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Barcelona Convention

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

Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025

Agenda Item 3: Thematic Decisions

Agenda Item 5: Ministerial Session

Report of the MAP Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 16-19 September 2025)

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2025

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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

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Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2025

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I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the programme of work[1] adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols at their twenty-third meeting, held in Portorož, Slovenia, from 5 to 8 December 2023, a meeting of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) focal points was held in Athens from 16 to 19 September 2025.

II. Attendance

2. The following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were represented at the meeting: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, Türkiye.

3. The following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, convention secretariats and intergovernmental organizations were represented as observers: Compliance Committee, Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Union for the Mediterranean.

4. The following non-governmental organizations and other entities were also represented as observers: Ankara University National Centre for the Sea and Maritime Law (DEHUKAM), European Union Water and Environment Support – Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA), Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association, International Association of Oil and Gas Producers, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET), Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental Law and Negotiation, OceanCare, World Wide Fund for Nature International, World Wide Fund for Nature Mediterranean.

5. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including the Mediterranean Action Plan/Barcelona Convention secretariat along with the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL), was also represented, along with the following Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) regional activity centres: Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (PB/RAC), Climate Change Regional Activity Centre (CC/RAC), Information and Communication Regional Activity Centre (INFO/RAC), Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC), Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Activity Centre (SCP/RAC-MedWaves).

III. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

6. The meeting was opened at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, 16 September by Mr. Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia), President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties.

7. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Bricelj said that, during the current biennium, considerable progress had been made in turning decisions into actions designed to build countries' resilience to climate change, pollution and other environmental challenges and a more secure future for populations living in Mediterranean areas. The fiftieth anniversary of the inception of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system had continued to be celebrated, including through the organization of a high-level event and a special Mediterranean Day at the third United Nations Ocean Conference, which had been held in Nice, France, from 9 to 13 June 2025. The political declaration of ministers of the Mediterranean adopted at the high-level event was progressive and ambitious. It reaffirmed the need for a source-to-sea approach and for stronger integrated coastal zone and ocean management, marine spatial planning, climate mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction strategies to enhance the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems and communities. On the opening day of the tenth anniversary edition of the Mediterranean Coast and Macro-Regional Strategies Week, taking place in Izola, Slovenia, from 15 to

[1] Decision IG.26/14.

17 September 2025, participants including the Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, Ms. Birgit Vogel, had expressed enthusiastic support for the declaration. It was time now to implement it.

8. Ms. Tatjana Hema, Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan, said that the fiftieth anniversary celebrations would conclude at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its protocols, to be held in Cairo from 2 to 5 December 2025. The many achievements of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system were a source of pride and inspiration, as was the political declaration emanating from the third United Nations Ocean Conference.

9. The current meeting was a key part of the institutional governance set-up of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system and required a spirit of solidarity and constructiveness, together with ambition and an openness to confronting new challenges. At the meeting, reports would be provided on activities undertaken to implement a range of activities of the programme of work, including those related to the Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme) funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Programme, which was delivering impressive results, was slowly coming to an end. It was therefore important to emphasize its contribution to UNEP/MAP, particularly in the current financial climate, in which it might prove more difficult than in the past to access external funding.

10. Despite laudable progress, more remained to be done to enhance compliance with the Barcelona Convention and its protocols. Several Contracting Parties had not yet ratified all the protocols to the Convention and especially the 1996 amendments to the Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea (Dumping Protocol) which had not yet entered into force. Ratification was important in lending credibility to implementation efforts.

11. At the current meeting and in view of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties, participants were expected to approve strategic documents that would set out the vision of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system for the coming decade – in particular, the Ecosystem Approach Road Map and Policy 2026–2035, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026–2035 and the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas 2026–2035. The preparation of the documents had been informed by the third United Nations Ocean Conference, global initiatives in the field of ocean governance, the European Ocean Pact, and the work of UNEP and other specialized agencies such as the International Maritime Organization. The UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system did not operate in isolation. Its partners had always been crucial in its work and would remain so in the future, as the agenda embraced by the Contracting Parties was too ambitious to be achieved alone.

IV. Organizational matters (agenda item 2)

A. Rules of procedure

12. The focal points agreed that the rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/IG.43/6, annex XI), as amended by the Contracting Parties (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.1/5 and UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.3/5), would apply mutatis mutandis to their deliberations at the meeting.

B. Election of officers

13. In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure, the focal points unanimously agreed that the following representatives of the Contracting Parties would serve as the Bureau for the current meeting:

President:	Mr. Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia)
Vice-Presidents:	Ms. Hala Ibrahem Mohamed Saed (Egypt)
	Mr. Franck Lauwers (Malta)
	Ms. Nassira Rheyati (Morocco)

Mr. Jorge Ureta Maeso (Spain)

Rapporteur: Ms. Tamara Brajović (Montenegro)

C. Adoption of the provisional agenda

14. The focal points adopted their agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda circulated in document UNEP/MED WG.620/1:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
   - 2.1 Rules of procedure;
   - 2.2 Election of officers;
   - 2.3 Adoption of the provisional agenda;
   - 2.4 Organization of work.
3. Progress report on activities carried out during the 2024–2025 biennium.
4. Financial implementation report for 2022–2023 and 2024–2025.
5. Specific matters for consideration and action by the meeting, including draft decisions:
   - 5.1 Compliance and reporting;
   - 5.2 MAP governance, CC/RAC mandate and partnerships;
   - 5.3 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development;
   - 5.4 MAP Ecosystem Approach Road Map and Policy;
   - 5.5 Climate Change Adaptation Regional Framework;
   - 5.6 Assessment reports;
   - 5.7 Conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity, endangered species and ecosystems;
   - 5.8 Marine pollution from ships;
   - 5.9 Offshore Action Plan;
   - 5.10 National action plans/programmes of measures to combat and prevent marine pollution;
   - 5.11 Programme of work and budget for 2026–2027.
6. Preparations for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties:
   - 6.1 Provisional agenda;
   - 6.2 Ministerial declaration: process and highlights.
7. Any other business.
8. Adoption of the report of the meeting.
9. Closure of the meeting.

D. Organization of work

15. The focal points agreed to work in plenary session in accordance with the schedule proposed by the secretariat.

V. Progress report on activities carried out during the 2024–2025 biennium; financial implementation report for 2022–2023 and 2024–2025 (agenda items 3 and 4)

16. The focal points decided to consider the two agenda items together.

17. The Coordinator drew attention to the progress report on activities carried out during the biennium 2024–2025 contained in document UNEP/MED WG.620/3, which outlined the work done, progress achieved and challenges encountered in the implementation of seven thematic programmes under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. A slide presentation was given highlighting key points related to each of the programmes.

18. Mr. Ivan Sammut (Head of Office, REMPEC), summarizing activities carried out to implement programme 1, entitled "Towards a Pollution- and Litter-Free Mediterranean Sea and Coast Embracing Circular Economy", said that the programme consisted of four interlinked outcomes. Under outcome 1.1, two scalable pilot initiatives had been launched, agreements had been signed with various Contracting Parties to deliver financial and technical support, a REMPEC assessment on lost containers at sea was being finalized, and steps had been taken to implement low plastic zones. Work under outcome 1.2 had included advancing the regional desalination agenda, strengthening national regulatory frameworks on hazardous substances, and enhancing preparedness and response mechanisms for marine pollution incidents. Regarding outcome 1.3, the Switchers Support Programme and a new impact fund were helping to unlock the potential of green entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean region. Under outcome 1.4, a historic achievement had been the designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for sulphur oxides (SOx) under Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

19. Mr. Mahmoud Elyes Hamza (Director, SPA/RAC), speaking about programme 2, entitled "Towards Healthy Mediterranean Ecosystems and Enhanced Biodiversity", said that measures had been taken to promote the implementation of actions 2 and 12 under the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (SAPBIO). The terms of reference of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean had been updated, and the Group had held two meetings by teleconference in March and April 2025. A Mediterranean regional workshop on target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, held in Montpellier, France, from 2 to 5 June 2025, had enabled participants to showcase national efforts and raise awareness of major gaps, needs and opportunities. The steps taken by SPA/RAC pursuant to decision IG.26/5, adopted at the twenty-third meeting of the Contracting Parties, were described in document UNEP/MED WG.620/11. On 23 and 24 January, SPA/RAC had organized two workshops in Rome on invasive non-indigenous species. Lastly, the main conclusions of the midterm assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO were set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.24.

20. Mr. Robin Degron (Director, Plan Bleu), speaking about programme 3, entitled "Towards a Climate Resilient Mediterranean", said that crucial contributions had been made to the production of scientific knowledge through a special report of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) interlinking climate change with the water-energy-food-ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean basin and through a working paper by SCP/RAC-MedWaves on the contribution of a circular economy to climate action. Activities conducted during the biennium had focused on, among other matters, coastal climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, fisheries management and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships. International workshops had been held to enable the testing of a just transition decision support system (DSS) tool, which had been officially launched in August 2024. SCP/RAC-MedWaves and PAP/RAC had organized side events on topics including circular economy approaches and climate change mitigation at the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference.

21. Mr. Jesús Maestro (Director, SCP/RAC-MedWaves), speaking about programme 4, entitled "Towards the Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Resources Including Circular and Blue Economy", said that progress had been made in the development of a national integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) strategy in Lebanon; coastal plans had been drawn up for locations in Montenegro and Morocco; methodological guidance was being drafted for the preparation of coastal plans in the framework of the MedProgramme; marine spatial planning support had been provided in Albania,

Tunisia and Türkiye; feasibility studies and consultations had been carried out with a view to preparing coastal area management programmes; the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan had been updated; and steps had been taken towards finalizing the Regional Offshore Standards and Guidelines on the Removal/Decommissioning of Installations and the Related Financial Aspects. PAP/RAC had coordinated four regional meetings of the Marine Spatial Planning Working Group and had become a partner in the MEDIGREEN project to accelerate the European Green Deal transition in the Mediterranean Sea. Under the BlueMissionMed project, seven national and regional hubs had been established to support individuals and organizations willing to contribute to achieving the project's objectives.

22. Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis (MAP Programme Management Officer – Governance) said that UNEP/MAP work under programme 5, on governance, had focused on delivering on the medium-term strategy 2022–2027 and the mandates from the twenty-third meeting of the Contracting Parties. In that regard, the evaluation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016–2025 had been completed and used to prepare the new Strategy for 2026–2035; the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for 2026–2035 had been developed; and the Mediterranean Quality Status Report for 2023 had been published. Meanwhile, the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Road Map had been updated for the period 2026–2035, and the third cycle of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP) had been reviewed. Highlighting the key meetings of the governance and decision-making bodies of UNEP/MAP, the many UNEP/MAP activities conducted to improve multi-stakeholder engagement and enhance public institutional capacity, as well as the engagement with the projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the European Union to support southern Mediterranean countries, he said that multiple milestones had been reached.

23. Ms. Daria Povh Škugor (Director, PAP/RAC), recalling that monitoring phenomena was a precondition for their management, updated focal points on progress under programme 6, entitled "Towards Monitoring, Assessment, Knowledge and Vision of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast for Informed Decision-Making". She drew attention, among other things, to the revision of the IMAP guidance fact sheets for common indicators on pollution; the strengthening of air pollution monitoring in a number of countries under the GEF MedProgramme; improvements to environmental and background assessment criteria; a new agreement on an intercalibration exercise on floating microplastics; and progress on the ecological objectives on marine food webs and sea floor integrity. She concluded by highlighting a range of dissemination activities that had been conducted, including regional workshops and meetings and the regular updating of the PB/RAC regional observatory.

24. Mr. Arthur Pasquale (Deputy Director, INFO/RAC) updated the focal points on work under programme 7, entitled "For Informed and Consistent Advocacy, Awareness, Education and Communication". Particularly notable had been the creation of the knowledge management platform, an accessible UNEP/MAP repository containing geographical data and information related to UNEP/MAP and intended, among other things, to facilitate knowledge exchange between stakeholders and other partners. Of the communication, dissemination and education activities conducted under programme 7, he highlighted the "Odyssey Reloaded" digital initiative developed as part of the UNEP/MAP fiftieth anniversary celebrations to highlight ongoing relevant activities around the Mediterranean; the awarding of several prizes, including the Mediterranean Sustainability Award; and the campaign, as part of Mediterranean Coast Day celebrations in 2024, to highlight the contributions of women to coastal sustainability at the local, national and regional levels.

25. The Coordinator drew attention to a comparison between UNEP/MAP expenditure for the biennium 2022–2023 and the budget approved for that period by the Contracting Parties. Noting that the rate of implementation was currently 62 per cent, she expressed the hope that a rate of 90 per cent could be achieved and confirmed in accounts, verified by UNEP, in time for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties. At that meeting, she also hoped to provide further information on staffing, including on the recruitment process for the position of deputy coordinator.

26. In the ensuing discussion, several focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested further information on the rates of implementation of activities approved before the start of the biennium under consideration, while another requested information on the status of biennial

reporting under the Convention. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries requested that the secretariat provide a comparison of budgeted and implemented activities. Several focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, drew attention to specific errors in and omissions from the document prepared by the secretariat.

27. One focal point commended UNEP/MAP for its work on pollution, particularly plastic pollution, and climate change, which were particular priorities for his country. Another said that the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP/MAP was a cause for celebration.

28. Responding to the comments, the Coordinator thanked the focal points for their comments on the report, of which the secretariat had taken note. Regarding the implementation of activities planned before the biennium under consideration, she said that the secretariat always informed Contracting Parties when activities that had been approved were not implemented. Acknowledging the importance of continued discussion on how to present budgeting and implementation information, she requested that Contracting Parties permit funds allocated for positions that remained vacant to be assigned to other uses that benefited UNEP/MAP work. With regard to reporting levels, she confirmed that there was room for improvement and said that assistance should be provided to countries that had difficulty complying with their reporting requirements, which could be onerous. Regarding specific errors and omissions identified by participants, she said that the secretariat would rectify them and reissue the progress report.

29. A representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner stressed the importance of having an integrated approach to all issues affecting the marine environment. She expressed appreciation for and highlighted the benefits of the close collaboration that her organization had with SPA/RAC, INFO/RAC and MEDPOL.

30. Following the discussion, the focal points agreed that three or four interested focal points would have an informal exchange with the secretariat on how, in the future, to improve the format and approach of the programme of work and budget.

VI. Specific matters for consideration and action by the meeting, including draft decisions (agenda item 5)

A. Compliance and reporting

Draft decision on compliance and reporting

31. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/4.

32. A representative of the Compliance Committee thanked the secretariat for its support and stressed the importance of the submission of reports by Contracting Parties to enable the Committee to be in possession of the requisite information. She also highlighted the importance of the information received from civil society on possible cases of non-compliance.

33. In the ensuing discussion, focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the Compliance Committee and the secretariat for their work. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries and a representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner stressed the importance of reporting by Contracting Parties and urged those Contracting Parities that had not yet done so to send in their national implementation reports as soon as possible. One focal point said that the fact that half of all Contracting Parties had yet to submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2022–2023 could not be ignored. Several focal points, including the one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and a representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner asked the secretariat to lend support to such Contracting Parties in reporting. One stressed that any approach or mechanism developed to help Contracting Parties report should take into consideration national reporting systems and national regulations regarding data flow. The Coordinator recalled that in previous years the Contracting Parties had been of the view that the preparation of reports on implementation was a minimum obligation that each Contracting Party needed to comply with, using its own resources. The Coordinator had recently asked the Bureau to reconsider the matter, however, and to introduce a modest budget to help some Contracting Parties that were in particular difficulty.

34. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries stressed that the compilation of reports on several bienniums into one report, as proposed in the draft decision, should take place on an exceptional basis and should not become the norm. Several focal points confirmed that their governments were working on their overdue reports and would submit them as soon as possible. One highlighted the challenges faced by the country in gathering information from a wide range of stakeholders. She asked what her Government should do in case it were unable to complete the report by the upcoming twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties. The Coordinator proposed that Contracting Parties at least submit their incomplete reports as draft versions, as that would show their commitment to the process. She added that further information on the process of compiling reports on several bienniums into one report would be provided at the meeting of the Contracting Parties.

35. One focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the Compliance Committee and the secretariat for the support that they had provided to one of the countries in that group in solving a compliance case and asked how long that country would need to continue reporting to the Compliance Committee on the improvements that it had made. She also asked why there was no mention, in the document before the focal points, of another case involving another country in the group. The Coordinator explained that the latter case was still under investigation and that it was thus premature for it to be brought to the attention of the focal points.

36. One focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, proposed that, in the future, the secretariat show any modifications made to existing documents in tracked changes mode. Such an approach would have been helpful in the case of the revision of the rules of procedure of the Compliance Committee. Another focal point, speaking on behalf of the same group of countries, proposed editorial changes to add clarity to the draft decision and its annexes.

37. Subsequently, the focal points considered a revised version of the draft decision.

38. A representative of the Compliance Committee (Vice-Chair) asked the secretariat to share with the focal points the draft decision on compliance approved by the Committee, so that the focal points would have a clearer, more complete picture of the work done. She also underscored the fact that the Committee's report on its activities was currently still in draft form. Lastly, she informed the focal points that the Committee had asked to participate in the meeting of the Contracting Parties, and hoped to hold a side event to showcase the role, functions and experience gained to date by the Committee, including through comparison with other such committees established by other international conventions, in order to raise awareness and thus support the work of both the Committee and the Barcelona Convention system as a whole.

39. Responding to the comments and question, the Coordinator explained that the reports for the last two meetings of the Compliance Committee were available in an information document (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.7), and that this included the proposal on the draft decision on compliance approved by the Committee. She further recalled that the Compliance Committee approved their activity report, which was then transmitted to the Contracting Parties on their behalf, noting that it was the responsibility of the Coordinating Unit to submit the draft decision on matters related to compliance and reporting, which they had done, in consultation with the Bureau, the Compliance Committee and the other components of the system.

40. Following the discussion, the focal points agreed to forward the revised draft decision for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/1) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

Draft decision on the revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

41. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/6.

42. In the ensuing discussion, one focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed her firm support for the revised Barcelona Convention reporting format, in particular the proposal to incorporate elements corresponding to obligations under the new regional plans. That would bring reporting into line with directives in her region. She also wished to give more prominence to the role of INFO/RAC in providing support to the Contracting Parties to enable them to submit their national

implementation reports in a timely way. The Coordinator suggested that a mention of INFO/RAC, MEDPOL and the secretariat would give a fuller picture.

43. Subsequently, the focal points considered a revised version of the draft decision and agreed to forward it for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/3) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

B. MAP governance, CC/RAC mandate and partnerships

Draft decision on governance

44. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/5, which addressed a number of governance-related issues. She presented elements of the decision relating to new memorandums of understanding with certain observer organizations/Mediterranean Action Plan partners and updates to the constitutive documents and membership of MCSD. She also drew attention to a corrigendum (UNEP/MED WG.620/5/Corr.1) setting out subsequent changes made to the memorandums of understanding by the UNEP Law Division during the mandatory legal clearance process.

45. One focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the draft decision on governance and expressed strong support for many individual elements, including the memorandums of understanding; the list of new observer organizations/Mediterranean Action Plan partners; the expansion of the MCSD membership to include women and youth organizations and the proposed new nominations for membership; and the proposed designation of Mediterranean Coast Day as a United Nations International Observance of Coast Day, which she suggested might have some synergies with the African Union's July celebration of Africa Days of the Seas. Referring to the "Common Operational Principles for MAP Components" adopted at the twenty-second meeting of the Contracting Parties, by decision IG.25/3, she indicated support for the request to host countries, set out in the draft decision, to take the necessary measures to implement those principles. Once the internal assessment of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system was finished, her delegation hoped to discuss how it might be used in determining the way forward, including how to improve the implementation of the budget. Finally, she welcomed the Plan of Action for a Model Mediterranean Sea (PAMEx), while suggesting that efforts should be made to increase engagement and fully deliver on the plan's potential. Her delegation favoured authorizing the secretariat to continue hosting PAMEx and encouraged synergies and increased cooperation, while also acknowledging the importance of delineating responsibilities to avoid duplication. Finally, her delegation wished to propose a number of changes to the text of the draft decision, including in relation to environmental impact assessment and the role of host countries as facilitators for the effective delivery of the regional activity centres' mandates. Another member of her delegation then presented the proposed changes.

46. One focal point raised a concern regarding a proposed new operative paragraph whereby the Contracting Parties would agree to discuss steps for integrating environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment (EIA/SEA) into the Barcelona Convention and explore the need to develop a specific instrument or framework for such processes. He recalled a consultation meeting held in June 2025 at which it had been agreed that the way forward for EIA/SEA should focus on voluntary, non-binding cooperation, tailored capacity-building efforts and strengthened information exchange. He said that, if accepted, the new paragraph should specifically state that any instrument or framework would not be legally binding.

47. The Coordinator also raised concerns in relation to the proposed new paragraph, noting that it did not clearly describe the product to be delivered. She said that any activity relating to the development of an instrument or framework would be primarily the responsibility of the Coordinating Unit, and, based on the established procedure, its inclusion in the programme of work was sufficient.

48. Later in the meeting, the Coordinator introduced a revised version of the draft decision reflecting the requested changes.

49. One focal point reiterated his desire for the non-binding nature of the possible options for integrating transboundary EIA/SEA to be clearly indicated. Following discussions, an alternative text was proposed and agreed on by consensus.

50. Subsequently, the focal points considered a revised version of the draft decision and agreed to forward it, as orally amended, for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/2) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

Draft decision on the mandate of the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre and terms of reference of its focal points

51. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/12, the annexes to which contained the mandate of the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre (CC/RAC) and the terms of reference of its focal points.

52. The President said that the time had come to turn planning into action. Once established, CC/RAC could improve resilience to the effects of climate change in the Mediterranean region and contribute to interregional cooperation on work in the Danube River Basin and the Black Sea through the "source-to-sea" approach. Resources should be made available to ensure that it could work effectively.

53. In the ensuing discussion on the draft decision, one focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the Coordinator's assurance that all efforts would be made to avoid duplication of work. She requested further information on the ways in which the secretariat would support CC/RAC. Saying that CC/RAC should facilitate the implementation of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, she underlined the importance of harmonizing the language used to refer to CC/RAC, including in the draft decision relating to the Framework. She proposed several other changes to the text and she requested clarification on whether the items in the section on scope of action and key issues had been arranged in order of priority and proposed potential changes in that regard.

54. Underlining the importance of climate change-related expertise in the selection of focal points to CC/RAC, she said that it should be prioritized over the recruitment of focal points already working with regional activity centres such as PB/RAC and PAP/RAC.

55. In relation to synergies with existing programmes, a representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner requested that the programme of activities on climate change education being conducted under the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development be taken into consideration when preparing the text on the mandate of CC/RAC.

56. One focal point requested detailed information on the resources provided by Türkiye towards the establishment of CC/RAC in the two years since the adoption of decision IG.26/12. Another requested that the draft decision be removed from the agenda because the process agreed on by the Contracting Parties at the twenty-third meeting for the establishment of CC/RAC had not been respected. In particular, he noted that not all Contracting Parties were consulted and pointed out the allocation in the programme of work and budget of funds to CC/RAC, in breach of the agreed terms, under which the host country was to provide all the funding required. In that regard, he recalled two previous occasions on which MAP had ended up bearing costs that should have been borne by a regional activity centre host country.

57. Several focal points said that, as the Mediterranean was one of the world's most vulnerable marine environments with regard to climate change, establishing CC/RAC would help Contracting Parties address a serious, borderless problem. One proposed that, given the importance of establishing synergies with regional activity centres that already had expertise in climate change, an operational paragraph be added to the draft decision explicitly tasking CC/RAC with presenting to the Bureau a strategic framework for synergies and complementarity. To diversify funding sources, she proposed that a goal be included on the development of a sustainable financing strategy.

58. Expressing condolences to all those who had recently suffered from the impacts of climate change, including drought and forest fires, and lamenting the danger that climate change posed to a majority of low-lying coastal world heritage sites of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the Mediterranean region, as highlighted in a recent UNESCO report, the focal point of Türkiye provided information on progress in the establishment of CC/RAC. The permanent director had been appointed, further recruitment was under way, and more information on staffing would be provided at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties. The building that would house the offices had been selected and a draft design for a logo and a website providing

information on the work of CC/RAC had been created. Emphasizing that CC/RAC would not duplicate or compete with ongoing work, but would complement it, under the guidance of the MAP Coordinating Unit, he confirmed that the operating costs of CC/RAC would be borne by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of Türkiye. Efforts would be made to seek funding from other sources, including the Mediterranean Trust Fund and voluntary contributions from other Contracting Parties.

59. Responding to the issues raised, the Coordinator said that the proposed changes to the draft decision would be assembled by the secretariat and presented as conference room papers at the earliest opportunity. Regarding the procedures followed, she stressed that the secretariat had strictly adhered to the terms set by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-third meeting, including the request for an independent mapping exercise. An independent expert had indeed been chosen to produce the report, and the terms of reference for the process had been presented for consideration by the Bureau in a timely manner. The secretariat had been exchanging information with the Government of Türkiye on facilities, staffing and funding for CC/RAC. She re-confirmed that an agreement has been made from the beginning with the government of Türkiye that operating costs would be borne by Türkiye. If important activities related to climate change needed to be undertaken, funding could also be sought from the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system. She added that the items listed under scope of action and key issues had not been placed in an order of priority and she would be happy to consider suggestions in that regard.

60. The Coordinator reiterated that the draft decision under consideration had been shared in a timely manner, two months before the current meeting, and that in that time no Contracting Party had made any comment or submitted any objection.

61. A focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries said that, in her view, the established procedure had been followed correctly and that it now fell to the Contracting Parties to give effect to the plan.

62. Subsequently, during the consideration of the draft decision with the requested amendments, the Coordinator addressed several areas regarding which doubts remained. Concerning the proposal that CC/RAC update the Bureau on synergies and complementarity within 12 months of starting work, she proposed that a request be included in the draft decision for the secretariat to report on efforts made to promote synergies and coordination between different regional activity centres on matters related to climate change.

63. With regard to the nomination of focal points and their areas of expertise, she said that, in its current formulation, the text gave scope for Contracting Parties to decide on their focal points, while emphasizing the value of expertise on climate change policy and related areas being contributed from as many Contracting Parties as possible.

64. In relation to the development of a resource mobilization strategy for CC/RAC, she said that it was up to the Contracting Parties to decide on the matter, but that such strategies had not previously been prepared for individual regional activity centres, although current funding constraints meant that the approach could be considered.

65. Later in the meeting, the Coordinator introduced a revised version of the draft decision that reflected the various changes proposed.

66. One focal point expressed dissatisfaction with the revised version, saying that many ambiguities remained and would lead to many misunderstandings between the new regional activity centre and the existing centres. He suggested that more time was needed to rethink the mandate and requested a full reservation on the decision. In addition, noting that the decision included a request for the secretariat to support the host country, he recalled the understanding that there would be no allocation for CC/RAC in the budget, which, he said, should be reiterated in the decision text.

67. The representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner reiterated his earlier request to include, in the references to awareness-raising and education, a clear reference to the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.

68. Responding to the comments, the Coordinator said that, while the mandate for CC/RAC might not be perfect, it was the clearest mandate to have been developed to date for a new regional activity centre. Furthermore, the regional activity centres' activities were constantly evolving, and their mandates could be adjusted as needed. On the question of budget allocation, she confirmed the agreement that the operational cost of the centre would be fully covered by Türkiye, and pointed out that no funding had been proposed for the centre's operation in the programme of work and budget. The support to be provided by the secretariat was thus the same type of support provided to all regional activity centres, such as advice on structure or terms of reference for experts.

69. Turning to the request to add reference to a specific reference to a policy instrument and governance mechanism of which UNEP/MAP was fully part, she explained that it was not the practice to refer to another instrument in the mandate of a regional activity centre. She asked that the secretariat be allowed time to further consider the request and to introduce any additional needed amendments at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties.

70. Later during the meeting, the Coordinator presented a revised version of the draft decision and asked the focal points to allow the secretariat the flexibility to make additional changes before presenting it to the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. Possible changes involved adding a mention of PAP/RAC to the current mentions of Plan Bleu/RAC and INFO/RAC and reordering the items listed under "scope of action and key issues" to better reflect their priority.

71. Several focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, indicated their agreement with that request.

72. The focal points agreed to forward the revised draft decision, as orally amended, for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/9) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

C. Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

Draft decision on the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026–2035

73. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/7, the annex to which contained the draft updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period 2026–2035.

74. In the ensuing discussion, a focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries and the representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner expressed strong support for the updated strategy and particular appreciation for the new targets and their links to existing indicators.

75. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries also highlighted other positive aspects of the strategy, including its updated objectives and strategic directions; the addition of new actions regarding renewable energy, nature-based solutions, marine spatial planning, sustainable water and forest management, air quality, sustainable and circular business models, and sustainable finance; the new flagship initiatives; and the spotlight on climate change. She asked for clarification of the thinking behind indicator 8, plastic leakage at sea, saying that it was not clear how progress could be monitored, given the multiple sources of such leakage. Another member of the same delegation then presented a number of textual suggestions.

76. One focal point noted that, while the strategy covered the period 2026–2035, the document indicated that it had been formulated to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. He asked what would happen if new sustainable development goals were set after 2030. Another focal point suggested that objective 3, "Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development", be modified to reflect the importance of innovation in sustainable water desalination and management in the light of the water scarcity facing the Mediterranean countries.

77. The Coordinator explained that the intention was to assess the post-2030 situation with regard to any new sustainable development goals during the midterm review of the status of implementation of the Strategy, expected to take place in 2028 or 2029. If, at that stage, the post-2030 outlook remained

unclear, the review process could be extended in order for its results and any related proposals to be presented to the Contracting Parties for consideration at their twenty-seventh meeting, rather than the twenty-sixth, as was provided for in the draft decision.

78. A representative of PB/RAC said that indicator 8 had been included pursuant to a request made by the MCSD steering committee in April 2024 and was based on an OECD statistic that measured microplastic leakage in the Middle East and North Africa. The indicator, currently rudimentary, would be refined over the coming biennium. There were no purely Mediterranean data sources on plastic leakage at sea.

79. Subsequently, the Coordinator presented proposed amendments to the draft decision and to the annex intended to reflect the comments and suggestions made by the focal points.

80. The focal points agreed to forward the draft decision for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/4) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

D. MAP ecosystem approach road map and policy

Draft decision on the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Road Map and Policy 2026–2035 and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP)

81. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/9/Rev.1, the annexes to which contained the ecosystem approach road map and policy 2026–2035 and IMAP and related assessment criteria.

82. A focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries and the representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner expressed their appreciation for the update of the ecosystem approach policy and road map and the new Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP). The focal point welcomed the effort made to align the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system with the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the work of other regional sea conventions, while the representative of the observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner conveyed his organization's willingness to provide support and technical assistance to the Contracting Parties and the secretariat for the preparation of a quality status report, particularly on biodiversity but also on forest fires, and to contribute to the technical meetings of the online working groups as appropriate.

83. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries endorsed the upgrade of two candidate noise indicators to the status of common indicators, underscoring the need to enhance work on noise. She expressed support for a proposal to keep the marine food web indicators as candidate indicators for the time being and potentially upgrade them to common indicators in two years or once the existing challenges with data had been addressed. Lastly, she voiced approval for a proposal to ask the respective Correspondence Group (CORMON) on Coast and Hydrography to put forward, by the end of September 2025, a proposal for activating existing indicators 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 and for including up to three indicators under Ecological Objective 8, considering that these indicators should be measurable and that the methodology was clear.

84. The focal points agreed to forward the draft decision, as orally amended, for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/6) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

E. Climate change adaptation regional framework

Draft decision on the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas 2026–2035

85. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/8, the annexes to which contained the draft updated Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas 2026–2035 and a draft performance monitoring matrix for the Framework.

86. In the ensuing discussion, support was expressed for the adoption of the updated Framework. One focal point said that emphasis should be placed on the importance of ensuring access to financing for the countries that needed it most, while another, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, proposed the inclusion of references in the draft decision to maritime spatial plans, which were an essential component of coastal zone management; to a midterm evaluation of the Framework, perhaps in conjunction with the planned midterm review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development; and to the mandate of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change. A second member of the same delegation then presented a number of textual suggestions aimed at fine-tuning the indicators for the performance monitoring matrix set out in annex II to document UNEP/MED WG.620/8.

87. One focal point said that she would like to see explicit references in the Framework or the draft decision to the issue of reporting, which should be simple, achievable and based on existing mechanisms, and to the need to provide financial support to the most vulnerable countries.

88. Subsequently, the Coordinator presented proposed amendments to the draft decision and to the draft performance monitoring matrix in annex II. One focal point, supported by another, said that, given the often vital role played by local authorities in the implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives, it would be helpful to have an indicator on the number of local adaptation plans carried out in each country.

89. The Chair of MCSD suggested adding indicators on the number of countries that had assessed their vulnerability to climate change and on the proportion of countries in the Mediterranean region that had drawn up national climate change adaptation plans.

90. The Coordinator explained that the matrix would be developed over time, including through the addition of baselines and targets, and that, to the extent possible, data would be collected from existing sources.

91. The focal points agreed to forward the draft decision for consideration, by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/5) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

F. Assessment reports

Draft decision on assessment studies: summary for policymakers of the MedECC Special Report on interlinking climate change with the water-energy-food-ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin

92. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/13, the annex to which contained the summary for policymakers of a special report prepared by the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) on interlinking climate change with the water-energy-food-ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin.

93. One focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the work done by MedECC and the proposed summary for policymakers and indicated her support for the endorsement of the summary and the inclusion of a flagship initiative on the issue of the WEFE nexus in the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026–2035.

94. Another focal point emphasized the need for review and approval of the calculation methodologies used for the selected indicators, particularly the indicators for plastics, and asked that her point be reflected in the draft decision.

95. Subsequently, the focal points agreed to forward the draft decision for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/10) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

G. Conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity, endangered species and ecosystems

Draft decision on draft amendments to the "Common Criteria for proposing amendments to annexes II and III to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean" and proposals for amendment of annexes II and III

96. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision and the annexes thereto, set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/10.

97. In the ensuing discussion, one focal point said that her country had recently adopted a national action plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fish and a recovery plan for certain species of shark. Expressing support for the inclusion in annex II of certain species whose status warranted enhanced protection, she said that, for other taxa, the national data that would justify their inclusion were lacking. In that light, her delegation wished to enter a reservation regarding certain species at that part of the text. Welcoming the proposed inclusion of certain sponges in annex II, she requested that SPA/RAC provide support for stock assessments and harmonization of existing national measures and Protocol measures.

98. Pursuant to decision IG.26/4, her Government officially requested the support of the secretariat for the implementation of conservation and management measures in relation to the species listed in annexes II and III to the Protocol, the mobilization of the resources necessary to perform that work, and the updating of the annexes.

99. Another focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the proposed amendments to annexes II and III, but, noting that their adoption would give them legal effect under European Union legislation, said that she was obliged to enter a scrutiny reservation pending a decision of the Council of the European Union on the matter. She also noted that the reservation entered by one Contracting Party of that group in relation to *Alopias vulpinus* was lifted.

100. A representative of an observer organization/MAP partner commended the listing of new shark and ray species, which reflected an ambition that matched the conservation challenges those species faced. Important work on the issue had recently been done in the Adriatic and central and western Mediterranean seas, but increased resources were needed to carry out scientific studies and support countries that required assistance to build technical and financial capacity for national management, monitoring and research, including for conducting subregional stock assessments of key species. Expressing support for the proposed changes in relation to annex II species, she urged countries expressing reservations in that regard to consider establishing a moratorium on the commercial exploitation of annex III species pending implementation of existing regional fisheries regulations on sustainable management and rebuilding of populations. She also indicated that IMAP indicators should be developed in respect to those species.

101. One focal point said that his country would soon ratify the SPA/BD Protocol.

102. Subsequently, the focal points agreed to forward the draft decision, as orally amended, and with two reservations and a scrutiny reservation, for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/7) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

Draft decision on Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs), Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the Post-2020 SAPBIO

103. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision and the annexes thereto, set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/11.

104. One focal point requested that the secretariat take into consideration, when addressing the evaluation and update of regional action plans in relation to vulnerable species, existing regional regulatory frameworks, in particular the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. She highlighted the Commission’s decisions on sea turtles and recalled that it was for regional fisheries management organizations to take decisions on matters relating to fisheries. She also requested that the secretariat update the action plans on the conservation of marine vegetation and cetaceans.

105. Subsequently, the focal points agreed to forward the draft decision for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/8) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

H. Marine pollution from ships

Draft decision on marine pollution from ships: revision of the terms of reference of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL in the Mediterranean Sea (MENELAS) and Road Map for Transitioning to Low-Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea

106. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision and the annexes thereto, set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/14.

107. In the ensuing discussion on the draft decision, one focal point, welcoming the Road Map for Transitioning to Low-Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea, said that it could only achieve equitable results if adequate consideration were given to Contracting Parties' differing capacities, and if access to financing and robust mechanisms for knowledge transfer and technical assistance were provided. Meeting emission control area requirements, for example, would require considerable investment in the renovation of maritime fleets, which would be particularly challenging for countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. She requested that such requirements be excluded from the draft decision for the time being. The proposal to establish economic incentives offering "green rebates" for low-emission shipping, meanwhile, appeared to favour large companies that were better able to absorb the costs of the transition, and she requested that the matter be reviewed. Accelerating the energy transition in maritime transport would also require the adoption of guidelines on the types of fuel permitted for use, as well as work to strengthen monitoring capacities, particularly in developing-country Contracting Parties. She proposed that a reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities be included in the text of the draft decision. With regard to the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL in the Mediterranean Sea (MENELAS), she proposed that a study be carried out on the cost of the transition to decarbonized maritime transport in Contracting Parties, and that support be given to help developing countries obtain financing from environmental support funds.

108. One focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern regarding the high number of recommendations in the Road Map, given the limited resources available. She proposed changes to the draft decision and its annexes that would reduce the number of recommendations and improve alignment with European Union legislation and the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

109. Another focal point drew attention to the proposal submitted to IMO on the establishment of an emission control area in the North Atlantic and said that linkages with the emission control area in the Mediterranean Sea could provide mutual benefits.

110. A third focal point requested that REMPEC consider the risks of carbon emissions from ship-to-ship transfers of oil in the Mediterranean.

111. The Coordinator noted that no reservations had been entered concerning the Annexes to the draft decision at the meeting of REMPEC focal points at which the matter had been discussed. Noting that such meetings had been the correct forums for such discussion, owing to the presence of experts on the technical aspects of the proposal, she proposed that, unless the Contracting Party proposed specific changes to the text, the draft decision be forwarded as amended, and that the Contracting Party discuss its reservations in a meeting with the Director of REMPEC with a view to resolving any issues.

112. Subsequently, the focal points agreed to forward the draft decision for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/11) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

I. Offshore Action Plan

Draft decision on the updated Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026–2035 in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and Its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol)

113. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/15, the annex to which contained the updated Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026–2035 in the framework of the Offshore Protocol.

114. In the ensuing discussion, support was expressed for the updated Plan. One focal point said that, given the level of ambition in the Plan, it was essential for REMPEC, as the MAP component primarily responsible for supporting the implementation of the Offshore Protocol, to be equipped with sufficient human resources. Appropriate funds should be allocated to that end in the programme of work and budget for 2026–2027. Another focal point encouraged REMPEC to organize additional training sessions and workshops focused on the implementation of the Plan, in particular the issue of decommissioning.

115. One focal point said that there was a need for clarification of elements of the Plan pertaining to the dissemination and exchange of information and for clear quantitative and qualitative performance indicators to enable an objective assessment of progress in the Plan's implementation. Although the draft decision provided for a resource mobilization framework, there was a reliance on limited and uncertain external sources of funding. Innovative and diverse financing mechanisms would therefore be crucial, as would adherence to the principle of positive discrimination in favour of developing countries. A permanent position should be created within REMPEC and provided with adequate resources to support the Plan's implementation and ensure effective coordination among relevant stakeholders.

116. Another focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries and noting that the Offshore Protocol provided that operators should be held liable for damage caused by their activities, suggested that one innovative financing idea might be to allocate funds from operators to the Plan's implementation in accordance with the polluter pays principle. Regarding the possible prioritization of deliverables, she said that particular importance should be attached to decommissioning and to initiatives with a high degree of maturity and environmental relevance.

117. The Coordinator said that it would be more in keeping with standard practice for the allocation of human resources to the Plan within REMPEC to be addressed during discussions on the programme of work and budget for 2026–2027 and included in its draft decision, while her understanding was that the focal points had agreed to forward the draft decision as it stood. Liability and compensation guidelines had been adopted within the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system in the past and could perhaps be drawn on to mobilize resources from operators.

118. The focal points reiterated the importance of providing REMPEC with adequate financial and human resources to enhance its capacity to implement the Offshore Action Plan. They requested the secretariat to include in the proposed programme of work and budget for 2026–2027 the establishment of a P-2 position for possible funding from core funds, from external funds or through secondment by a Government.

119. The focal points agreed to forward the draft decision, for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/12) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

J. National action plans/programmes of measures to combat and prevent marine pollution

Draft decision on the implementation of updated national action plans containing measures and timetables for their implementation

120. The Coordinator, introducing the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/16, highlighted the importance of partnerships with entities such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Investment Bank in the provision of support for the development and implementation of national action plans.

121. In the ensuing discussion, several focal points welcomed the draft decision, particularly the request for a midterm evaluation of the implementation of national action plans and programmes of measures in 2030. Two focal points called on the secretariat to continue to provide implementation support, including in respect of monitoring, data collection, assessment and reporting activities. One

focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the draft decision was fully in line with the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive and with the Water Framework Directive.

122. The focal points agreed to forward the draft decision for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/13) is set out in annex IV to the present report.

K. Programme of work and budget for 2026–2027

123. The Coordinator introduced the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/17 and gave a presentation on the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2026–2027, as set out in documents UNEP/MED WG.620/17 and UNEP/MED WG.620/17/Add.1. Noting that it was the final biennium covered by the medium-term strategy for 2022–2027, she highlighted the key elements considered in the preparation of the programme of work vis-à-vis the seven programmes envisaged in the medium-term strategy for 2022–2027, as well as the lessons learned from the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2024–2025.

124. She spoke of the budgetary needs of the proposed programme of work, which totalled approximately 15.8 million euros. Recalling that the secretariat had been requested by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-third meeting to develop a proposal for absorbing the whole remaining unutilized positive balance of the Mediterranean Trust Fund, excluding the working capital reserve, in the bienniums 2026–2027 and 2028–2029, she explained that the secretariat was proposing to allocate 2.5 million euros of the positive balance to the budget of the biennium 2026–2027 and the remainder to the budget of the biennium 2028–2029. She noted that the positive balance might increase further over the coming biennium if some of the budget were to remain unspent. Of the 2.5 million euros, the secretariat was proposing the use of 431,576 euros to cover the equivalent of a 2.5 per cent increase in the assessed contributions of Contracting Parties so that no additional burden was placed on them. If assessed contributions were not increased soon, the money available for activities would slowly decrease. An operative paragraph had been added to the draft decision with a view to the Contracting Parties' committing to considering an increase of 2.5 per cent in their assessed contributions to the Trust Fund starting only from the biennium 2028–2029.

125. The Coordinator then gave a breakdown of the expected income, including external funding, and the proposed budget per programme and source of funding. While noting that Contracting Parties on the whole paid their dues, the Coordinator emphasized the importance of the early payment of assessed contributions, not least to ensure that there was enough money to transfer to the regional activity centres at the beginning of each year so that they could begin their work promptly.

126. Highlighting other elements of the draft decision, the Coordinator noted that the text proposed that the Contracting Parties authorize the Coordinator to approve, under certain conditions, transfers of up to 20 per cent within a given programme and UNEP/MAP component/RAC and transfers from savings resulting from vacant posts for the implementation of approved activities in the current biennium under the same UNEP/MAP component for which external funding had not been secured. She used the opportunity to remind all MAP focal points that MED POL was considered a MAP component only for thematic purposes.

127. In the ensuing discussion, a focal point, thanking the secretariat for preparing the proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027, asked for a copy of the presentation. Recalling that the positive balance of the Mediterranean Trust Fund resulted from the funds not being used to the extent planned, he proposed more discussion of that matter. He and another focal point suggested that there might be more to the issue than vacant posts. The Coordinator said that the authorization of transfers proposed in the draft decision would help remedy the problem of unused budgetary resources and boost implementation of the programme of work.

128. In response to questions about the scale of assessed contributions by some focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, a representative of the secretariat explained that the scale was set for three years by the General Assembly. She outlined how UNEP/MAP applied the scale to the calculation of Contracting Parties' contributions. The Coordinator explained that two different scales might apply within the same biennium, which could lead to a change in the annual

contribution requested of a Contracting Party. One focal point highlighted an error in the figure given as the assessed contribution of her country.

129. Responding to a question about an annual increase of 2.5 per cent in Contracting Parties' assessed contributions to the Mediterranean Trust Fund, the Coordinator explained that, in its calculations of the annual budgets under the biennium 2026–2027, in order to ascertain the amount that should be taken from the 2.5 million euros allocated from the positive balance of the Mediterranean Trust Fund, an increase of 2.5 per cent had been applied to the 2025 budget to yield the budget for 2026, and an increase of 2.5 per cent had been applied to the new budget for 2026 to yield the budget for 2027. The increase of 2.5 per cent was therefore cumulative. However, there would be no additional cost for the Contracting Parties in the biennium 2026–2027 with respect to annual assessed contributions.

130. In response to a question about the use of 2.5 million euros from the Mediterranean Trust Fund, which was less than the amount specified by the Contracting Parties in decision IG.26/14 on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2024–2025, the Coordinator said that the secretariat had followed the respective decision of COP23 that authorized the use of the unspent positive balance in two consecutive bienniums.

131. The focal points agreed that the secretariat would consolidate documents UNEP/MED WG.620/17 and UNEP/MED WG.620/17/Add.1 into a single document to aid the focal points' further consideration of the programme of work and budget at the current meeting.

132. Subsequently, the Coordinator introduced the consolidated documents in the form of a conference room paper and highlighted a number of corrections that had been made.

133. In the ensuing discussion, a focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries said that the group wished to place a scrutiny reservation on the document to give the countries in the group time to coordinate their position.

134. A number of focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, raised the issue of the increase of 2.5 per cent in Contracting Parties' assessed contributions, including the considerations that the draft decision stipulated a start date but no end date; that some Contracting Parties might face challenges in increasing their contributions; and that the low implementation rate and unspent balance of the Mediterranean Trust Fund might negate the need for an increase. One of them said that the approval of any additional financial obligation for her country needed to follow a specific internal process that culminated in approval by the Government. She was therefore unable to commit to discussing a future increase in Contracting Parties' annual contributions. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group requested more information on the other multilateral environmental agreements that had increased their assessed contributions.

135. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group then proposed that the secretariat present several budgetary scenarios, including one with zero nominal growth. The Coordinator explained that the secretariat worked in response to decisions by the Contracting Parties and that a request for multiple scenarios could be added to the draft decision to ensure that there would be more than one scenario presented for the budget of the biennium 2028–2029. She reiterated that there would be no increase in contributions for Contracting Parties during the biennium 2026–2027, as the budgetary increase would be covered by the funds taken from the positive balance of the Mediterranean Trust Fund. Nevertheless, at some point the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system would have to reduce the level of its ambition or increase Contracting Parties' contributions. The most recent increase in assessed contributions had been done some years ago, when funds for holding the meeting of the Contracting Parties had been included in the budget to enable more countries, especially those in the southern Mediterranean region, to propose themselves as hosts. To minimize confusion, she proposed a different presentation of the information about the funds taken from the positive balance of the Mediterranean Trust Fund, which made no reference to an increase in assessed contributions. The focal point speaking on behalf of a group expressed the group's wish that the information be presented in two different ways. She added that the draft decision would have to be amended in places to ensure that it reflected the new presentation of the information.

136. One focal point proposed the inclusion in the budget of the cost of a P-2 or P-3 post for REMPEC. A representative of REMPEC explained that the Contracting Parties took decisions on the

capacities and human resources employed at REMPEC, and that IMO administered the recruitment process following the decisions taken by the Contracting Parties. The Coordinator said that she would inform IMO of the proposed position. Two focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, proposed adding to the programme of work a deliverable to be financed entirely through a voluntary contribution by Italy. The new deliverable – a regional workshop on a possible common approach to restoration programmes – would be included in the biodiversity and ecosystems programme, under the outcome of improving ecosystem resilience through restoration. The Coordinator requested Italy to submit a concrete proposal with a view to ensuring inclusion of the activity in the version of the draft programme of work and budget to be forwarded to the Contracting Parties. A representative of Italy announced that his/her Government would also contribute to the implementation of the programme of work for 2026–2027 through an additional voluntary contribution and would support the regional activity centre hosted by Italy through a dedicated host country contribution.

137. One focal point, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, proposed that a reference to the development of the medium-term strategy for 2028–2033, such as was included in paragraph 20 of the original draft decision, and a commitment by the Contracting Parties to contribute to the process be included in the draft decision on governance.

138. One focal point said that, as the new regional activity centre on climate change was supposed to be financed entirely by the host country, he could not agree to the inclusion of funding for the centre in the budget.

139. The Coordinator replied that it had been agreed that only the operational costs were to be covered by the host country.

140. A focal point speaking on behalf of a group of countries sought further discussion of ways of improving the budget implementation rate, proposing that the document on the 50 years of the Mediterranean Action Plan would be a good basis. The Coordinator explained that the document entitled "The Mediterranean Action Plan at 50: Achievements, Challenges, and Future Directions" had been financed by UNEP and added that it was presented as Information Document to the MAP Focal Points Meeting (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.19), She also noted that the Secretariat was clarifying the procedure and next steps and that the current plan was to present the document for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. Acknowledging the low rate of implementation as at June 2025, she was nevertheless optimistic that the rate would increase to some 90 per cent by the end of the year.

141. Responding to a number of questions, the Coordinator said that the transfer of savings from vacant posts to cover the implementation of activities under the same MAP component would concern only savings made during the biennium under way. She said that the reference to expertise in regional activity centres aimed to keep the right balance between internal and external expertise, with the emphasis placed on building internal expertise as opposed to hiring consultants.

142. She noted that any increase in the assessed contributions for 2026–2027[2] resulted from the application of the scale of assessment agreed on by the General Assembly and not from any proposal by the secretariat to the Contracting Parties for an increase of the assessed contributions.

143. The Coordinator proposed that an online meeting, without interpretation, could be organized for focal points, in late October or early November 2025, to enable further discussion of the programme of work and budget and the provision of additional clarifications, with a view to facilitating the approval process at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties. A number of focal points, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, gladly accepted the offer.

144. Following the discussion, the focal points agreed that the secretariat would introduce the alternative budget table in the draft document of the programme of work and budget, amending the related draft decision accordingly, for consideration by the focal points.

[2] As presented in table 2, "Expected ordinary income", of Annex I of draft decision IG.27/14.

145. Subsequently, the focal points considered a revised version of the draft decision and agreed to forward it, as orally amended, for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-fourth meeting. The draft decision (IG.27/14) is set out in annex V to the present report.

VII. Preparations for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties (agenda item 6)

A. Provisional agenda

146. The Coordinator presented the provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties (UNEP/MED WG.620/18).

147. She informed the focal points that Peter Thomson, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, had agreed to attend the meeting as a keynote speaker.

148. The focal points approved the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties.

B. Ministerial declaration: process and highlights

149. The focal point for Egypt screened a short video featuring the venue for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties, namely the St. Regis Cairo, and the meeting logo. She then spoke briefly about the draft ministerial declaration, explaining that it was based on elements of the Declaration of Mediterranean Ministers of the high-level event held during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Barcelona Convention at the third United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice. Given the increasing pressure on the marine environment from climate change, pollution and resource overuse and the importance of the Convention for maritime governance in the Mediterranean basin, the ministerial declaration should reflect the challenges and offer solutions. The thematic areas proposed by the host country were the blue economy, climate resilience, pollution reduction, the circular economy and sustainable financing. She suggested that an informal group be established to discuss the thematic areas and launch the process of preparing the draft declaration during the intersessional period preceding the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties. Finally, she informed the focal points that Egypt, together with the secretariat, was considering more than 40 applications for side events for the meeting.

150. In the ensuing discussion, several focal points and a number of representatives of observer organizations thanked the representative of Egypt for her presentation and expressed their interest in contributing to the development of the ministerial declaration. All those who spoke singled out the blue economy as a theme of paramount importance for sustainable development in the Mediterranean. Several representatives of observer organizations recalled the broad spectrum of work done on the blue economy in recent years, with individual representatives highlighting elements that they wished to see mentioned in the ministerial declaration, including the recent Blue Economy and Finance Forum held in connection with the third United Nations Ocean Conference, the 2015 and 2021 Ministerial Declarations on Sustainable Blue Economy of the Union for the Mediterranean and the related Roadmap for implementation, and parliamentary engagement on the blue economy and sustainable development.

151. One focal point said that the declaration should take into account international elements such as rights of the sea and maritime law, given the new Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction that would soon come into force. A representative of an observer organization/Mediterranean Action Plan partner stressed the importance of a clear reference to the need for education, awareness-raising, outreach to society and strengthening of environmental information, as well as to the Mediterranean Accession Agenda to the Aarhus Convention and the new water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus approach, which he said needed the support of all countries and all of society.

152. The focal points agreed to establish an informal working group to further develop the ministerial declaration. The Coordinator suggested that a brief informal discussion be held on the matter after the plenary session to allow any other focal points wishing to participate in the working group to indicate their interest in doing so.

153. Later in the meeting, the focal point for Egypt reported on the first meeting of the informal working group.

154. In terms of the themes, everyone had agreed that the blue economy should be the primary theme of the conference and of the declaration. It had also been suggested that, in addition to the blue economy and the circular economy, the declaration should mention the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, as well as pollution reduction, highlighting plastic pollution and the unfinished negotiations on a treaty on plastic pollution. Suggestions also included a specific mention of marine spatial planning and climate resilience, including ocean acidification and sea level rise; highlighting of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and demographic challenges; and inclusion of groups such as women and youth. Finally, several focal points had advised her to use the political declaration of the Third United Nations Ocean Conference as a reference in order to optimize the content of the ministerial declaration and avoid repetition.

155. In terms of process, she planned to provide the secretariat with a zero draft of the declaration by the end of September 2025 for distribution to all Contracting Parties, allowing two weeks for commenting, and then provide a second draft by the end of October or early November for a final round of comments, the aim being to produce the final draft at least one week before the twenty-fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties.

156. A representative of the secretariat reported that the group had initially consisted of Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco and Türkiye, under the leadership of Egypt, and would henceforth also include the European Union and Morocco, while the Chair of MCSD had a mandate from the Commission’s members to participate in the drafting process.

157. The focal points took note of the information provided.

VIII. Any other business (agenda item 7)

158. No other matters were considered.

IX. Adoption of the report of the meeting (agenda item 8)

159. The focal points adopted the draft report set out in document UNEP/MED WG.620/L.1, as orally amended. The secretariat was entrusted with the finalization of the report.

X. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 9)

160. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the meeting closed at 6 p.m. on Friday, 19 September 2025.

Annex I

Agenda

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting

2. Organizational Matters

- 2.1 Rules of Procedure
- 2.2 Election of Officers
- 2.3 Adoption of the Provisional Agenda
- 2.4 Organization of Work

3. Progress Report on Activities Carried Out during the 2024-2025 Biennium

4. Financial Implementation Report for 2022-2023 and 2024-2025

5. Specific Matters for Consideration and Action by the Meeting, including draft Decisions

- 5.1 Compliance and Reporting
- 5.2 MAP Governance, CC/RAC mandate and Partnerships
- 5.3 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
- 5.4 MAP Ecosystem Approach RoadMap and Policy
- 5.5 Climate Change Adaptation Regional Framework
- 5.6 Assessment Reports
- 5.7 Conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity, endangered species and ecosystems
- 5.8 Marine Pollution from Ships
- 5.9 Offshore Action Plan
- 5.10 National Action Plans/Programmes of Measures to combat and prevent marine pollution
- 5.11 Programme of Work and Budget for 2026 - 2027

6. Preparation of the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 24)

- 6.1 Provisional Agenda of COP24
- 6.2 Ministerial Declaration: Process and Highlights

7. Any Other Business

8. Adoption of the Report

9. Closure of the Meeting

Annex II

Provisional Agenda of the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties

Provisional Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting

2. Organizational Matters

2.1. Rules of Procedure

2.2. Election of Officers

2.3. Adoption of the Agenda

2.4. Organization of Work

2.5. Verification of Credentials

3. Thematic Decisions

3.1. Compliance and Reporting

3.2. MAP Governance

3.3. Mandate of the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre: Mandate and Terms of Reference of its Focal Points

3.4. Barcelona Convention Reporting System Format: Update of the LBS Protocol Section

3.5. Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

3.6. Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas 2026-2035

3.7. MAP Ecosystem Approach Policy and RoadMap 2026-2035

3.8. Amendments to the "Common Criteria for proposing amendments to Annexes II and III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean" and Amendment of Annexes II and III of the SPA/BD Protocol

3.9. Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SAPMIs), Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the Post-2020 SAPBIO

3.10. Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the MedECC Special Report interlinking climate change with the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in the Mediterranean Basin (MedECC Special WEFE Report)

3.11. Marine Pollution from Ships

3.12. Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035

3.13. Implementation of National Action Plans/Programmes of Measures in accordance with Articles 5 and 15 of the LBS Protocol and EcAp Policy and COP Decisions on Regional Plans

4. Decision on Programme of Work and Budget for 2026 – 2027

5. Ministerial Session

5.1. Opening of the Session

5.2. Report on Activities carried out in the framework of UNEP/MAP since the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP23)

5.3. Interactive Ministerial Policy Review Session

5.4. Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award 2024-2025

5.5. Cairo Ministerial Declaration

6. Dates and Place of the 25th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP25)

7. Any Other Business

8. Adoption of the Report

9. Closure of the Meeting

Annex III

List of Participants

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES / REPRÉSENTANTS DES PARTIES CONTRACTANTES

ALBANIA / ALBANIE	**Ms. Shpresa Domi** Head of Projects Unit Ministry of Tourism and Environment
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-ET-HERZÉGOVINE	**Ms. Rada Milisav** Head of Department for Water Resources Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations
CYPRUS / CHYPRE	**Ms. Marina Argyrou** Director Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment **Mr. Lavrentios Vasiliades** Fisheries and Marina Research Officer Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment **Mr. Konstantinos Antoniadis** Fisheries and Marine Research Office Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment **Ms. Yianna Samuel** Fisheries and Marine Research Officer Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment **Mr. Chedli Rais** Consultant Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
EGYPT / ÉGYPTE	**Chem. Hala Ibrahem Mohamed Saed** General Director Department of environmental crisis and member of Sustainable Development Unit Ministry of Environmental - (EEAA)
EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPÉENNE	**Ms. Paula Duarte Gaspar** Head of Unit Directorate General Environment European Commission **Mr. Javier Villar Burke** Policy Officer Directorate General Environment European Commission

FRANCE / FRANCE

Mr. David Elkaïm
Chargé de mission Négociations internationales Biodiversité marine Conventions de Barcelone et de Carthagène Direction de l'Action européenne et internationale
Ministère de la transition écologique et solidaire

Ms. Aurélie Gleye
Policy Advisor
Rédactrice - Protection internationale des océans
Sous-direction du climat et de l'environnement
Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères

GREECE / GRÈCE

Mr. Nikolaos Mavrakis
Head of the Department of European and International Environmental Affairs
Directorate of International and European Affairs
Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

Ms. Maria Papaioannou
Expert, Department of European and International Environmental Affairs, Directorate of International and European Affairs, Alternate National Focal Point for the Barcelona Convention
Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

Ms. Aimilia Drouga
National Focal Point
Expert, Department of Protected Areas, Directorate of Natural Environment & Biodiversity Management, Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

Mr. Christos Mathioudakis
Expert, Department of Biodiversity, Directorate of Natural Environment & Biodiversity Management, Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

Ms. Ioanna Tsalakanidou
National Expert, Department of Climate Change, Directorate of Climate Change and Air Quality, Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

Mr. Ioannis Rigas
Expert Minister Counsellor on Environmental and Climate Issues, D4 Directorate for Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Global Issues

Ms. Marianna Pashou
Expert, Legal Department / Public International Law Section, Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Kyriaki-Aikaterini Pisimisi
Expert, Legal Department / Public International Law Section, Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Dimitrios Petrakis
Commander, Marine Environment Protection Directorate, Hellenic Coast Guard Headquarters, Hellenic Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy

Ms. Kalliopi Pagkou
Research Director
Institute of Oceanography
Hellenic Centre for Marine Research

ISRAEL / ISRAËL

Mr. Rani Amir
Senior Deputy Director General of Natural
& Climate Resilience

Mr. Dror Zurel
Marine monitoring and research coordinator
Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection

ITALY / ITALIE

Ms. Silvia Sartori
Head of office on international activities – Unit VII – General Directorate for Biodiversity and Sea Protection
Ministry of Environment and Energy Security

Ms. Cristina Farchi
Technical Officer - Unit VII – General Directorate for Biodiversity and Sea Protection
Ministry of Environment and Energy Security

Ms. Laura Fanciulli
Technical Officer - Unit VII – General Directorate for Biodiversity and Sea Protection - Ministry of Environment and Energy Security)

Ms. Valentina Mauriello
Expert - Sogesid Technical Assistance – Unit VII - General Directorate for Biodiversity and Sea Protection
Ministry of Environment and Energy Security

LEBANON / LIBAN

Mr. Adel Yacoub
Head of Protection of Natural Resources Department
Acting Chief of Natural Resources Service
Ministry of Environment

MALTA / MALTE

Mr. Franck Lauwers
Water & Marine Unit
Environment & Resources Authority

Ms. Angela Bartolo
Senior Officer, Water & Marine Unit
Environment & Resources Authority

MONACO / MONACO

Mr. Tidiani Couma
Secrétaire des Relations Extérieures
Ministère des Relations Extérieures et de la Coopération

MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO	**Ms. Tamara Brajović** Head of Division for Integrated Management of Marine and Terrestrial Ecosystems Directorate for Nature Protection Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region of Montenegro
MOROCCO / MAROC	**Ms. Nassira Rheyati** Head of the International Cooperation Division Cooperation, Partnership and Communication Directorate Sustainable Development Department Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development
SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE	**Mr. Mitja Bricelj** National Focal Point for the Barcelona Convention Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	**Mr. Jorge Ureta Maeso** Head of the International Marine Protection Unit Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge
TUNISIA / TUNISIE	**Ms. Dhekra Gharbi Ep Mezlini** General Director Ministry of Environment
TÜRKIYE / TÜRKIYE	**Mr. Fatih Turan** General Director Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change **Ms. Vildan Bölükbaşi Atay** Head of Department Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change **Mr. Mehmet Tamer Çobanoğlu** Expert Department of Marine and Coastal Management Directorate General of Environmental Management Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

OBSERVERS

Compliance Committee Representatives	**Ms. Daniela Addis** Vice-Chair of the Compliance Committee
MCSD Representatives	**Mr. Mohammed Maktit** President of the MCSD

REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS / REPRESENTANTS DES INSTITUTIONS SPECIALISEES DES NATIONS UNIES ET AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS OF THE BLACK SEA, MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND CONTIGUOUS ATLANTIC AREA (ACCOBAMS) / L'ACCORD SUR LA CONSERVATION DES CÉTACÉS DE LA MER NOIRE, DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE ET DE LA ZONE ATLANTIQUE ADJACENTE (ACCOBAMS)	**Ms. Mailys Salivas** Executive Secretary **Mr. Alessio Maglio** Noise Pollution Expert
OECD / OCDE	**Mr. Achraf Bouali** Head of the OECD Instanbul Centre **Ms. Damla Haciibrahimoglu Dabak** Policy Analyst
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (PAM)	**Mr. Marco Mura** Program Officer
SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UFM) / LE SECRÉTARIAT DE L'UNION POUR LA MEDITERRANÉE (UPM)	**Ms. Alessandra Sensi** Head of Sector Environment, Green and Blue Economy

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES

ANKARA UNIVERSITY NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE SEA AND MARITIME LAW (DEHUKAM)	**Ms. Büşra Deniz** Researcher **Mr. Çağrı Ünal** Researcher
EU WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT - BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE ACTION (WES-BCA)	**Mr. Michail Marios Scoullos** Team Leader WES-BCA
HELLENIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (HELMEPA)	**Mr. Constantinos Triantafillou** Head of Maritime Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement **Mr. Stathis Kostakopoulos** Head of Environmental Affairs & Initiatives
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OIL & GAS PRODUCERS (IOGP)	**Mr. Harvey Johnstone** Director, Environment

MEDITERRANEAN INFORMATION OFFICE FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MIO-ECSDE)	**Ms. Anastasia Roniotes** Head Officer
	Ms. Thomais Vlachogianni Head of Science, Research & Policy
	Mr. Haris Paliogiannis Senior Policy and Programme Officer
MEDASSET- MEDITERRANEAN ASSOCIATION TO SAVE THE SEA TURTLES	**Ms. Konstantina Andreanidou** Programmes and Policy Officer
MEPIELAN CENTRE (MEDITERRANEAN PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND NEGOTIATION)	**Mr. Evangelos Raftopoulos** President
OCEANCARE	**Mr. Carlos Bravo** Ocean Policy Expert
WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE INTERNATIONAL (WWF INTERNATIONAL) / FONDS MONDIAL POUR LA NATURE	**Ms. Mehdi Aissi** Marine Program Manager
	Ms. Carlotta Bianchi Regional Manager, Policy and Advocacy
WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE MEDITERRANEAN (WWF MEDITERRANEAN) / FONDS MONDIAL POUR LA NATURE (MEDITERRANÉE)	**Mr. Giuseppe Di Carlo** Advisor

SPECIAL GUESTS-PANELISTS / INVITES SPECIAUX-PANELISTES

UNEP/MAP GEF MEDPROGRAMME	**Ms. Christine Haffner-Sifakis** Integration expert GEF MedProgramme

THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND COMPONENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN / PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT - SECRETARIAT DE LA CONVENTION DE BARCELONE ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE

UNEP/MAP COORDINATING UNIT / PNUE/PAM UNITÉ DE COORDINATION	**Ms. Tatjana Hema** Coordinator
	Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis Governance Programme Management Officer
	Ms. Kumiko Yatagai Fund/Administrative Officer
	Mr. Mohamad Kayyal Programme Management Officer (MedProgramme)
	Ms. Marie Daher-Corthay Public Information Officer
	Mr. Ihab Tarek Legal Officer
	Ms. Patrizia Busolini Socio-Economic and Sustainable Development Officer
	Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis Quality Status Report (QSR) Programme Management Officer
	Ms. Samar Kilani Programme Management Officer, EcAp MED PLUS project
	Mr. Marc Attallah Assosiate Programme Management Officer
	Ms. Khouloud Athimen UNV – EcAp MED PLUS Project
	Ms. Senem Elcin Berber Gender Specialist
	Dr. Heba Sharawy Liaison Officer with Egypt for COP24
	Mr. Francois Galgani Expert
THE MEDITERRANEAN POLLUTION ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL PROGRAMME (MED POL) / LE PROGRAMME D'EVALUATION ET DE MAITRISE DE LA POLLUTION MARINE EN MEDITERRANEE (MED POL)	**Ms. Olfat Hamdan** Programme Management Officer (MED POL)
	Ms. Jelena Knezevic Monitoring and Assessment Officer
	Mr. Erol Cavus Programme Management Officer (Pollution)

REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRES / CENTRES D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES

INFO/RAC	**Ms. Lorenza Babbini** Director **Mr. Arthur Pasquale** Deputy Director
PLAN BLEU REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (PLAN BLEU/RAC) **PLAN BLEU / CENTRE D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES (PLAN BLEU/RAC)**	**Mr. Robin Degron** Director **Antoine Laffite** Deputy Director Head of Plan Bleu Observatory
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER FOR THE PRIORITY ACTIONS PROGRAMME (PAP/RAC) / CENTRE D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES PROGRAMME D'ACTIONS PRIORITAIRES (CAR/PAP)	**Ms. Daria Povh Skugor** Director **Mr. Marko Prem** Deputy Director **Mr. Yassine Ramzi Sghaier** Programme Officer
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC) / CENTRE RÉGIONAL MEDITERRANÉEN POUR L'INTERVENTION D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)	**Mr. Ivan Sammut** Head of Office
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER FOR SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS (SPA/RAC) / CENTRE D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES POUR LES AIRES SPECIALEMENT PROTÉGÉES (CAR/ASP)	**Mr. Mahmoud Elyes Hamza** Director **Mr. Atef Ouerghi** Programme Officer in charge of Ecosystem Conservation
REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SCP/RAC-MedWaves) / CENTRE D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES POUR LA CONSOMMATION ET LA PRODUCTION DURABLES (CAR/CPD-MedWaves)	**Mr. Jesus Maestro** Director **Mr. Matías Ibáñez Sales** Coordinator of Operations
UNEP/MAP CLIMATE CHANGE REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (CC/RAC)	**Mr. Mustafa Baskara** Director **Ms. Ozlem Orme** Deputy Director

Annex IV

Draft Decisions

[Draft Decision IG.27/1

Compliance and Reporting

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Having regard to the Barcelona Convention, in particular Articles 26 and 27 thereof, about reports and compliance control, respectively, and the relevant articles of its Protocols,

Recalling Decision IG.17/2 of the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 15, Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008) on Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as amended by Decision IG.20/1 of the 17th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 17, Paris, France, 8-10 February 2012), as well as Decision IG.21/1 of the 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 18, Istanbul, Türkiye, 3-6 December 2013) and Decision IG.26/1 of the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 23, Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023),

Emphasizing the Compliance Committee's unique role in facilitating and promoting compliance by the Contracting Parties with the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols,

Reiterating that national reporting is an obligation for all Contracting Parties, and that timely submission of national implementation reports is essential to allow the assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols as well as of the difficulties faced by the Contracting Parties in implementing the Convention, its Protocols and the related legally binding measures,

Recognizing the challenges faced by Contracting Parties in reporting on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and acknowledging the need to provide appropriate legal and technical support to facilitate their reporting process,

Noting with appreciation the efforts made by Contracting Parties to report on their implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols using the online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS),

Expressing its concern due to non-submission by 11 Contracting Parties of their 2022-2023 biennial reports as of 5 July 2025, and to the late submission by other Contracting Parties,

Having considered the reports of the 20th and 21st meetings of the Compliance Committee and its Activity Report for the biennium 2024-2025,

1. *Adopt* the revised Rules of Procedure of the Compliance Committee, set out in Annex I to this Decision, aiming at effectively supporting the delivery of the Compliance Committee mandate;

2. *[Adopt]* the Activity Report of the Compliance Committee for the Biennium 2024-2025,

including its findings and recommendations, set out in Annex II to this Decision;

3. *Adopt* the Programme of Work of the Compliance Committee for the Biennium 2026-2027, set out in Annex III to the present Decision;

4. *Appreciate* the achievements identified in the 2022-2023 Implementation Assessment Report as set out in Annex IV to the present Decision, and *endorse* the overall findings on the progress in implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols noting the specific difficulties encountered by the Contracting Parties during the submission process;

5. *Urge* those Contracting Parties that have not yet submitted their national implementation reports for the 2018-2019, 2020-2021 and the 2022-2023 biennia to do so, as soon as possible, and to this end, *ask* them to provide on an exceptional basis a combined report that may include the measures taken in the last three biennia in one single report of the last reporting biennial cycle;

6. *Invite* the Contracting Parties to promptly submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2024-2025 using the online Barcelona Convention Reporting System, at the latest by December 2026;

7. *Elect* the candidates nominated by the Contracting Parties listed in Annex V to the present Decision as members and alternate members of the Compliance Committee respectively;

8. *Appreciate* the actions taken by the Government of Spain to implement the findings and recommendations by the Compliance Committee for the case of Mar Menor;

9. *Acknowledge* with thanks the significant contributions of the following Compliance Committee members and alternate members, whose terms have concluded: Mr. Ezzedine Jouini-Berzine, Ms. Nancy Khoury, Mr. Marko Starman, Ms. Selma Osmanagic-Klico, Mr. José Juste Ruiz and Ms. Aysin Turpanci;

10. *Express appreciation to* the Compliance Committee for the work carried out in supporting and facilitating the Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.
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Annex I

Revised Rules of Procedure of the Compliance Committee

Revised Rules of Procedure of the Compliance Committee
(following the adoption of Decision IG.26/1)

Purposes

Rule 1
Within the framework of the implementation of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, hereinafter called "compliance procedures and mechanisms", contained in the annex to decision IG.17/2 on compliance procedures and mechanisms, hereinafter called decision IG.17/2, as adopted by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, as amended by the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties and set out in the annex to decision IG.26/1, these rules of procedure shall apply to any meeting of the Compliance Committee, hereinafter called "the Committee", under the Convention and its related Protocols.

Rule 2
The Rules of Procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols shall apply mutatis mutandis to any meeting of the Committee unless otherwise stipulated in the rules set out herein and in decision IG 17/2, and provided that rules 18 and 19 on representation and credentials of the Rules of Procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties do not apply.

Definitions

Rule 3
For the purposes of these rules:
1. "Convention and its related Protocols" means the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) adopted in 1976 and amended in 1995 and its related Protocols: Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency (Emergency Protocol), Barcelona, 1976; Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol), Malta, 2002; Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (Dumping Protocol), Barcelona, 1976; amendments to the Dumping Protocol, recorded as Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea, Barcelona, 1995; Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land- Based Sources (LBS Protocol), Athens, 1980; amendments to the LBS Protocol, recorded as Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities, Syracuse, 1996; Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPA Protocol), Geneva, 1982; Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA and Biodiversity Protocol), Barcelona, 1995; Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol), Madrid, 1994; Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Hazardous Wastes Protocol), Izmir, 1996; Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol), Madrid, 2008.

2. "Compliance procedures and mechanisms" means the procedures and mechanisms on compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols adopted by the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties and set out in the annex to decision IG.17/2, as amended by the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties and set out in the annex to decision IG.26/1.

3. “Contracting Parties” means Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols, including the amended versions, if any, for which the Convention and the related Protocols and their respective amendments are in force.
4. “Party concerned” means a Party in respect of which a question of compliance is raised as set out in section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.

5. “Committee” means the Compliance Committee established by section II, paragraph 4, of the compliance procedures and mechanisms and by decision IG 17/2 of the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

6. “Member” means a member of the Committee elected under section II, paragraph 5, of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.

7. “Alternate member” means an alternate member of the Committee elected under section II, paragraph 5, of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.

8. “Chairperson” means the Chairperson of the Committee elected in accordance with rule 7 of the present rules of procedure, recalling section II paragraph 12 of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance.

9. “Vice-Chairpersons” means the Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee elected in accordance with rule 7 of the present rules of procedure, recalling section II paragraph 12 of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance.

10. “Secretariat” means the Coordinating Unit that is designated by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as responsible for the administration of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), referred to in paragraph 42 of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.

11. “Representative” means a person designated by the Party concerned to represent it during the consideration of a question of non- compliance.

12. “The public” means one or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organizations or groups.

13. “Bureau” means the Bureau of the Contracting Parties referred to in article 19 of the Convention.

14. “Observers” means the organizations referred to in article 20 of the Convention and those included in the list of MAP partners as approved by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties and members of the civil society which have been granted the status of observers by the Compliance Committee on a case-by-case basis as per the compliance procedures and mechanisms.

Membership of the Committee

Rule 4
1. Each member of the Committee is elected and shall serve in her or his individual capacity and shall act objectively in the interest of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal area avoiding any conflicts of interest. A Committee member is not entitled to designate a substitute.

2. The term of office of a member shall commence at the end of an ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties immediately following her or his election and run until the end of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties four years thereafter, as applicable.

3. Every member serving the Committee shall, before taking up her or his duties, make a solemn declaration in a meeting of the Committee that she or he will perform her or his functions objectively as provided in Rule 12 of the present rules of procedure.

4. When a member of the Committee resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office, the Committee shall immediately request the Secretariat to start the replacement procedures. Therefore, the Bureau shall appoint a new member from the list of candidates nominated by the Contracting Parties or, subsidiary, shall request the Party which nominated that member to nominate a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term.

5. When a member is absent for two consecutive meetings without providing any reasonable grounds, the term of office of the member concerned expires and new election proceeds, according to the provisions of Rule 4 of the present rules of procedure.

Place, dates and notice of meetings

Rule 5

1. The Committee shall normally meet twice per biennium preferably once a year. It may recommend the Secretariat to hold additional meetings subject to workload requirements arising from submissions by concerned Contracting Parties, referrals by the Secretariat and referrals by the Committee on its own initiative, subject to availability of funds.

2. Unless it decides otherwise, the Committee shall meet at the seat of the Secretariat. Any additional costs that may rise by changing of the place of the meeting shall be met by the host country.

3. At each meeting, the Committee shall decide in consultation with the Secretariat on the place, dates and duration of its next meeting.

Rule 6

Notice of Committee meetings shall be sent by the Secretariat to the members and alternate members and any representative, as the case may be, with a copy to the MAP Focal Points of all Contracting Parties, at least three months before the opening of the meeting.

Officers

Rule 7

The Committee shall elect a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons for a term of two years.
No officers shall serve for more than two consecutive terms.

Rule 8

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere in these rules, the Chairperson shall: (a) Preside over the meeting;

(b) Declare the opening and closure of the meeting;

(c) Ensure the observance of these rules;

(d) Accord the right to speak;

(e) Put questions to the vote and announce decisions;

(f) Rule on any points of order;

(g) Subject to these rules, have complete control over the proceedings and maintain order.

2. The Chairperson may also propose: (a) The closure of the list of speakers;
(b) A limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of interventions on an issue;
(c) The adjournment or closure of debate on an issue;
(d) The suspension or adjournment of the meeting.

Agenda

Rule 9
1. In agreement with the Chairperson, the Secretariat shall draft the provisional agenda for each meeting of the Committee. The agenda of the Committee shall include items arising from its functions as specified in section IV of the compliance procedures and mechanisms and other matters related thereto.

2. The Committee, when adopting its agenda, may decide to add urgent and important items and to delete, defer or amend items.

Rule 10
The provisional agenda and the annotated agenda for each meeting, the draft report of the previous meeting and other working and supporting documents shall be circulated by the Secretariat to members and alternate members at least six weeks before the opening of the Committee's meeting.

Conflict of Interest

Rule 11
1. Each member of the Committee shall, with respect to any matter that is under consideration by the Committee, avoid direct or indirect conflicts of interest. Any matter that may constitute a conflict of interest shall be brought as soon as possible to the attention of the Secretariat, which shall forthwith notify the members of the Committee. The concerned member shall not participate in the elaboration and adoption of findings, measures and recommendations of the Committee in relation to such a matter.

2. If the Committee considers that a material violation of the requirements of objectivity expected of a member or alternate member of the Committee has occurred, it may decide to recommend, through the Secretariat to the Bureau of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties, to revoke the membership of any member or alternate member concerned, after having given the member or alternate member the opportunity to be heard.

3. All decisions of the Committee taken under this rule shall be noted in the annual report of the Committee to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Oath/Solemn Declaration

Rule 12
Each member and alternate member of the Committee shall take the following written oath:
"I solemnly declare that I shall perform my duties as a member of the Committee objectively, and act in the interest of the Barcelona Convention avoiding any conflict of interest, I shall not disclose any confidential information coming to my knowledge by reason of my duties in the Committee, and I shall disclose to the Committee any personal interest in any matter submitted to the Committee for consideration which may constitute a conflict of interest."

Distribution and consideration of information

Rule 13
1. The information received in accordance with paragraphs 21-22 section V on "Procedure" of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance shall be distributed by the Secretariat to the members and alternate members of the Committee.

2. Any submission received in accordance with paragraph 21(a) of section V "Procedure" of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance shall be transmitted by the Secretariat to the members of the Committee and their alternates as soon as possible but no later than thirty days of receipt of the submission.

3. A submission received in accordance with paragraphs 21(b) and 27 of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance and any issues raised by the Secretariat as provided for in paragraph 26 of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance shall be transmitted by the Secretariat to the members

of the Committee and their alternates as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the six-month time frames provided for in the above-mentioned paragraphs have expired.

4. Any information to be considered by the Committee shall, as soon as possible but no later than two weeks after receipt, be made available to the Party concerned.

Public access to documents and information

Rule 14

The provisional agenda reports of meetings and any official documents subject to rule 13 above and paragraph 34 of section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms, and any other non-confidential information documents shall be made available to the public.

Participation in proceedings of the Committee

Rule 15

1. Unless the Committee or the Party whose compliance is in question decides otherwise, the meetings of the Committee will be open to other Contracting Parties and to observers.

2. Observers shall be entitled to receive copies of publicly distributed documents, submit written comments and make oral statements at meetings. The Committee reserves the right to give the floor to the attending public, upon request, if it deems it useful.

3. In accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 21, 31 and 33 of the compliance procedures and mechanisms, the Party concerned is entitled to participate in the Committee's proceedings and make comments thereon. It may furthermore, in accordance with the criteria adopted by the Committee and at the request of the latter, take part in the preparation of its findings, measures and recommendations. The Party concerned shall be given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings, measures and recommendations of the Committee. Any such comments shall be forwarded with the report of the Committee to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

4. The Committee may invite experts to provide expert advice through the Secretariat. In that case it shall:

(a) Define the question on which expert opinion is sought;

(b) Identify the expert(s) to be consulted, on the basis of a roster of experts prepared and regularly updated by the Secretariat;

(c) Lay down the procedures to be followed.

5. Experts may also be invited by the Committee to be present during the formulation of its findings, measures or recommendations.

6. Secretariat officials may be also invited by the Committee to attend the Committee’s deliberations in order to assist in the drafting of its findings, measures or recommendations.

Conduct of business

Rule 16

Seven members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. For the purpose of the quorum, the replacement of members by alternates shall take into consideration equitable geographical representation, consistently with the composition of the Committee as set out in the third paragraph of decision IG 17/2 as amended by decision IG.26/1.

Rule 17

1. With respect to a notification or document sent by the Secretariat to a Contracting Party, the date of receipt shall be deemed to be the date indicated in a written confirmation from the Party or the date indicated in a written confirmation of receipt by the expedited delivery courier, whichever comes first.

2. With respect to a submission, request or other document intended for the Committee, the date of receipt by the Committee shall be deemed to be the first business day after receipt by the Secretariat.

Rule 18
1. Electronic means of communication may be used by the members of the Committee for the purpose of conducting informal consultations on issues under consideration and decision-making on matters of procedure. Electronic means of communication shall not be used for making decisions on matters of substance related in particular to the preparation of findings, measures and recommendations by the Committee.

2. The Committee may use electronic means of communication for the transmission, dissemination and storage of documentation, without prejudice to normal means of circulation of the documentation, as the case may be.

Voting

Rule 19
Each member of the Committee shall have one vote.

Rule 20
1. The Committee shall make every effort to reach agreement by consensus on its findings, measures and recommendations. If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted, the Committee shall as a last resort adopt its findings, measures and recommendations by at least six members present and voting.

2. For the purpose of these rules, “members present and voting” means members present at the session at which voting takes place and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting shall be considered as not voting.

Secretariat

Rule 21
1. The Secretariat shall make all necessary arrangements for meetings of the Committee and provide it with services as required.

2. In addition, and subject to availability of technical and financial means, the Secretariat shall perform any other function assigned to it by the Committee with respect to the work of the Committee.

Languages

Rule 22
English and French shall be the working languages of the Committee. However, the Committee will accept communications or submissions, as well as corroborating information in any of the four official languages of the meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties.

Rule 23
1. The submissions from the Party concerned, the response and the information referred to in section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms shall be provided in one of the four official languages of the Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols. The Secretariat shall make arrangements to translate them into English and/or French if they are submitted in the other official languages of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols.

2. Any representative taking part in the Committee proceedings and/or meetings may speak in a language other than the working languages of the Committee if the Party provides for interpretation.

3. Final findings, measures and recommendations shall be made available in all official languages of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols.

General procedures for submissions

Rule 24
The time frame for submissions is as follows:
1. For cases concerning a submission by a Contracting Party in respect of its own actual or potential situation of non-compliance: at the latest six (6) weeks before the opening of the ordinary meeting of the Committee.

2. For cases concerning a submission by a Contracting Party in respect of another Party's situation of non-compliance: at the latest four (4) months before the opening of the ordinary meeting of the Committee allowing the Contracting Party whose compliance is in question at least three months to consider and prepare its response.

3. The time frames for cases concerning a submission by a Contracting Party in respect of another Contracting Party's situation of non-compliance also apply to issues raised by the Secretariat.

4. All the above time frames are indicative and may be extended according to the necessities warranted by the circumstances of the matter at hand and in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure and due process. In this respect, Contracting Parties may submit additional documentation, comments and written observations to be considered by the Committee.

Rule 25
1. A submission by any Contracting Party raising a question of non-compliance with respect to itself shall set out: (a) The name of the Contracting Party making the submission;

(b) A statement identifying the question of non-compliance, supported by substantiating information setting out the matter of concern relating to the question of non-compliance;

(c) Its legal basis and the relevant provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols and decision IG. 17/2 and as subsequently amended that form the basis for raising the question of non-compliance;

(d) Any provisions of the decisions of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties and the reports of the Secretariat that are applicable to the question of non-compliance.

2. The submission shall also include the list of all documents annexed to the submission.

Rule 26
1. A submission by any Contracting Party raising a question of non-compliance with respect to another Party shall set out:

(a) The name of the Contracting Party making the submission;
(b) A statement identifying the question of non-compliance, supported by substantiating information setting out the matter of concern relating to the question of non- compliance;
(c) The name of the Party concerned;
(d) Its legal basis and the relevant provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols and decision IG. 17/2 and as subsequently amended that form the basis for raising the question of non-compliance;
(e) Any provisions of the decisions of the meetings of the Contracting Parties and the reports of the Secretariat that are applicable to the question of non-compliance.

2. The submission should also include the list of all documents annexed to the submission.

Rule 27
The Secretariat shall make the submission and any supporting information, submitted under rule 14 above, including any expertise reports, available to the representative designated by the concerned Party.

Rule 28
Within the framework of general procedures for submissions as provided for under rule 25 above, comments and written observations by the Party concerned in accordance with the provisions of section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms on the Committee's preliminary and final findings, measures and recommendations shall include:
(a) A statement of the position of the Party concerned on the information, findings, measures and recommendations or question of non-compliance under consideration;
(b) An identification of any information provided by the Party that it requests should not be made available to the public in accordance with paragraph 34 of section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms;
(c) A list of all documents annexed to the submission or comment.

Rule 29
1. Any submission, comment and/or written observations under rules 13 and 28 above shall be signed by the MAP Focal Point or the representative of the Contracting Party and be delivered to the Secretariat in hard copy and by electronic means of communication.

2. Any relevant documents in support of the submission, comment or written observations shall be annexed to it.

Rule 30
1. Findings, measures or recommendations shall contain, mutatis mutandis:

(a) The name of the Party concerned;
(b) A statement identifying the question of non-compliance addressed;
(c) The legal basis and the relevant provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols and decision IG. 17/2 as subsequently amended and other relevant decisions of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties that form the basis of the preliminary findings, measures and recommendations and their final versions;
(d) A description of the information considered in the deliberations and confirmation that gives the Party concerned an opportunity to comment in writing on all information considered;
(e) A summary of the proceedings, including an indication of whether its preliminary finding or any part of it as specified is confirmed;
(f) The substantive decision on the question of non-compliance, including the consequences applied, if any;
(g) The background, conclusions and reasons for the findings, measures and recommendations;
(h) The place and date of the findings, measures and recommendations;
(i) The names of the members who participated in the consideration of the question of non-compliance and in the elaboration and adoption of the findings, measures and recommendations.

2. Written comments on the findings, measures and recommendations submitted within 45 days of their receipt by the Party concerned shall be circulated by the Secretariat to the members and alternate members of Committee and shall be included in the Committee's biennial report to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Admissibility and Communication procedures

Rule 31

A. Admissibility criteria under paragraph "V. Procedure" of the procedures and mechanisms

1. Communications addressed to the Committee under paragraph V. Procedure of the procedures and mechanisms shall be in writing or in electronic form through the Secretariat. The communications shall be supported by substantiating documentation.

2. When determining admissibility, the Compliance Committee shall consider whether the communication is:
(a) anonymous;
(b) de minimis;
(c) manifestly ill founded;
(d) incompatible with the provisions of this compliance procedure or with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

3. The Committee should, at all relevant stages, take into account any available domestic remedy unless the application of the remedy is unreasonable prolonged or obviously does not provide an effective and sufficient means of redress.

4. With respect to communications by any member of the public and observers submitted to the Compliance Committee, the following procedures shall apply.

B. Handling and circulation of Communications

1. Communications shall be in writing or in electronic form through the Secretariat and as concise and concrete as possible. It is preferable that the communication shall not be more than twelve pages in total. Visual means are also welcomed.

2. The minimum requirements to be included in any such communication are:
(a) Name and contact details of the communicant, whether this is a natural or legal person, it will however respect any request of confidentiality by the communicant;
(b) Clear identification of the Party or Parties concerned;
(c) One to two-page summary with the main facts of the case;
(d) A document presenting the facts of the alleged non-compliance, and clearly stating how the facts presented constitute a case of non-compliance with the Barcelona Convention and/or its Protocols;
(e) Indication of whether steps have been taken to use the remedies available at the national and/or international level.

3. Communications shall be addressed to the Compliance Committee through the Secretariat. Upon receipt of a communication the Secretariat shall register it, send an acknowledgement of the receipt, and transmit the communication to the Party concerned and to the Compliance Committee within two weeks from the receipt clarifying that, at the present stage, it has not been deemed admissible by the Compliance Committee. Communications forwarded by the Secretariat will be considered by the Committee at its next meeting for the Committee to take a decision whether to enter into their preliminary admissibility.

C. Preliminary Determination of Admissibility

1. Upon circulation of a communication, the Compliance Committee shall consider the preliminary admissibility of communications addressed to it. To that end the Chair of the Compliance Committee in consultation with the Members of the Compliance Committee shall appoint from among its

members a Rapporteur for each communication. The Rapporteur shall not be a national of the Party concerned.

2. If translation of substantiating material is required, the Committee shall decide on the extent to which more material, other than that which is already available in English, should be translated, taking into account both the costs of translation and the delay involved. The Committee may also request the communicant to provide an English translation of certain materials.

3. If the Compliance Committee determines that the communication is inadmissible, it shall inform the Party concerned and the communicant accordingly, through the Secretariat, and close the file. Such determination shall be final.

4. If the Compliance Committee determines that the communication is admissible on a preliminary basis, it opens a file, and shall notify the Party concerned and the communicant accordingly, through the Secretariat. The Committee should in principle consider preliminary determination of a communication not later than at its second meeting following the receipt of the communication.

5. The Compliance Committee may, after making a positive decision on admissibility, present the questions raised with the Party concerned, if any, when forwarding the communication. Such questions will be transmitted to the Party concerned by letter from the Secretariat, together with the confirmation of preliminary admissibility.

6. The Compliance Committee may also address any questions to the communicant it might find necessary to clarify the facts of the communication. Such questions will be transmitted to the communicant by letter from the Secretariat, together with the confirmation of preliminary admissibility.

7. The Party concerned should, as soon as possible but no later than two months from the date of the Secretariat's letter, submit written explanations or statements on the matter.

8. When forwarding a communication to the Party concerned on behalf of the Committee, the Secretariat will prepare a cover letter with: (a) a request to the Party concerned to acknowledge receipt of the communication; (b) a reminder of its obligation under paragraph 12 of the Barcelona Convention to submit as soon as possible, but not later than two months after the communication has been brought to its attention, written explanations or statements clarifying the matter and describing any response that it may have made; (c) a reference to the determination of preliminary admissibility with the request to inform the Committee as soon as possible if it intends to comment on admissibility issues; (d) specific points of discussion and questions to be addressed in the response, as identified by the Committee.

9. If the Party concerned consents to the admissibility of the communication, the Compliance Committee will consider this, and the communicant will be given an opportunity to comment and/or provide additional information.

10. If the Compliance Committee confirms the admissibility of the communication, it will proceed to the examination of the substance of it. Otherwise, the Compliance Committee will reverse its preliminary decision. The non-admissibility of the communication by the Committee is final. The Compliance Committee will inform the Party concerned and the communicant through the Secretariat.

11. The Compliance Committee should start the formal discussion on all particular communications at the first meeting that takes place following either the receipt of a response to the communication from the Party concerned or if no response has been received within the deadline of two months.

12. When the Compliance Committee discusses the substance of any communication at a particular meeting, the Secretariat will notify the Party concerned and the communicant that the communication

will be discussed following mutatis mutandis the procedures established in paragraphs 28 to 34 of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance.

Amendments to the rules of procedure

Rule 32

Any amendment to these rules of procedure is adopted by consensus by the Committee and submitted for consideration and adoption by the Bureau, subject to endorsement by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Overriding authority of the Convention and its related protocols and decision IG. 17/2 as subsequently amended

Rule 33

In the event of a conflict between any provision in these rules and any provision in the Convention and its related Protocols or decision IG.17/2 as subsequently amended, the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols, shall prevail.

[Annex II

Activity Report of the Compliance Committee for the Biennium 2024-2025

Section 1: Introduction

1. This section will summarize the outcome of the Meetings of the Compliance Committee during the biennium 2024-2025.

2. The Compliance Committee met two times during the biennium 2024-2025. The 20th Meeting of the Compliance Committee was held on 19-20 June 2024 in Athens, Greece and the 21st Meeting of the Compliance Committee was held on 4-5 June 2025 in Athens, Greece.

3. At its 20th Meeting, the Compliance Committee went through its Programme of Work for the biennium 2024-2025 adopted by the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 23) held in (Portorož, Slovenia, 4-8 December 2023).

4. The key outcomes of the work of the Compliance Committee are presented in this report in accordance with paragraph 35 of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance based on the conclusions and recommendations of the meetings. Further information is provided in the full reports of the 20th and 21st Meetings of the Compliance Committee.

Section 2: Specific Submissions under Section V of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

Communication to the Compliance Committee under paragraph 26 of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance

5. This section will summarize the discussions held at the 20th and the 21st meetings of the Compliance Committee regarding the communication submitted to the Committee under section V. Procedure of its Procedures and Mechanisms, and the conclusions reached based on the discussions. The following items will be included in this section:

(a) The 20th meeting of the Compliance Committee (19-20 June 2024). A summary of the discussions and recommendations regarding the Committee's need for further progress report and information from the Party concerned regarding the Mar Menor case, as well as the designation of rapporteurs from among the Committee members to follow up on the case and prepare the necessary report, as well as the discussions held at the meeting and the recommendations regarding the confirmation of the admissibility of the communication in the new case of non-compliance, as well as the appointment of rapporteurs from among the Committee members to follow up on the new case of possible non-compliance and prepare the necessary report, will be presented. This summarized the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting, as contained in document UNEP/MED CC.20/8, paragraphs 22 and 29.

(b) At its 21st meeting on June 4-5, 2025, the Compliance Committee received a report from rapporteurs detailing discussions and next steps for the Mar Menor and a new potential non-compliance case. The report also summarized the meeting's discussions on the substantive and procedural aspects of compliance procedures (paragraphs 21-26).

(c) No other submissions were received under Section V of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols neither at the 20th nor the 21st Compliance Committee meetings.

Section 3: General Issues of Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

Status of submission and criteria for the assessment of the 2022-2023 national implementation reports under Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention

6. This section summarizes the discussions from the 20th and 21st Compliance Committee meetings. These meetings focused on evaluating 2022-2023 national implementation reports submitted by Contracting Parties as of March 7, 2025. The evaluation specifically assessed compliance with submission criteria, timelines, completeness, and implementation. The conclusions and recommendations from both meetings are presented, as detailed in documents UNEP/MED CC.20/8 and UNEP/MED CC.21/11.

Section 4: Functioning of the Compliance Committee

Election of the officers of the Compliance Committee for the biennium 2024-2025

7. This section will summarize the discussions held at the 20th Meeting of the Compliance Committee (19-20 June 2024) which led the Compliance Committee to elect for the biennium 2024-2025 the following officers: Ms. Aysin TURPANCI (Group III) as Chairperson of the Compliance Committee; Mr. Ezzedine JOUINI-BERZINE (Group I) as Vice-Chairperson of the Compliance Committee; and Ms. Daniela ADDIS (Group II) as Vice-Chairperson of the Compliance Committee.

Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance and Rules of Procedure of the Compliance Committee

8. This section summarizes the discussions from the 20th and 21st Compliance Committee meetings regarding its effective functioning, focusing on the following elements:

(a) 20th Meeting of the Compliance Committee (19-20 June 2024). The discussions held at the meeting on the agreement of the Committee on a clean text of the revised Rules of Procedure on Compliance that were prepared in order to align them with the revised Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols adopted at COP 23 through Decision IG.26/1.

(b) 21st Meeting of the Compliance Committee (4-5 June 2025). The summary of discussions, conclusions, and recommendations will be presented to the COP24, in view of the adoption of the Compliance Committee's Rules of Procedure.

Section 5: Cooperation with other Compliance Procedures and Mechanisms of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

9. This section outlines efforts to enhance cooperation with compliance mechanisms under other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). This includes the Coordinating Unit's participation in the Rabat workshop (December 16-19, 2024) on the BBNJ Agreement for Atlantic and Mediterranean African States. Additionally, MAP has worked with the Espoo Convention Secretariat on possible participation in each other's Compliance Committee meetings, while the two Secretariats co-organized the 2nd Sub-regional Meeting on Environmental Assessments in a Transboundary Context in the Mediterranean Sea (Portorož, Slovenia, 28 - 30 May 2025) which also addressed legal issues. Furthermore, technical legal support has been provided to the Cartagena Convention Secretariat regarding the potential establishment of its Compliance Committee.]

Annex III

Programme of Work of the Compliance Committee for the biennium 2026-2027

Programme of Work of the Compliance Committee for the biennium 2026-2027		
Activity	**Lead/Who**	**Timetable/When**
Specific submissions under Section V of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocol		
1. To consider any submissions and/or referrals in accordance with Section V of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance	Compliance Committee	22nd and 23rd Compliance Committee Meetings
General issues of compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols		
2. To consider specific situations of actual or potential non-compliance by individual Parties in accordance with Section IV of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance	Compliance Committee	22nd and 23rd Compliance Committee Meetings
3. At the request of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties, to consider general compliance issues in accordance with Section IV of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance	Compliance Committee	22nd and 23rd Compliance Committee Meetings
4. To consider any other issues as requested by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties in accordance with Section IV of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance	Compliance Committee	22nd and 23rd Compliance Committee Meetings
Enhanced effectiveness of the compliance mechanism		
5. To facilitate assistance, in coordination with MAP components, to address non-compliance situations	Coordinating Unit, MAP Components, Compliance Committee	22nd and 23rd Compliance Committee Meetings
6. To support the process of upgrading the reporting format of the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), as necessary	Coordinating Unit, MAP Components, Compliance Committee	22nd and 23rd Compliance Committee Meetings
7. To continue to build and strengthen synergies, with other Compliance Committee's Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including holding joint sessions	Compliance Committee	22nd and 23rd Compliance Committee Meetings

Annex IV

Assessment Report of the 2022-2023 National Implementation Reports

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1976 Barcelona Convention on the 2022-2023 biennium: 22
- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1995 Barcelona Convention on the 2022-2023 biennium: 22
- Number of reporting Contracting Parties for the 2022-2023 biennium: 11

Main overall findings

- The precautionary principle and the polluter pay principle have been incorporated into domestic legislation in all reporting Contracting Parties. This has been achieved through core legal instruments for environmental protection as well as sectoral legislation regulating specific issues of environmental protection.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and/or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) laws and associated regulations are in place in all reporting Contracting Parties for activities or projects which are likely to cause a significant adverse impact on the marine environment.
- All reporting Contracting Parties indicated having put in place the legal and regulatory framework for the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP), which has mainly translated into the adoption of industrial sectoral regulations.
- National IMAP-based monitoring programmes for the Mediterranean Sea and coast have been established in all reporting Contracting Parties. In establishing such programmes, through general and/or sector-oriented acts, reporting Contracting Parties refer to national capacities to comply with the methodologies and guidelines related to the pollution and marine litter cluster of IMAP, prepared under the coordination of MED POL to harmonize national monitoring and assessment efforts across the Mediterranean. IMAP implementation to achieve the Good Environmental Status (GES) has been ongoing in synergy and coordination with the relevant European Union (EU) Directives, including the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).
- Public access to environmental information is ensured in all reporting Contracting Parties through a variety of legal instruments raging from laws on free access to information, to environmental framework laws or codes, to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) laws. This adds to the legislation transposing the Aarhus Convention, on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and relevant EU Directives, such as the Directive on Open Data and the Re-use of Public Sector Information (2019/1024/EU).

- Public participation and consultation in environmental legislation decision-making processes is ensured in all reporting Contracting Parties. This has been achieved through general laws protecting the environment, public participation and access to information laws, and/or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) laws: In many reporting Contracting Parties public participation and consultation has been in practice through for instance the establishment of public consultative mechanisms in the framework of the implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol.
- Cooperation mechanisms of notification, exchange of information and consultation among the concerned states in cases of transboundary EIA are in place in nearly all reporting Contracting Parties. This has been mainly taken forward within the framework of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) laws and regulations, in addition to the action taken under the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo EIA Convention).
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) principles have been integrated into domestic legal and policy frameworks in all reporting Contracting Parties through a variety of instruments encompassing, laws ratifying the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol and national strategies and plans on marine and coastal management, as well as on marine spatial planning; and laws on the development, protection and conservation of the coast, including laws on protected areas, such as Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs).
- The promotion of the research on, access to and transfer of environmental sound technology, including clean production technologies needs to be further reinforced, as only half reporting Contracting Parties have indicated action in this field, which mainly focus on preparedness and response to accidental pollution through cooperation agreements, climate change adaptation, or R&D Projects for the promotion of blue growth.
- Most reporting Contracting Parties have answered affirmatively to the question on the implementation of the Guidelines for the Determination of Liability and Compensation for Damage resulting from Pollution of the Marine Environment in the Mediterranean Sea Area.
- Difficulties most frequent reported in implementing the Barcelona Convention are limited financial resources, administrative management and technical guidance capabilities.

Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea

(Dumping Protocol)

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1976 Dumping Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 21
- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1995 Dumping Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 15
- Number of reporting Contracting Parties on the 2022-2023 biennium: 9

Main overall findings

- In most reporting Contracting Parties, the prohibition of dumping of wastes or other matter with the exception of those listed in Article 4.2 of the Dumping Protocol, as well as the establishment of the required permitting system has been mainly articulated through their laws ratifying the Dumping Protocol, in addition to their domestic laws and regulations protecting the environment, managing wastes, marine protected areas or aquaculture activities, regulating ports and/or maritime codes. This adds to the laws ratifying the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (London Convention) and its 1996 Protocol.
- It appears that there is a need to enhance the institutional structure to implement the Dumping Protocol, as only half of reporting Contracting Parties have responded positively to the question whether they have designated a competent national authority responsible for keeping records of the nature, quantities of the waste or other matter, dumping location and method.
- In most reporting Contracting Parties incineration is prohibited as per the Dumping Protocol.
- It seems that critical and force majeure dumping at sea as per the conditions set out in the Dumping Protocol are areas where further action is needed, as only a limited number of reporting Contracting Party has responded positively to the questions whether critical and force majeure dumping is conducted as required by the Dumping Protocol.
- Difficulties most frequent reported in implementing the Dumping Protocol are the regulatory and policy framework, technical guidance capabilities and limited financial resources.

Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea

(Prevention and Emergency Protocol)

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1976 Emergency Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 21
- Number of Contracting Parties to the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol on 2022-2023 biennium: 17
- Number of reporting Contracting Parties on the 2022-2023 biennium: 9

Main overall findings

- Contingency plans and other means of preventing and combating oil and hazardous Noxious substances (HNS) have been adopted in all reporting Contracting Parties. Contingency plans range from national, to regional to local. The majority of the Contingency plans cover oil and HNS spill response. The national level of response equipment varies from country to country[1], and at regional level a key actor is the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) with its Network of Stand-by-Oil Spill Response Vessels. Regular training of both national operating level personnel and supervisory level personnel has been conducted mainly through national oil spill exercises. Training has taken place mainly at national level, and at subregional level, within the framework of the subregional contingency plans although international training has been also conducted under the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)[2]; the European Union (EU) Civil Protection Mechanism and EMSA;

- Monitoring and surveillance programmes to detect accidental or operational pollution are in place in most reporting Contracting Parties. This includes the aerial and satellite surveillance under the EMSA detection service CleanSeaNet, as well as at national level the surveillance carried out by the Coast Guard. In addition, maritime traffic control systems are also used;

- Reporting procedures to ensure that those required (e.g. ships, aircrafts, offshore installations, and Port Facility Authorities) report on actual or potential oil and hazardous Noxious substances (HNS) pollution incidents to the designated national authority or authorities. Reporting to the nearest Coastal State are made by the designated national authority or authorities in all Contracting Parties. This has been mainly achieved through relevant domestic legislation (e.g. maritime codes) and national contingency plans' requirements;

- Communication to REMPEC and those Contracting Parties likely to be affected of information on actual or potential oil and hazardous Noxious substances (HNS) pollution incidents is carried out by most reporting Contracting Parties. This has been mainly articulated through the national contingency plans or the POLREP system. On the POLREP system, there is room for further encourage its use, as part of the Mediterranean Emergency Communication Procedure. To address the low level of pollution reports by Contracting Parties, the establishment of a Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean, which is under review during the current reporting period, will be further addressed in the next biennium, however Contracting Parties should be further encouraged to meet their reporting obligations;

[1] REMPEC developed a Template for the development of Manuals on national mechanisms for the mobilization of response equipment and experts, in case of emergency. The developed Manuals gather information and procedures for the mobilization of response equipment and experts either individually or through cooperation frameworks. The information collected is also used to update the Country Profile and the Response equipment data base on MEDGIS-MAR and also to produce the report related to implementation of the E&R Protocol under the BCRS.

[2] REMPEC extended the use of the Readiness Evaluation Tool for Oils Spills to the Central and Eastern Mediterranean that enable the countries of the region to develop their respective self-assessment of the level of their preparation to respond to oil spills. The ultimate objective is that each country will have the capacity to identify, periodically, gaps of respective national system of preparedness for and response to oil marine pollution and to take measures to clear identified gaps and improve their level of preparedness.

- Conducting oil and HNS pollution incident assessments and taking every practical measure to prevent, reduce and, to the fullest possible extent, eliminate the effects of the pollution incident is part of the national contingency plans' requirements in many reporting Contracting Parties;

- In most reporting Contracting Parties, the legal and regulatory framework[3] is in place to ensure that those required (e.g. ships, sea ports, and offshore installations) have contingency plans on board. This has been articulated trough domestic legislation (e.g. maritime codes) as well as laws ratifying the MARPOL Convention and the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC);

- Port reception facilities are available in ports and terminals meeting the needs of ships, including pleasure crafts, in nearly all reporting Contracting Parties. The EU-funded Marine Litter Med Project has been one of the avenues to improve Port Reception Facilities in the region;

- Many reporting Contracting Parties have assessed the environmental risks of the recognized routes used in maritime traffic using a variety of tools including Vessels Traffic Systems (VTS);

- Measures aimed at reducing the risks accidents have been taken by most reporting Contracting Parties. This has been articulated in different ways, including Vessels Traffic Systems (VTS), and the designation and management of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs),with the endorsement of the IMAP common Indicator 19 on acute pollution, the process to facilitate the monitoring and the assessment of the impact of accidental marine pollution on the marine environment has been initiated during this biennium .

- In most reporting Contracting Parties measures dealing with places of refuge for ships in distress have been adopted. However, some Contracting Parties have reported difficulties in financial Resources, technical guidance and capabilities difficulties, as well as administrative management and regional framework difficulties;

- The dissemination and exchange of information as per the requirements of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol has been mainly achieved through the official websites of the relevant Ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure or the Ministry of Environment), as well as the REMPEC Country Profiles[4]. The use and update of REMPEC Country Profiles should be further promoted among Contracting Parties;

- Responses strategies for marine pollution incidents, including policies for the use of dispersants, are in place in most reporting Contracting Parties;

- National contingency plans cover both oil and hazardous Noxious substances (HNS) in the majority of the reporting Contracting Parties.

- Difficulties most frequent reported in implementing the Prevention and Emergency Protocol are the regulatory and policy framework, administrative management and limited financial resources.

[3]Setting up a common emergency communication system for the Mediterranean, enclosing also link to the competent authorities will encourage and assist countries to meet this requirement of the E&P

[4] Idem foot note No.3

Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities

(LBS Protocol)

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1980 LBS Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 22
- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1996 LBS Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 17
- Number of reporting Contracting Parties on the 2022-2023 biennium: 8

Main overall findings

- Legal and regulatory measures to eliminate Land-based Sources (LBS) pollution are reported to be in place in nearly all the reporting Contracting Parties. This has been mainly articulated through broad domestic legislation (e.g. on environmental protection, water or coast), as well as specific legislation (e.g. on industrial emissions, sea bathing water quality, (urban) waste management and. This adds to the domestic legislation transposing the relevant European Union (EU) Directives, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (2008/56/EC).
- In nearly all reporting Contracting Parties, discharges and pollutant releases are subject to the required authorization or regulation issued by the competent national authority. In general, legal instruments listed, mainly on water, on coast, and on environmental protection, establish a system which enables the competent national authority or authorities to issue a permit (e.g. water right permit, environmental permit) for any discharge or release into the sea or surface waters, provided that *inter alia* some specific limit values are met.
- Measures to reduce to a minimum the risk of accidental pollution are reported to be in place in all reporting Contracting Parties. This has been mainly achieved through national contingency plans, in addition to the transposition into domestic legislation of the relevant EU Directives, including the SEVESO III EU Directive (2012/18/EU) and REACH Regulations.
- All reporting Contracting Parties indicated having in place a system of inspection to assess compliance with authorizations and regulations and to impose sanctions in the event of non-compliance. Such system rests on different authorities from country to country, ranging from Environmental Inspectors, to Judicial or Environmental Police, to Harbor Master's Inspectors and accredited Agencies and Networks; and cover sanctions such as fines, indictments, imprisonment, temporary suspension of work or activities.
- Environmental monitoring programmes are reported to be in place in most of the reporting Contracting Parties. This has been mainly articulated within the framework of the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL), in consistency with the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy implementation and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast, and in synergy with the relevant European Union (EU) Directives, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Monitoring programmes in place vary in scope from country to country, encompassing marine ecosystems, marine and coastal waters, bathing waters, land- based sources, marine litter, or industrial emissions. In addition, national institutions and networks for observation and monitoring underpin these programmes through the regular collection and assessment of data.

- Monitoring programmes to evaluate the effectiveness of action plans, programmes and measures under the LBS Protocol are reported to be in place in most reporting Contracting Parties, yet proper monitoring of the implementation of such measures needs further enhancement.
- The limited amount of data received by reporting Contracting Parties shows the need to further refine the UN Mediterranean knowledge platform (INFO/MAP) system to facilitate the submission of data, as well as to articulate practical ways and means to support Contracting Parties through capacity building activities, subject to available resources.
- Technical assistance and capacity building activities should be strengthened in synergy with relevant MEAs and other stakeholders, to further advance in the implementation of the regional action plans.
- Difficulties most frequent reported in implementing the Land-based Sources Protocol are the regulatory framework, administrative management and limited financial resources.

Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol)

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1982 SPA Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 21
- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1995 SPA/BD Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 17
- Number of reporting Contracting Parties on the 2022-2023 biennium: 13.

Main overall findings

- Regional Action Plan on Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretions: Actions taken by reporting Contracting Parties signal are a positive signal progress in implementation. To further enhance implementation, it seems that focus should be put on the promotion of research programs on coralligenous assemblages and maerl beds and on designing an integrated monitoring and assessment program for the assessment of the state coralligenous/maerl assemblages.
- Most reporting Contracting Parties have designated Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) and provided legal or regulatory frameworks for their protection and management. A few Parties are still in the process of developing or updating their national systems for SPA designation and management, indicating a dynamic and evolving implementation of the SPA/BD Protocol.
- Many Contracting Parties reported having developed Management Plans for their SPAs. Some Parties clarified that, although formal plans are not always in place for each SPA, protective and management measures have been adopted through other legal instruments or frameworks. Further efforts appear necessary to ensure the effective implementation and operationalization of these plans.
- Most Contracting Parties have established regulations governing activities such as scientific research, species collection, fishing, maritime traffic, and waste disposal in SPAs and/or SPAMIs. These measures are often articulated within site-specific management plans or through national environmental legislation.
- Appropriate training initiatives for SPA staff, managers, and technical personnel were reported by many Contracting Parties, often implemented through national programmes, international cooperation, or support from regional organizations like SPA/RAC.
- Monitoring programmes and observation efforts for ecological changes in Protocol areas are in place in most reporting Parties, with a majority stating that human impacts are systematically taken into account. Many Parties have also emphasized efforts to engage local communities in the management and stewardship of SPAs
- Most reporting Parties referred to the use of diverse financing mechanisms, including national funding schemes, international cooperation, and income-generating activities compatible with conservation, to support the management and promotion of SPAs.

- Implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) appears to require continued efforts, particularly regarding Ecological Objectives EO1 (Biodiversity), EO2 (Non-indigenous species) and EO6 (Seafloor integrity), where several Parties reported either partial or ongoing implementation.
- As of 2022–2023, the number of SPAMIs remains unchanged at 39 sites. A few Contracting Parties reported efforts underway to nominate new SPAMIs or to strengthen the management of existing ones.
- Regulatory measures for the protection of endangered or threatened species are reported to be in place in most Contracting Parties, with references to national species lists, protected areas, and restrictions on harmful activities.
- Many Contracting Parties reported having developed or updated inventories of biodiversity, with a focus on marine species and habitats. These efforts are often aligned with the SPA/BD Protocol and relevant EU Directives (e.g., Habitats Directive).
- Several Parties reported listing endangered or threatened species at national level and identifying their distribution. However, the update and harmonization of these lists remain in progress in some countries.
- Measures on ex-situ conservation, such as the reproduction or reintroduction of protected species, have been reported in most Parties, particularly in relation to key species like the monk seal, marine turtles, or certain plant species.
- The majority of Contracting Parties reported having taken steps to control or prevent the introduction of non-indigenous or genetically modified species, although full implementation of Article 13 remains a challenge in some areas.
- Cartilaginous Fishes: The level of implementation of this Plan remains limited. Several Contracting Parties reported a lack of data synchronization, delays in submitting catch statistics, and the absence of national action plans. Further efforts are required to fulfill reporting obligations and implement national Shark Action Plans.
- Invasive Species: Progress remains insufficient overall. While a few Parties have integrated invasive species control into national strategies, the mechanism to coordinate actions (paragraph 22 of the RAP) and updates to the MAMIAS database are still not fully operational in most countries.
- Bird Species: Significant efforts have been noted, especially in terms of legal protection and monitoring. However, further action is needed on the establishment and implementation of National Action Plans for endangered and threatened bird species, as only a few Parties reported progress in this regard.
- Cetaceans: Most Contracting Parties have ratified the ACCOBAMS Agreement and undertaken action for cetacean conservation, such as surveys and mitigation measures. However, acoustic mapping and the development of a Mediterranean-wide noise monitoring strategy remain underdeveloped and require further support.
- Marine Vegetation: While some progress has been made, notably on the creation of MPAs for marine vegetation, national inventories, monitoring networks, and action plans remain under development in many Parties. The integration of new Annex II species in legal frameworks is also pending in several cases.

- Monk Seal: Implementation varies depending on species presence. Parties with breeding populations reported having taken conservation measures, created SPAs, and conducted awareness programmes. However, many countries with no monk seal presence marked several questions as not applicable.

- Marine Turtles: Most Parties reported legal protection and enforcement, but gaps remain in habitat protection, tagging and genetic studies, and the establishment of rescue centers or training programmes. Enhanced efforts are needed to ensure a comprehensive implementation of the RAP.

- Dark Habitats: Implementation is still limited, though a few Contracting Parties reported progress in awareness-raising and national legislation. Areas requiring further work include habitat mapping, revision of endangered species lists, and the integration of dark habitats into MPAs and impact assessments.

- Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions: Many Parties reported legislative measures and scientific programmes underway. However, promotion of dedicated research and the coordination of an integrated monitoring framework remain in early stages in several countries.

- The most frequently reported challenges in implementing the SPA/BD Protocol remain: Limited financial resources, lack of technical and human capacities, administrative constraints and coordination gaps across institutions

- Addressing these limitations, through increased regional support, resource mobilization, and technical training, will be essential to ensure full and effective implementation of the Protocol and its associated Action Plans.

Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal

(Hazardous Wastes Protocol)

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1996 Hazardous Wastes Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 7
- Number of reporting countries on the 2022-2023 biennium: 5

Main overall findings

- Measures aimed at reducing to a minimum or where possible eliminating the generation of hazardous wastes are at the heart of the domestic legislation on waste management adopted in all reporting Contracting Parties, as per the requirements of the Hazardous Wastes Protocol.
- All reporting Contracting Parties indicated having adopted measures to reduce to a minimum and possibly eliminate the amount of hazardous wastes including POPs/PCBs subject to transboundary movement, as required by the Hazardous Wastes Protocol, and in synergy with the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (The Basel Convention).
- The notification procedure sets out in Article 6 of the Hazardous Wates Protocol in cases of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes is reported to be in place in all reporting Contracting Parties.
- Restrictions on the export and import of hazardous wastes either for final disposal or recovery are indicated to be in place in many reporting Contracting Parties.
- Data received by reporting Contracting Parties shows that continued enhancement of data collection is key, by both continuing refining the UN Mediterranean knowledge platform (INFO/MAP) system to avoid duplication of reporting, as well as exploring practical ways and means to support Contracting Parties in the collection and submission of data, subject to available resources.
- The reported Contracting Parties have not submitted any reports detailing difficulties in implementing the Hazardous Wastes Protocol however, It is noted that some countries are facing a challenge in disposal of hazardous waste, lacking facilities in the country that is a mere indication of accumulation of hazardous waste in the country that requires proper storage and planning for disposal. International funds like GEF etc are well positioned to answer such problems, however, countries need to explore to potential disposal mechanisms.

Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil

(Offshore Protocol)

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the 1994 Offshore Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 8
- Number of reporting countries on the 2022-2023 biennium: 4

Main overall findings

- A global trend is that no significant changes have been reported by the reporting Contracting Parties since the previous report (2020-2021). Most of the below comments were made following the previous reporting and are still valid, except those related to the Covid-19 crisis within that period.

- It is to recall that offshore activities are subject to prior authorization, appropriate legal and regulatory measures for granting the construction and operation of installations as required by the Offshore Protocol in all reporting Contracting Parties. This authorization or permitting system has been mainly articulated through laws governing the offshore exploration and exploitation of mineral resources and/or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) laws and environmental permitting laws.

- Difficulties have been indicated in relation to the disposal of harmful or noxious substances and materials, including challenges related to the regulatory framework, technical guidance capabilities and administrative management. Urging the development of related Standards and Guidelines was one of the main findings of the Workshop on Oil and oily mixtures and drilling fluids and cuttings held in Malta in November 2023.

- In some reporting Contracting Parties, the use and storage of offshore chemicals is approved by the competent national authority on the basis of the Chemical Use Plan as requested by Article 9 of the Offshore Protocol. It sems that further work is still needed in this area, in particular about the content of the chemical use plan, its assessment and its continuous monitoring as confirmed again during the above-mentioned event.

- In regard to enforcement, it is to note that two reporting Contracting Parties, that have oil and gas operations, indicated having carried out inspections. In the previous report (2020- 2021) also two reporting Contracting Parties, that have oil and gas operations, indicated having carried out inspections.

- Difficulties most frequent reported in implementing the Offshore Protocol are the policy and regulatory framework, and administrative management.

- The trend showing few changes, as well as the limited data submitted regarding authorization permits, number of offshore installations and enforcement measures, illustrates that exploring practical ways and means to support Contracting Parties in the collection and submission of data, using REMPEC's Platforms - Country Profile Page (on REMPEC Website) and MEDGIS-MAR as appropriate, would be key for the future reporting. Enhancement of data collection is paramount, and a continuous refinement of the UN Mediterranean knowledge platform (INFO/MAP) supports the process and would avoid duplication of reporting.

Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol)

Status of Reporting

- Number of Contracting Parties to the ICZM Protocol on the 2022-2023 biennium: 12
- Number of reporting countries on the 2022-2023 biennium:11

Main overall findings

Ratification and general legal transposition into national law

- The Contracting Parties (CPs) that have ratified the Protocol have transposed provisions of the Protocol into national legal acts or through strategies, plans and programmes, depending on institutional structure and competencies of the sub-national level of administration. Also, some CPs that have not yet ratified the Protocol report on transposition of most of the requirements in their national legal system including the objectives and general principles of the Protocol. They report on the value of the objectives and general principles in supporting the implementation of ICZM embedded in the ICZM Protocol. In this, CAMP projects are highlighted by CPs as the most relevant.

Information on geographical coverage

- Most of the CPs report on geographical coverage of their coastal zones to which the Protocol applies, either by various laws concerning administrative procedures or spatial planning or by similar instruments like coastal national strategies or action plans.

Institutional measures

- Competencies for coastal zone management are defined in most Contracting Parties, but there is no single department responsible across all CPs. A specific inter-ministerial body for ICZM is rarely in place; instead, ad hoc working groups or technical committees typically handle the coordination of national documents such as MSPs, strategies, or similar plans. The establishment of these bodies has largely been supported by projects like CAMP, as well as those funded by GEF and other donors. Coordination between national and sub-national administrative levels is generally reported as being in place, primarily through the preparation of planning and related documents. Many CPs highlight the significant contribution of the Protocol's provisions to better coastal area management, thanks to synergies and complementarities with other relevant sectoral policies.

Operational measures

- Legal measures for controlling urban development along the coastline are defined in all the reporting CPs. The setback zone is legally established through coastal laws or physical/spatial planning acts, however not uniquely of 100 or more meters but this width varies between the CPs according to national legislation. The definition of the setback zones is proved to be a challenge in practice (with the 100 m setback as a minimum). The non-building zones are defined in spatial plans that integrate requirements of other sectorial laws (nature protection, water, protection of cultural heritage, agriculture land protection, forestry, etc.). Freedom of access to the sea and along the shore is guaranteed for the public in all reporting CPs.

- Not all of the reporting CPs have prepared and/or adopted a national ICZM or coastal strategy. And only a minor number of national strategies have established appropriate indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of ICZM strategies, plans and programmes. With regard to biodiversity, sensitive areas, landscapes and cultural heritage most of the CPs have established regulation to ensure their protection and conservation, mainly through environmental, coastal or nature and heritage protection legislation. Protection measures in all these fields appear to be the most developed. On the contrary, only few countries have taken restoration measures to increase resilience and positive role of coastal wetlands, which are considered specific coastal ecosystems in the Protocol. CPs that have islands have adopted some kind of legislation to take into account their specificities in coastal strategies, plans and programmes.
- Mechanisms for management of coastal land in the public domain exist and are operational in the majority of the reporting Contracting Parties. Most of the coastal land is public property and the responsibility for management is either on Government or local authorities.
- Institutional and legal frameworks for coastal inventory and monitoring are in a majority of cases fragmented, as no dedicated institutions oversee coastal zone monitoring, and responsibilities are distributed among multiple entities. While most CPs report some level of activity, there appears to be limited focus on coastal zones, and a dedicated coastal observatory is lacking. Initiatives such as CAMP, other ICZM projects, and work on IMAP indicators are considered essential for monitoring and observation. Additionally, for EU Member States, monitoring obligations under the MSFD and MSP frameworks play an important role.
- The use of indicators in coastal management remains limited, especially for evaluating economic impacts on coastal zones. This is likely linked to the absence of national coastal observatories. However, in cases where a national ICZM or coastal strategy exists, some indicators are used to assess progress in implementing the ICZM Protocol.
- All reporting CPs have legislation in place for environmental assessments, with the EIA process being widely applied. The use of SEA is also regulated in nearly all reporting CPs. However, in many CPs not bound by the Espoo Convention, transboundary EIA/SEA frameworks are lacking. Still, transboundary cooperation is implemented through joint projects.
- There is significant diversity in the types and levels of implementation of land policy, economic, financial, and fiscal instruments among the reporting CPs. This presents a strong potential for exchange and training on best practices. Many CPs report the involvement of non-governmental organizations and various donors in supporting instruments for coastal protection and conservation.
- Risks and emergency situations appear to be a major concern for most of the reporting CP, many of which have established national contingency and emergency plans. A significant number also report on civil protection systems that coordinate activities in emergencies. Progress has been made in integrating climate change into coastal and marine strategies and planning schemes, with the introduction of prevention, mitigation, and adaptation measures to address its negative effects. However, there is still considerable potential to enhance the resilience of coastal areas and their capacity to adapt to changes, particularly sea level rise and flooding.
- Awareness raising, education and training are considered essential for advancing the complex approach of ICZM. The annual Mediterranean Coast Day is recognized as an important event for raising awareness. EU Directives (e.g., MSFD), Strategies (e.g., EUSAIR), and funding instruments (e.g., the INTERREG Programme), along with GEF-funded initiatives, play a key role in promoting cooperation and awareness initiatives. Some CPs report on specific education and awareness action plans that incorporate ICZM topics into curricula, TV programs, and other media.

Annex V

Membership of the Compliance Committee

[Members and Alternate Members of the Compliance Committee that need to be elected by the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties

Group I: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia

One Member and one Alternate Member to be elected

Group II: Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain and the European Union

One Member to be elected or renewed

One Alternate Member to be elected

Group III: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Monaco, Montenegro and Türkiye

One Member to be elected or renewed

One Alternate Member to be elected]

]

[Draft Decision IG.27/2

Governance

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Considering Decision IG.17/5 on the governance of the Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention system, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 15th Meeting (COP 15, Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008) and Decision IG.19/6 on the Mediterranean Action Plan Civil Society Cooperation and Partnership, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 16th Meeting (COP 16, Marrakesh, Morocco, 3-5 November 2009),

Considering also Decisions IG.25/3 and IG.26/2 on Governance, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 22nd (COP 22, Antalya, Türkiye, 5-8 December 2021) and 23rd (COP23, Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) Meetings respectively,

[Taking note of the Report "Mediterranean Action Plan at 50: Achievements, Challenges and Future Directions" as a background document that acknowledges achievements and can be the basis for further reflection on enhancing the effectiveness of the entire UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system with a view to cope with future and emerging challenges],

Recalling Decision IG.22/17 on the Reform of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and Updated MCSD Constitutive Documents that has adopted the Composition of the MCSD and its terms of reference as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties,

Taking note of the report of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD (Corinth, Greece, 24-26 June 2025),

Expressing appreciation to the four lead countries - France, Spain, Slovenia and Egypt - and to the Secretariat for the excellent organization of the high-level event for the anniversary of the 50 years of UNEP/MAP and the 30 years of Post-Rio Barcelona Convention held at the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3, Nice, France, 9-12 June 2025) with the participation of the Executive Director of UNEP and the high-level participation from many Contracting Parties,

Stressing the effective and substantial progress made in the strengthening of regional cooperation and enhanced coordination in supporting the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and other decisions of the Contracting Parties, and *highlighting* the need to continue work in that direction by inter alia enhancing regional synergies and complementarities, with the view to maximizing the effective and efficient use of resources and enhancing impacts on the ground,

Welcoming the outcomes of the meeting on regional consultation on the Legal study on integration of transboundary EIA/SEA in the context of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Athens, Greece, 6 February 2025) and of the online Consultation Meeting on Transboundary EIA/SEA Activities within the UNEP/MAP Framework (24 June 2024),

Recalling the Plan of Action for a Model Mediterranean Sea by 2030 (PAMEx), as a multi-partner collective initiative, and its priority objectives addressing the preservation of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean, the promotion and development of sustainable fishing to end overfishing by 2030, redoubled efforts to combat marine pollution, particularly so that no plastic is discharged into the Mediterranean by 2030, and the promotion of maritime transport practices which protect the marine and environment and combat climate change,

Recalling the "Common Operational Principles for MAP Components" adopted through Decision IG.25/3 at COP 22 (Antalya, Türkiye, 5-8 December 2021),

Recalling the UNEP and UN policy and strategy for gender equality and the environment and *appreciating* the effort by the Secretariat on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment in policy, administrative and programmatic matters related to the work and mandate of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system,

Recognizing the Mediterranean Coast Day, celebrated annually on 25 September since 2007 under the coordination of PAP/RAC in cooperation with the UNEP/MAP system, as a key regional advocacy initiative aimed at promoting the values and principles of the ICZM Protocol and as a flagship initiative of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035,

Appreciating the guidance and advice provided to the Secretariat by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on all policy and administrative matters related to the successful delivery of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and COP decisions, and having considered the reports of the 95th, 96th and 97th Bureau Meetings,

1. *Approve* the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNEP/MAP and the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), set out in Annex I to this Decision, and the MoU between UNEP/MAP and the MEDCITIES, set out in Annex II to this Decision, and request the Secretariat to proceed towards their signature;

2. *Decide* to expand the Non-Contracting Party Members of the MCSD for including regional and sub-regional organizations of women and youth working in the field of environment and sustainable development that meet the criteria of MAP Partners, bringing the total number of the MCSD Members to 42, and *ask* the Secretariat to launch the process for nomination in the beginning of the biennium for approval by the Bureau in 2026, in order to allow these organizations to participate at the MCSD meeting of 2027;

3. *Adopt* the updated MCSD constitutive documents, set out in Annex III to this Decision, that replace those adopted at COP 19 through Decision IG.22/17;

4. *Adopt* the renewed non-Contracting Party Membership of the MCSD, set out in Annex IV to this Decision;

5. *Endorse* the list of new MAP Partners, set out in Annex V to this Decision;

6. *Note with appreciation* the contribution of all partners to the work of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, and encourage the Secretariat to continue reaching out and working closely with partners to further strengthen and enhance collaboration and governance for the protection of the marine environment and coastal region and promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean;

7. *Welcome* the ambitious UNOC3 declaration of Ministers of Environment of the Mediterranean and express appreciation to the extensive work that was undertaken to prepare it;

8. *Request* the governments of MAP Components' Host Countries to rigorously implement the

"Common Operational Principles for MAP Components" adopted at COP 22 (Decision IG.25/3) and *ask* them to make every effort to support the effective delivery of the respective RACs' mandates, highlighting the need that the RACs primary role is to provide thematic expertise to Contracting Parties in their scope of work rather than overall project or programme management;

9. *Reiterate their authorization* to the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to hosting PAMEx Technical Secretariat with a view to maximizing mutual synergies and further implementation of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention goals and actions, without any budgetary implications to MAP subject to the continuation of the generous financial support to the initiative by France, and *urge* the PAMEX Technical Secretariat as well as the PAMEx partner countries and organizations to intensify cooperation to deliver practical results under the four axes of the initiative;

10. *Agree* to submit to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties the results of the activities on EIA/SEA included in the Programme of Work 2026-2027 with a view to continue discussions on possible options for integrating transboundary EIA/SEA into the MAP/Barcelona Convention System, including strengthen its already existing tools and mechanisms;

11. *Endorse* the proposal for the formal recognition of International Coast Day by the United Nations General Assembly at the global level and *encourage* the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties to initiate this process during the 2026-2027 biennium.

]

List of Annexes

Annex I Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNEP/MAP and the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)

Annex II Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between UNEP/MAP and the MEDCITIES

Annex III Updated MCSD Constitutive Documents

Annex IV Renewed MCSD Non-Contracting Party Membership

Annex V List of new MAP Partners

Annex I

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNEP/MAP and the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN

THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME in its capacity as Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)

AND

THE CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE ARAB REGION AND EUROPE (CEDARE)

WHEREAS the United Nations Environment Programme (hereinafter referred to as "UNEP") is the leading organization within the United Nations system in the field of environment and has as a major area of focus of its global mandate, the conservation, protection, enhancement and support of nature and natural resources, including biological diversity, worldwide;;

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WHEREAS the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention and the Mediterranean Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as "UNEP/MAP") is administered by UNEP and has the mandate, as per the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean adopted in 1976 and revised in 1995, to assist the Mediterranean countries, with its main objectives through its seven protocols respectively to assess and control marine pollution; to ensure sustainable management of natural marine and coastal resources; to address common challenges related to the prevention and reduction of pollution from land-based sources, ships, dumping, off-shore installations and the movement of hazardous substances; to ensure the protection of biodiversity; and, the integrated management of coastal zones;

WHEREAS UNEP/MAP has also the mandate to assist in the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) which was adopted in 1975 and became MAP II after its revision in 1995;

WHEREAS in this context, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted Regional Strategies, Actions Plans and Programmes as well as put in place regional structures including a consolidated system of focal points, the Secretariat and six Regional Activity Centers, which have a mandate for carrying out activities aimed at facilitating implementation of the seven Protocols of the Barcelona Convention, the decisions of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols;

WHEREAS The Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), hereinafter referred to as "CEDARE" is an independent intergovernmental organisation having been established in 1992 in response to the Damascus Convention, which was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) in 1991 and was followed by a Host Government Agreement (HGA) between the Arab Republic of Egypt, and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD); has the mandate to support and enhance the capacities of national and regional institutions to plan and implement sound, effective environmental policies, and pursue sustainable development;

WHEREAS UNEP and CEDARE (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Parties") share common objectives with regard to the conservation, protection, enhancement and support of nature and natural resources, including biological diversity worldwide, and wish to collaborate to further these common goals and objectives within their respective mandates and governing rules and regulations;

WHEREAS the Parties intend to conclude this Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter

referred to as “MOU”) with the aim of consolidating, developing and detailing their cooperation and effectiveness to achieve the common objectives in the field of environment;

NOW, THEREFORE, UNEP/MAP AND CEDARE HAVE AGREED TO COOPERATE UNDER THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
Interpretation

1. References to this MOU shall be construed as including any Annexes, as varied or amended in accordance with the terms of this MOU. Any Annexes shall be subject to the provisions of this MOU, and in case of any inconsistency between an Annex and this MOU, the latter shall prevail.

2. Implementation of any subsequent activities, projects and programmes pursuant to this MOU, including those involving the transfer of funds between the Parties, shall necessitate the execution of appropriate legal instruments between the Parties. The terms of such legal instruments shall be subject to the provisions of this MOU.

3. This MOU represents the complete understanding between the Parties and supersedes all prior MOUs, communications and representations, whether oral or written, concerning the subject matter of this MOU.

4. Any Party’s failure to request implementation of a provision of this MOU shall not constitute a waiver of that or any other provision of this MOU.

Article 2
Duration

1. This MOU shall be effective upon the last date of signature of the approving officials and remain in force until 1 December 2030, unless terminated in accordance with Article 15 below.

Article 3
Purpose

1. The purpose of this MOU is to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding, and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives in regard to the conservation, protection, enhancement and support of nature and natural resources in the Mediterranean Sea Area, and to contributing to its sustainable development in their fields of competence.

2. The objectives of this MOU shall be achieved through:

    a. Regular dialogue and meetings between the Parties;
    b. Participation of the Parties in each other’s meetings and workshops on subject matters of common interest as mutually agreed.
    c. Execution of separate legal instruments between the Parties to define and implement any subsequent activities, projects and programmes pursuant to Article 1.2.

Article 4
Areas of Cooperation

1. The Parties have agreed to the following preliminary and overarching areas of cooperation for this MoU:

    a. Under the present MOU, the Parties may cooperate on a bilateral basis for the mutual

exchange of experience in any or all of the following fields of study or management: Promoting eco-innovation and the adoption of green economy, circular economy and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) approaches, policies, and legislations, in key economic sectors and lifestyles considered upstream drivers of pollution, particularly, marine litter.

b. Strengthening the resilience of the Mediterranean natural and socioeconomic systems to climate change impacts through promoting integrated adaptation approaches, such as marine spatial planning (MSP) and integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), nature-based solutions (NBS), and an enhanced understanding of vulnerabilities, while reducing anthropogenic pressures on coastal and marine ecosystems.

c. Promoting and supporting environmentally-sound management of chemicals and waste, including but not limited to plastic pollution and electronic waste, with a focus on preventing and reducing pollution from land-based sources, in line with relevant provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

d. Enhancing the science-policy interface in the Mediterranean region through monitoring, assessment, and knowledge management projects and initiatives to facilitate informed decision-making; including flagship publications, knowledge management tools, education and awareness programmes, and the application of digital technologies to support evidence-based decision-making.

e. Designing and implementing initiative, projects and activities to advance sustainable development and blue economy approaches in the Mediterranean region including but not limited to sustainable urban planning, energy efficiency and renewable energy, water security and wastewater management, as well as blue economy approaches.

f. Collaborating on comprehensive assessment and State of Environment reporting initiatives and projects of the marine and coastal environment in the Mediterranean region, including but not limited to contributing to the Mediterranean Quality Status Reports (MED QSR), and to the implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP), to enhance evidence-based decision making and track progress toward Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.

g. Promoting biodiversity conservation and protected area management in the Mediterranean, including Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs), through joint initiatives to identify ecological hotspots, develop management plans, and monitor biodiversity status and trends in alignment with the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean.

h. Establishing, coordinating, and contributing to mechanisms for environmental data sharing, harmonization, and accessibility, including but not limited to the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and IMAP Info System, to facilitate integrated assessments and informed decision-making.

i. Enhancing the capacities of local and national public institutions from the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols in developing policies, regulations, and strategies, and in designing and implementing projects and activities, related to the areas of cooperation outlined herein, as well as other areas relevant to sustainable development in the Mediterranean region.

j. Leveraging global and regional platforms and networks to share experience, knowledge, and best practices in enforcement and management thereby strengthening public institutional capacities for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

k. Within the scope of the Parties' respective regulatory framework, the Parties may consider the possibility of joint missions and the hosting of joint training activities and information sessions.

2. The above list is not exhaustive and should not be taken to exclude or replace other forms of cooperation between the Parties on other issues of common interest.

3. Specific activities may be identified by the Parties and will be carried out on the basis of separate legal instruments established between the Parties.

4. Within the scope of the Parties' respective regulatory framework and , within the remit of their respective mandates, the Parties shall collaborate for the implementation of the activities undertaken pursuant to this MoU.

5. This MoU seeks to consolidate and intensify cooperation between the Parties and to strengthen regional synergy.

Article 5
Organization of the Cooperation

1. The Parties shall hold bilateral meetings on matters of common interest, in accordance with an agenda agreed to in advance by the Parties, for the purpose of developing and monitoring collaborative activities. Relevant international organizations and relevant initiatives/projects may be invited by both Parties to join such consultations that will take place at least once per year, through face-to-face meetings or remote conferences. The following two items should be examined at least once per year in occasion of consultations:

a. Discuss technical and operational issues related to furthering the objectives of this MOU; and

b. Review progress of collaboration and related work undertaken by the Parties in the priority areas of cooperation mentioned in Article 4 above. .

3. In implementing activities, projects and programmes in the agreed priority areas, the Parties shall execute a separate legal instrument appropriate for the implementation of such initiatives in accordance with Article 1.2 above. In identifying the areas of cooperation under this MoU, due regard shall be given to CEDARE'sgeographic coverage; capacity for implementation and experience in the related field.

4. Where one of the Parties is organizing a meeting with external participation at which policy matters related to the aims of this MoU shall be discussed, such a Party shall, as appropriate, either invite the other Party to participate in the meeting or update it on relevant policy matters discussed at the meeting.

5. CEDARE and UNEP/MAP will inform their relevant governing bodies on the progress made in implementing this MoU.

6. Nothing under this MoU imposes financial obligations upon either Party. If the Parties mutually agree to allocate specific funds to facilitate an activity undertaken pursuant to this MoU, such an agreement will be reflected in writing and signed by both Parties. In particular, for the implementation of collaborative activities within the framework of this MoU that might involve payment of funds, a specific separate legal instrument will be entered into, as appropriate, taking into account those relevant administrative and financial rules and procedures applicable to the Parties.

7. The Parties will undertake, within their global knowledge network and to the extent possible, to facilitate mutual access to relevant information as well as dissemination of best practices between them.

Article 6
Status of the Parties and their Personnel

1. The Parties acknowledge and agree that they are separate and distinct entities and that CEDARE is separate and distinct from the United Nations and UNEP. The employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors, affiliates or Partners of CEDARE, including the personnel engaged by CEDARE for carrying out any of the activities pursuant to this MoU, shall not be considered in any respect or for any purposes whatsoever as being employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of the United Nations, including UNEP, nor shall any employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of UNEP be considered, in any respect or for any purposes whatsoever, as being employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of CEDARE.

2. Neither Party shall be entitled to act or make legally binding declarations on behalf of the other Party. Nothing in this MoU shall be deemed to constitute a joint venture, agency, interest grouping or any other kind of formal business grouping or entity between the Parties.

Article 7
Fundraising

1. To the extent permitted by the Parties' respective regulations, rules and policies, and subject to sub-article 2, the Parties may engage in fundraising from the public and private sectors to support the activities, projects and programmes to be developed or carried out pursuant to this MOU.

2. Neither Party shall engage in fundraising with third parties in the name of or on behalf of the other, without the prior express written approval of the other Party in each case.

Article 8
Intellectual Property Rights

1. Nothing in the MOU shall be construed as granting or implying rights to, or interest in, intellectual property of the Parties, except as otherwise provided in Article 8.2.

2. In the event that the Parties foresee that intellectual property that can be protected shall be created in relation to a particular activity, project or programme to be carried out under this MOU, the Parties shall negotiate and agree on terms of its ownership and use in the relevant legal instrument concluded as per Article 1.2.

Article 9
Use of Name and Emblem

1. Neither Party shall use the name, emblem or trademarks of the other Party, its subsidiaries and/or affiliates, or any abbreviation thereof, in connection with its business or for public dissemination without the prior expressly written approval of the other Party in each case. In no event shall authorization of the UN, UNEP and/or UNEP/MAP name or emblem be granted for commercial purposes.

2. CEDARE acknowledges that it is familiar with the independent, international and impartial

status of the UN, UNEP and/or UNEP/MAP, and recognizes that their names and emblems may not be associated with any political or sectarian cause or otherwise used in a manner inconsistent with the status of the UN, UNEP and/or UNEP/MAP.

3. The Parties agree to recognize and acknowledge this partnership, as appropriate. To this end, the Parties shall consult with each other concerning the manner and form of such recognition and acknowledgement.

Article 10
United Nations Privileges and Immunities

1. Nothing in or relating to this MOU shall be deemed a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations, including its subsidiary organs.

Article 11
Confidentiality

1. The handling of information shall be subject to each Party's corporate confidentiality policies.

2. Before disclosing internal documents, or documents that by virtue of their content or the circumstances of their creation or communication must be deemed confidential, of the other Party to third parties, each Party shall obtain the express, written consent of the other Party. However, a Party's disclosure of another Party's internal and/or confidential documents to an entity the disclosing Party controls or with which it is under common control, or to an entity with which it has a confidentiality agreement, shall not be considered a disclosure to a third party, and shall not require prior authorization.

3. For UNEP, a principal or subsidiary organ of the United Nations established in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations shall be deemed to be a legal entity under common control.

Article 12
Responsibility

1. Each Party will be responsible for dealing with any claims or demands arising out of its actions or omissions, and those of its respective personnel, in relation to this MOU.

2. The CEDARE shall indemnify, hold and save harmless and defend at its own expense, the UN, UNEP and/or UNEP/MAP, their officials, personnel and representatives, from and against all suits, claims, demands and liability of any nature or kind which may arise in relation to this MOU due to any actions or omissions attributable to CEDARE.

Article 13
Dispute Settlement

1. The Parties shall use their best efforts to settle amicably any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of this MOU. Where the Parties wish to seek such an amicable settlement through conciliation, the conciliation shall take place in accordance with the UNCITRAL Conciliation Rules then prevailing, or according to such other procedure as may be agreed between the Parties.

2. Any dispute, controversy or claim between the Parties arising out of this MOU which is not

settled amicably in accordance with the foregoing sub-article may be referred by either Party to arbitration under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules then in force. The arbitral tribunal shall have no authority to award punitive damages. The Parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such controversy, claim or dispute.

Article 14
Notification and Amendments

1. Each Party shall promptly notify the other in writing within 3 months of any anticipated or actual material changes that will affect the execution of this MOU.

2. Upon receipt of such notification, the Parties shall consult each other with a view of reaching an agreement on any actual or proposed change(s) suggested in accordance with Article 14.1.

3. The Parties may amend this MOU by mutual written agreement, which shall be appended to this MOU and become an integral part of it.

Article 15
Termination

1. Either Party may terminate this MOU by giving three months' prior written notice to the other Party.

2. Upon termination of this MOU, the rights and obligations of the Parties defined under any other legal instrument executed pursuant to this MOU shall cease to be effective, except as otherwise provided in this MOU.

3. Any termination of the MOU shall be without prejudice to (a) the orderly completion of any ongoing collaborative activity and (b) any other rights and obligations of the Parties accrued prior to the date of termination under this MOU or legal instrument executed pursuant to this MOU.

4. The obligations under Articles 8-13 do not lapse upon expiry, termination of or withdrawal from this MOU.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the duly authorized representatives of the Parties affix their signatures below.

For the United Nations Environment Programme	**For the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe**
……..….	
…….	
Name: **Division Director/Regional Director** **Division/**	Name: **H.E. Dr Khaled Fahmy** **Title: Executive Director** **Office**
Date: …….	Date: ……

Annex II

Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between UNEP/MAP and the MEDCITIES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)
AND
MEDCITIES

WHEREAS the United Nations Environment Programme (hereinafter referred to as "UNEP") is the leading organization within the United Nations system in the field of environment and has as a major area of focus of its global mandate, the conservation, protection, enhancement and support of nature and natural resources, including biological diversity, worldwide;

WHEREAS the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention and the Mediterranean Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as "UNEP/MAP"), which was established under the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, adopted in 1976 and amended in 1995;

WHEREAS UNEP/MAP is mandated to assist the Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Convention and its seven Protocols, with the objective of assessing and controlling marine pollution; ensuring the sustainable management of marine and coastal natural resources; addressing challenges related to the prevention and reduction of pollution from land-based sources, ships, dumping, offshore installations, and the movement of hazardous substances; protecting biodiversity; and promoting the integrated management of coastal zones;

WHEREAS UNEP/MAP is also mandated to support the implementation of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), initially adopted in 1975 and revised in 1995 as MAP II, through a regional governance framework which includes the Secretariat, a consolidated system of national focal points, and six Regional Activity Centres, all of which facilitate the implementation of the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention and the decisions adopted by the Meetings of the Contracting Parties;

WHEREAS MedCities and/or MedCités(hereinafter referred to as "MedCities") is a non-profit association, with full legal and operational capacities, which brings together a network of Mediterranean towns and cities (hereinafter referred to as "network") from different countries with the aim of strengthening and developing urban sustainability as a way to improve living conditions in the Mediterranean region and to contribute to prevention of climate change.

WHEREAS UNEP/MAP and MedCities (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Parties" and individually referred to as a "Party") share common objectives regarding the conservation, protection, enhancement and support of nature and natural resources, including biological diversity worldwide, and wish to collaborate to further these common goals and objectives within their respective mandates and governing rules and regulations;

WHEREAS the Parties intend to conclude this Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as "MOU") with the aim of consolidating, developing and detailing their cooperation and effectiveness to achieve the common objectives in the field of environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PARTIES HAVE AGREED TO COOPERATE UNDER THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
Interpretation

1. References to this MOU shall be construed as including any Annexes, as varied or amended in accordance with the terms of this MOU. Any Annexes shall be subject to the provisions of this MOU, and in case of any inconsistency between an Annex and this MOU, the latter shall prevail.

2. Implementation of any subsequent activities, projects and programmes pursuant to this MOU, including those involving the transfer of funds between the Parties, shall necessitate the execution of appropriate legal instruments between the Parties. The terms of such legal instruments shall be subject to the provisions of this MOU.

3. This MOU represents the complete understanding between the Parties and supersedes all prior MOUs, communications and representations, whether oral or written, concerning the subject matter of this MOU.

4. Any Party's failure to request implementation of a provision of this MOU shall not constitute a waiver of that or any other provision of this MOU.

Article 2
Duration

1. This MOU shall be effective upon the last date of signature of the approving officials and remain in force until 1st June 2030 unless terminated in accordance with Article 15 below.

Article 3
Purpose

1. The purpose of this MOU is to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding, and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives in regard to the conservation, protection, enhancement and support of nature and natural resources, including biological diversity worldwide and specifically in the Mediterranean basin, with special emphasis on the role of local authorities as agents of change and actual implementers of policies on the territories.

2. The objectives of this MOU shall be achieved through:

    a. Regular dialogue and meetings between the Parties;
    b. Execution of a separate legal instrument between the Parties to define and implement any subsequent activities, projects and programmes pursuant to Article 1.2.

Article 4
Areas of Cooperation

1. Areas of Cooperation are agreed jointly through the cooperation mechanism in the MOU. Policies and priorities under this MOU may also be jointly reviewed by the Parties pursuant to Article 5 to allow the Parties to respond to newly emerging issues in the realm of environment and sustainable development.

2. The Parties have agreed to the following preliminary and overarching areas of cooperation for this MOU, which form part of UNEP/MAP's mandate and programme of work and have been approved by Ordinary Meetings of Contracting Parties to Barcelona Convention. The areas of cooperation items listed below are also priorities or ongoing activities of the MedCities in accordance with its mandate. All could be strengthened through the cooperation of the Parties and in accordance with each Party' respective regulatory framework.

a. Develop and deliver collaborative communication activities and campaigns that raise awareness of Mediterranean environmental priorities among local authorities, stakeholders, and the public.

b. Support the implementation of the Barcelona Convention protocols, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and relevant flagship initiatives, and regional plans particularly relevant to the role of local authorities.

3. The above list is not exhaustive and should not be taken to exclude or replace other forms of cooperation between the Parties on other issues of common interest.

Article 5
Organization of the Cooperation

1. The Parties shall hold regular bilateral meetings on matters of common interest, in accordance with an agenda agreed to in advance by the Parties, for the purpose of developing and monitoring collaborative activities. Such meetings shall take place at least once per year to:

a. discuss technical and operational issues related to furthering the objectives of this MOU; and

b. review progress of collaboration and related work between the Parties.

2. Within the context defined above, further bilateral meetings at desk-to-desk and at expert level shall be encouraged and set up on an ad hoc basis as deemed necessary by UNEP/MAPand MedCities to address matters of common interest for the implementation of activities in specific areas, countries and regions.

3. In implementing activities, projects and programmes in the agreed priority areas, the Parties shall execute a separate legal instrument appropriate for the implementation of such initiatives in accordance with Article 1.2 above. In identifying the areas of cooperation under this MOU, due regard shall be given to MedCities's geographic coverage; capacity for implementation and experience in the related field.

4. Each Party undertakes to share knowledge and information in its area of operations and expertise relevant to the MOU with the other Party, and invite, where appropriate, the other party to events with external participationat which policy matters related to the aims of this MoU shall be discussed.

Article 6
Status of the Parties and their Personnel

1. The Parties acknowledge and agree that they are separate and distinct entities and that MedCities is separate and distinct from the United Nations and UNEP. The employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of MedCities, including the personnel engaged by MedCities for carrying out any of the project activities pursuant to this MOU, shall not be considered in any respect or for any purposes whatsoever as being employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of the United Nations, including UNEP/MAP, nor shall any employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of UNEP be considered, in any respect or for any purposes whatsoever, as being employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of MedCities.

2. Neither Party shall be entitled to act or make legally binding declarations on behalf of the other Party. Nothing in this MOU shall be deemed to constitute a joint venture, agency,

interest grouping or any other kind of formal business grouping or entity between the Parties.

Article 7
Fundraising

1. To the extent permitted by the Parties' respective regulations, rules and policies, and subject to sub-article 2, the Parties may engage in fundraising from the public and private sectors to support the activities, projects and programmes to be developed or carried out pursuant to this MOU.

2. Neither Party shall engage in fundraising with third parties in the name of or on behalf of the other, without the prior express written approval of the other Party in each case.

Article 8
Intellectual Property Rights

1. Nothing in the MOU shall be construed as granting or implying rights to, or interest in, intellectual property of the Parties, except as otherwise provided in Article 8.2.

2. In the event that the Parties foresee that intellectual property that can be protected shall be created in relation to a particular activity, project or programme to be carried out under this MOU, the Parties shall negotiate and agree on terms of its ownership and use in the relevant legal instrument concluded as per Article 1.2.

Article 9
Use of Name and Emblem

1. Neither Party shall use the name, emblem or trademarks of the other Party, its subsidiaries and/or affiliates, or any abbreviation thereof, in connection with its business or for public dissemination without the prior expressly written approval of the other Party in each case. In no event shall authorization of the UN, UNEP or UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention name or emblem be granted for commercial purposes.

2. MedCities acknowledges that it is familiar with the independent, international and impartial status of the UN, UNEP and/or UNEP/MAP, and recognizes that their names and emblems may not be associated with any political or sectarian cause or otherwise used in a manner inconsistent with the status of the UN, UNEP and/or UNEP/MAP.

3. The Parties agree to recognize and acknowledge this partnership, as appropriate. To this end, the Parties shall consult with each other concerning the manner and form of such recognition and acknowledgement.

Article 10
United Nations Privileges and Immunities

1. Nothing in or relating to this MOU shall be deemed a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations, including its subsidiary organs.

Article 11
Confidentiality

1. The handling of information shall be subject to each Party's corporate confidentiality policies.

2. Before disclosing internal documents, or documents that by virtue of their content or the circumstances of their creation or communication must be deemed confidential, of the other Party to third parties, each Party shall obtain the express, written consent of the other Party

However, a Party's disclosure of another Party's internal and/or confidential documents to an entity the disclosing Party controls or with which it is under common control, or to an entity with which it has a confidentiality agreement, shall not be considered a disclosure to a third party, and shall not require prior authorization.

3. For UNEP, a principal or subsidiary organ of the United Nations established in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations shall be deemed to be a legal entity under common control.

Article 12
Responsibility

1. Each Party will be responsible for dealing with any claims or demands arising out of its actions or omissions, and those of its respective personnel, in relation to this MOU.

2. MedCities shall indemnify, hold and save harmless and defend at its own expense, the UN and UNEP , their officials, personnel and representatives, from and against all suits, claims, demands and liability of any nature or kind which may arise in relation to this MOU due to any actions or omissions attributable to MedCities.

Article 13
Dispute Settlement

1. The Parties shall use their best efforts to settle amicably any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of this MOU. Where the Parties wish to seek such an amicable settlement through conciliation, the conciliation shall take place in accordance with the UNCITRAL Conciliation Rules then prevailing, or according to such other procedure as may be agreed between the Parties.

2. Any dispute, controversy or claim between the Parties arising out of this MOU which is not settled amicably in accordance with the foregoing sub-article may be referred by either Party to arbitration under the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules then in force. The arbitral tribunal shall have no authority to award punitive damages. The Parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such controversy, claim or dispute.

Article 14
Notification and Amendments

1. Each Party shall promptly notify the other in writing of any anticipated or actual material changes that will affect the execution of this MOU.

2. Upon receipt of such notification, the Parties shall consult each other with a view of reaching an agreement on any actual or proposed change(s) suggested in accordance with article 14.1

3. The Parties may amend this MOU by mutual written agreement, which shall be appended to this MOU and become an integral part of it.

Article 15
Termination

1. Either Party may terminate this MOU by giving 2 months' prior written notice to the other Party.

2. Upon termination of this MOU, the rights and obligations of the Parties defined under any

other legal instrument executed pursuant to this MOU shall cease to be effective, except as otherwise provided in this MOU.

3. Any termination of the MOU shall be without prejudice to (a) the orderly completion of any ongoing collaborative activity and (b) any other rights and obligations of the Parties accrued prior to the date of termination under this MOU or legal instrument executed pursuant to this MOU.

4. The obligations under Articles 8-13 do not lapse upon expiry, termination of or withdrawal from this MOU.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the duly authorized representatives of the Parties affix their signatures below.

For United Nations Environment Programme	**For MedCities**
……..….	
…….	
Name:	Name:
Division Director/Regional Director	Title:
Division/Regional Office	
Date: …….	Date:
……..……	

Annex III

Updated MCSD Constitutive Documents

CONSTITUTIVE DOCUMENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CONSTITUTIVE DOCUMENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

RULES OF PROCEDURE, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION

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MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MCSD) RULES OF PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

Rule 1

The Rules of Procedure shall apply to the meetings of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD). They complement the framework for operation of MCSD, as described by the "Terms of Reference" and the "Composition of the Commission" in the annexed documents adopted by the Contracting Parties.

DEFINITIONS

Rule 2

For the purpose of these rules:

1. the word "Commission" shall apply to the "Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development";

2. the term "Barcelona Convention" shall apply to the 1976 Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution as amended in 1995;

3. the term "Coordinator" shall apply to the Coordinator or the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan or his designated representative;

4. the term "Secretariat" shall apply to the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) as provided in article 17 of the Barcelona Convention as amended.

PLACE OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION

Rule 3

The meetings of the Commission shall be held at the seat of the Coordinating Unit of MAP, unless convened in other Mediterranean venues in pursuance of a recommendation of the Commission approved by the meeting of the Contracting Parties.

During the time between the Parties' meeting the approval maybe given by the Bureau of the Parties to the Convention.

For reasons of optimal use of available resources, the meetings within the MCSD context may be coordinated as appropriate with other relevant MAP meetings.

DATES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION

Rule 4

The Commission will hold an ordinary meeting on a biannual basis and extraordinary sessions on a need-be basis.

The Coordinator shall convene the meetings of the Commission.

The Commission shall, at its ordinary meetings, fix the opening date and the duration of the next meeting.
At the commencement of the first sitting of each meeting, the Commission shall elect the Steering

Committee, which is composed of a President, five Vice-presidents and a Rapporteur, on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution, and among the various groups in accordance with the distribution indicated in Rule 17.

INVITATIONS

Rule 5

The Coordinator shall invite to send representatives to participate in the Commission's meetings as observers, the United Nations and its competent subsidiary bodies, and the Specialized Agencies if they participate in the activities of the Mediterranean Action Plan, or have direct concern with environment and sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean.

The Coordinator shall, in agreement with the Steering Committee, invite to send representatives to participate in the Commission's meetings as an observer, any state which is a member of the United Nations which so requests and has direct concern with environmental and sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean.

The Coordinator shall, in agreement with the Steering Committee, invite to send representatives to participate in the Commission's meetings as an observer, any other inter-governmental organization, including financial institutions, which would interest itself directly in issues of environmental protection and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, the activities of which are related to the functions of the Commission.

Such observers may, as provided in Article 20(2) of the Barcelona Convention as amended, participate in the Commission's meetings and may present any information or report relevant to the work of the Commission and in matters of direct concern to the organizations they represent.

PUBLICITY

Rule 6

Plenary sittings of the meetings of the Commission shall be held in public, unless the Commission decides otherwise. Sittings of subsidiary bodies of the meetings of the Commission shall be held in private, unless the meeting of the Commission decides otherwise.

AGENDA

Rule 7

In agreement with the Steering Committee of the Commission, the Coordinator shall prepare the provisional agenda for the meeting of the Commission and shall communicate it to the members of the Commission at least four weeks before the opening of the meeting together with supporting documents.

Rule 8

The provisional agenda of each meeting shall include:

1. all items mentioned under the “MANDATE” section of the Terms of Reference of the Commission;

2. all items the inclusion of which has been requested at a previous meeting of the Commission;

3. any item proposed by a member of the Commission;

4. an analytical report of the Coordinator containing information on relevant sustainable development activities, the progress achieved in the implementation of the MSSD and other relevant activities undertaken, and emerging issues to be addressed;

5. the reports of the Task Managers and the Thematic Working Groups as per Rule 20;

6. all items pertaining to the financial arrangements relevant to the Commission.

Rule 9

The Coordinator shall, in agreement with the Steering Committee of the Commission, include any question suitable for the agenda which may arise between the dispatch of the provisional agenda and the opening of the meeting in a supplementary provisional agenda which the meeting of the Commission shall examine together with the provisional agenda.

Rule 10

At the opening of an ordinary meeting of the Commission, the members of the Commission, when adopting the agenda for the meeting, may add, delete, defer or amend items. Only items which are considered by the meeting to be urgent and important may be added to the agenda.

Rule 11

At the beginning of each meeting, subject to the provision of Rule 10, the Commission shall adopt its agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda and the supplementary provisional agenda referred to in Rule 9.

Rule 12

The Commission shall normally consider for the meeting only agenda items for which adequate documentation has been circulated to members four weeks before the beginning of the meeting of the Commission.

REPRESENTATION

Rule 13

All members of the Commission shall participate in the Commission on an equal footing.

Each member of the Commission shall be represented by representative accredited, who may be accompanied by such advisers as may be required.

Rule 14

The names of representatives and advisers shall be officially submitted by the members of the Commission to the Coordinator, before the opening sitting of a meeting which the representatives are to attend.

Rule 15

At the first sitting of each meeting of the Commission, the President of the previous ordinary meeting, or in his absence a Vice-President designated by him, shall preside until the meeting has elected a President for the meeting.

Rule 16

If the President is temporarily absent from a sitting or any part thereof, he shall appoint one of the Vice-Presidents to assume his duties.

STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMISSION

Rule 17

The Steering Committee shall include four members representing the Contracting Parties, including *ex officio* the President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, and three representatives from the **seven**~~six~~ categories foreseen by the Terms of Reference of the MCSD.

At the commencement of the first sitting of each meeting, the Commission shall elect the Steering Committee, which is composed of a President, five Vice-presidents and a Rapporteur, on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution, and among the various groups in accordance with the distribution indicated in the paragraph above.

Rule 18

The MCSD Steering Committee oversees the work of the MCSD between sessions. The Steering Committee meets regularly on annual basis during the biennium - at least one of these meetings is to be face-to-face.

The work of the Steering Committee is supported by the Secretariat. In order to secure the necessary financial means, the Secretariat shall include adequate provisions in its biennial Programme of Work and Budget to be discussed and agreed by the Contracting Parties.

Members of the Commission are encouraged to hosting the meetings of the Steering Committee.

Rule 19

The President, or in his absence one of the Vice-Presidents designated by him shall serve as President of the Steering Committee.

If a member of the Steering Committee resigns or otherwise becomes unable to continue to perform his functions, a representative of the same member of the Commission shall replace him for the remainder of his mandate.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION

Rule 20

During the course of a meeting, the Commission shall establish thematic working groups and other working groups as it deems necessary, and to refer to them the themes identified by the Commission as of great importance for the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region for study, and proposal. Such working groups could sit while the Commission is not in session, ensuring thus, together with the Steering Committee, the continuity of the Commission between its sessions. Unless otherwise decided, the Commission shall select task managers for each thematic working group and a chairman for other working groups.

The Commission shall define the mandate and composition of the working groups and Task Managers.

Rule 21

The Coordinator shall act as Secretary of any meeting of the Commission. He may delegate his functions to a member of the Secretariat.

Rule 22

The Coordinator shall provide the staff required by the Commission and shall be responsible for all the necessary arrangements for meetings of the Commission.

Rule 23

The Secretariat shall arrange for interpretation of speeches, receive, translate and circulate the documents of the meetings of the Commission and its working groups; publish and circulate the decisions, reports and relevant documentation of the meeting of the Commission. It shall have custody of the documents in the archives of the meeting of the Commission and generally perform all other work that the Commission may require.

LANGUAGES OF THE COMMISSION

Rule 24

Arabic, English, French and Spanish shall be the official languages of the Commission. English and French shall be the working languages of the Commission if available financial resources do not allow for the use of the four official languages. English and French shall be the working languages of meetings of the Steering Committee of the Commission and of working groups.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 25

The Rules of procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties concerning Conduct of Business (Rules 30-41) shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Conduct of Business in the meetings of the Commission.

PROPOSALS OF THE COMMISSION

Rule 26

Proposals of the Commission shall be adopted by consensus. These proposals will be presented to the Contracting Parties' meetings.

RECORDS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION

Rule 27

Sound records of the meetings of the Commission shall be kept by the Secretariat in accordance with the practice of the United Nations.

AMENDMENTS OF PROCEDURE

Rule 28

Any amendments of the Rules of Procedure should be approved, after proposal of the Commission, by the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

1. The Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) was established in 1995 in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) as an advisory body to the Contracting Parties to assist them in their efforts to integrate environmental issues in their socioeconomic programmes and, in so doing, promote sustainable development policies in the Mediterranean region.

2. The Commission is unique in its composition, in as much as government representatives, local communities, socioeconomic actors, IGOs and NGOs participate on an equal footing. The MCSD has so far carried out high-quality undertakings, mobilising work on priority themes for the Mediterranean, notably, water resources, integrated coastal zone management, tourism, industry etc., and developing the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development.

A. PURPOSE

3. The purpose of the MCSD is to assist the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to implement the objectives of sustainable development and other regional or local actors in their efforts to promote sustainable development in the Mediterranean region and to integrate environmental issues in their socio-economic programmes.

B. MANDATE

4. The MCSD is an advisory body to the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention and represents a forum for debate with essentially the following mission:

- To assist Mediterranean countries and other stakeholders active in the region in the adoption and implementation of sustainable development policies, particularly the integration of environmental considerations into other policies;

- To ensure the follow-up of MSSD implementation through appropriate tools, mechanisms and criteria that would better enhance an efficient follow-up function;

- To promote the exchange of experience and good practices regarding the integration of environmental and socioeconomic policies, as well as examples which show the application of international sustainable development commitments at suitable scales in different countries;

- To identify the obstacles encountered and support regional and subregional cooperation for the effective implementation of the sustainable development principle;

- To coordinate the periodical drafting of the report on the state of implementation of the MCSD recommendations;

- To produce opinions of the overall MAP Work Programme, with the aim of integrating sustainability considerations into the MAP / Barcelona Convention system as a whole.

- To produce opinions and recommendations for integration and coordination of the work of the MCSD with the other existing international and regional sustainable development and environmental programmes, policy frameworks and initiatives.

C. FUNCTIONING

5. Each session of the Commission will focus on sectoral issues relevant to the MSSD, as well as other emerging sustainability issues. MCSD recommendations will be presented for consideration to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties, following discussion at the meeting of the MAP Focal Points with the aim of advising on making practical and effective use of the MSSD and on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

D. REPORTS

6. Before each session, each member should provide a concise report focusing on the implementation of MSSD and MCSD recommendations, following a template prepared by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will then prepare a summary report to be presented at the beginning of each session.

7. The analytical report of the Coordinator as per Rule 8 paragraph 4 of the Rules of Procedure will also include reports by the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) on the implementation of MSSD and MCSD recommendations relevant to their line of work.

MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
COMPOSITION

Introduction

1. The MCSD is an advisory body to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and a forum for debate and exchange of experiences on sustainable development issues that concern all interested parties in the Mediterranean region. It is appropriate to involve the greatest possible variety of actors in the work of the Commission, so as to ensure the greatest possible dissemination of the concepts promoted by the MCSD.

A. NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

2. The Commission shall be composed of **42** ~~**40**~~ members, consisting of:

- 22 representatives designated by the competent bodies of the Contracting Parties
- 3 representatives of local authorities
- 3 representatives of NGOs
- 3 representatives of socio- economic stakeholders
- 3 representatives of the scientific community
- 3 representatives of intergovernmental organizations working in the field of sustainable development
- 3 representatives of regional parliamentary associations
- **2 representatives of women and youth organizations**

3. Efforts should be made to ensure participation of representatives from both the environmental and development fields related to the topics of the agenda of each meeting of the MCSD. Appropriate geographical representation and media participation should be ensured.

4. Each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention shall be represented by one high-level representative (total 22), who may be accompanied by such alternates and advisers as may be required, in order to ensure interdisciplinary participation of relevant ministerial bodies of the Contracting Parties (e.g. ministries of environment, tourism, economy, development, industry, finance, energy, etc.).

5. All members shall participate in the Commission on an equal footing.

B. METHOD OF NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES OTHER THAN THOSE REPRESENTING THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

6. The Contracting Parties, MCSD members and the Secretariat (in consultation with UNEP/MAP Components, as appropriate) may nominate members of the Commission, other than those representing the Contracting Parties, based on written expressions of interest, and criteria and modalities provided for in Decision **IG.26/2 on Governance, Annex V: MAP Partner Policy,** ~~**IG.19/6 on "MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership".**~~

Each biennium, the Steering Committee of the Commission, with the assistance of the Secretariat, shall review the list of the MCSD members, particularly in the light of those members whose mandate may be drawing to a close, and decide on any changes required.

The list of candidates shall be submitted for adoption by the next Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

7. The following general selection criteria will apply:

I. The criteria established in Decision **IG.26/2 on Governance, Annex V: MAP Partner Policy** ~~**19/6 on "MAP/ Civil society cooperation and partnership"**~~ shall be used as a reference text for selection of members representing NGOs.

II. Priority for selection shall be given to Mediterranean local authorities, NGOs, socio-economic stakeholders, the scientific community, ~~**and**~~ intergovernmental organizations, **and women and youth organizations** that are concerned with environmental and sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean.

III. The principle of equitable geographical distribution should be respected (north/south and east/west).

IV. Fragile and island ecosystems will be given due consideration;

V. With reference to the **seven**~~**six**~~ specific categories, the following are the selection criteria, giving priority to the groups or networks concerned:

(i) Local Authorities

Local authorities to be selected should be concerned with environmental and sustainable development issues.

(ii) Socio-economic Actors

Selection within this group should take into consideration the major problems and decisive factors in the Mediterranean as well as the following factors:

- north/south representation
- developed/developing countries
- rural/urban
- past and current activities at the Mediterranean level.

Priority of selection shall be given to socio-economic networks active in the Mediterranean.

(iii) NGOs

The members representing NGOs should be selected from the list of MAP/NGO partners.

The members should be selected from among three NGO categories, with priority being afforded in the following order:

- NGOs with regional or sub-regional Mediterranean scope
- NGOs with global scope
- NGOs with national or local scope

The NGOs to be selected should have a concrete and action-oriented approach towards the Mediterranean

(iv) IGOs

The members representing IGOs should be selected from organizations with global and/or regional scope, with mandates and activities of direct relevance to the work of the MCSD and the implementation of the MSSD.

(v) Scientific Community

The members representing the scientific community should be selected from among academic/research institutions and individuals with a proven track of relevant work and interest in fields of environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

(vi) Parliamentarians

The members representing Parliamentary Associations should have a Mediterranean regional or sub-regional scope and include individuals with experience in the field of sustainable development.

(vii) Women and Youth

Women and youth organizations to be selected should be concerned with environmental and sustainable development issues.

8. The Secretariat shall develop with inputs from Contracting Parties, MCSD members and UNEP/MAP Components a roster of organizations and individuals from the above categories to be used for future nominations as members of the MCSD.

C. DURATION OF THE MANDATE

9. The duration of the membership of the Commission shall be as follows:

I. All Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention shall be permanent members of the Commission;

II. Three representatives from each of the six **first** categories **and two representatives of the women and youth category**, shall be selected for a duration of two biennia by the meeting of the Contracting Parties. Their mandate is renewable for one additional term **of two biennia**;

III. The mandate of the MCSD Members under the group of parliamentarians may be renewable for more than one additional term taking into consideration to the extent possible the need for rotation and for geographical balance;

IV. When members do not attend the Commission meetings, enquiries shall be forwarded by ~~**through**~~ the Steering Committee through the Secretariat to identify and address the reasons for the non-attendance. Non-Contracting Party organizations who have not attended two successive meetings of the MCSD should be considered for replacement.

Annex IV

Renewed MCSD Non-Contracting Party Membership

New MCSD Non-Contracting Party Members

(with a mandate for the next two biennia)

- *Local authorities Group*
  - **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)**
  - **Fispmed Network, Sustainable development and the fight against poverty in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (FISPMED)**

- Socio-economic Group
  - **Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA)**
  - **UNIVERDE Foundation**

- NGOs Group
  - **Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)**
  - **Worldwide Fund for Nature - Mediterranean (WWF-MED)**
  - **Oceanographic Institute of Monaco**

- IGOs Group
  - **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)**
  - **Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)**

- Parliamentarian Group
  a. **Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD)**
  b. **Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)**

- Women and Youth Organizations
  a. ***Vacant seat***
  b. ***Vacant seat***

Annex V

List of New MAP Partners

LIST OF NEW MAP PARTNERS

The following institutions are accredited as MAP Partners:

- Mediterranean Youth Foundation for Development
- Banlastic Egypt
- European Public Law Organization (EPLO)
- Association for Protection of Environment and Sustainable Development of Bizerte (APEDDUB)
- Seas at Risk
- Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe InterMediterranean Commission (CPMR)
- BETA Technological Centre of the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (BETA TC)

[Draft Decision IG.27/3

Revised Reporting Format for the Implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Reminding also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Having regard to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, in particular article 26 of the Barcelona Convention and relevant articles of its Protocols addressing reporting obligations,

Recalling, the Decision IG.17/3, Decision IG.21/2, Decision IG.22/16 and Decision IG.23/1 adopted by COP15, COP18, COP19, COP20 respectively, on the reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols,

Taking into consideration the adoption of the Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management and of the Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management through Decisions IG.25/8 and IG25/9, respectively, at COP 22 (Antalya, Türkiye December 2021), and the adoption of the Regional Plans on Agriculture Management, on Aquaculture Management and on Urban Stormwater Management through Decisions IG.26/6, IG.26/7 and IG.26/8, respectively, at COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, December 2023), which introduce new legally binding measures and timetables as well as provisions for their reporting in the frame work of the Barcelona Convention Reporting System,

1. *Adopt* the revised Part III and IV reporting format for the implementation of the LBS Protocol, as set out in Annexes I and II to this Draft Decision;

2. *Request* the Secretariat (MEDPOL and INFO/RAC) to ensure that the revised reporting format of Parts III and IV of the LBS Protocol is made available and accessible on the online Barcelona Convention Reporting System in a timely manner, to enable Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports, starting with those for the biennium 2024–2025;

3. *Request* the Secretariat (MED POL and INFO/RAC) to continue providing support to the Contracting Parties, subject to the availability of resources, to facilitate the timely submission of their national implementation reports including the implementation of marine pollution prevention and control measures.

]

ANNEX I

LBS Reporting Format PART III: IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL ACTIONS PLANS (RAPs) AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

Table III- IMPLEMENTATION OF RAPs AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

	Regional plan requirement: Measures Taken	**Status**				**Difficulties/Challenges**					**Changes in the information provided in the previous report** *(please tick the box that applies)*	
		Please tick the box that applies				Please tick all that apply						
		Yes	No	Under development	Not applicable	Policy framework	Regulatory framework	Financial Resources	Administrative management	Technical Guidance and Capabilities	Yes	No
Amendments to the Regional Action Plan On Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (COP Decision IG.25)/9)	Take adequate regulatory measures to integrate the informal sector into regulated waste collection and recycling schemes (Article 8 (12). Timetable 2028)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish, as appropriate, a regulatory framework for compostable plastics to be integrated into national waste management policies (Article 8 (13). Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Apply prevention measures aiming to achieve, to the extent possible, a circular economy for plastics (Regulate the use of primary microplastics, Implement Sustainable Procurement Policies, Establish voluntary agreements, Establish procedures and manufacturing methodologies, Identify single-use plastic products, Set targets to phase out production and use, increase the reuse and recycling, Phase-out chemical additives used in plastic products, Promote the use of recycled plastics, substitute plastics, Implement standards for product labelling, Establish dedicated collection and recycling schemes, minimize the amount of marine litter associated with fishing/aquaculture, Scale-up and replicate sustainable models) (Article 9 (15.2).Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Base urban solid waste management on reduction at source, applying the following waste hierarchy as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation and policy: prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, other recovery, e.g. energy recovery and environmentally sound disposal (Article 9 (15.3. a). Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement adequate waste reducing/reusing/recycling measures in order to reduce the fraction of plastic packaging waste that goes to landfill or incineration without energy recovery (Article 9 (15.3. b). Timetable 2019)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Take the necessary measures to close to the extent possible the existing illegal dump sites on land in the area of the application of this Regional Plan (Article 9 (15.3.c). Timetable 2020)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Identify and, to the extent possible, restore and contain, the coastal landfills that are a source of marine litter (Article 9 (15.3. d). Timetable 2027)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Identify and assess impacts of marine litter accumulations in upstream regions of rivers and their tributaries and apply measures to prevent or reduce their leakage into the Mediterranean (Article 9 (15.3.f). Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Explore and implement, to the extent possible, ways and means to charge reasonable cost for the use of port reception facilities or when applicable, apply No-Special-Fee system (Article 9 (15.4.h). Timetable 2017)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement targeted measures aiming at preventing and reducing marine litter impact in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) (Article 9 (15.4.i). Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Explore and implement to the extent possible "Gear marking to indicate ownership" concept and "reduced fishing catches through the use of environmental neutral upon degradation of nets, pots and traps concept (Article 9 (15.4.j). Timetable 2017)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Apply cost-effective measures to prevent any marine littering from dredging activities (Article 9 (15.4.k). Timetable 2020)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Explore and implement to the extent possible the identification in collaboration with relevant stakeholders' accumulations / hotspots of marine litter and implementation of national programmes on their regular removal and sound disposal (Article 10 (16.a). Timetable 2019)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Implement National Marine Litter Cleanup Campaigns on a regular basis and evaluate their effectiveness (Article 10 (16.b). Timetable 2030)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement Marine Litter Cleanup Campaigns on a regular basis driven by beach; concessionaries/ managers/ local authorities, including outside the touristic season (Article 10 (16.c). Timetable 2030)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Participate in International Coastal Cleanup Campaigns and Programmes (Article 10 (16.d). Timetable 2019)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Apply as appropriate 'Adopt-a-Beach' or similar practices and enhance public participation role with regard to marine litter management (Article 10 (16.e). Timetable 2019)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Apply Fishing for Litter in an environmentally sound manner, based on agreed guidelines and best practice, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations and in partnership with fishermen and ensure adequate collection, sorting, recycling and/or environmentally sound disposal of the fished litter (Article 10 (16.f). Timetable 2019)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Charge reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable apply No-Special-Fee system, in consultation with competent international and regional organizations, when using port reception facilities for implementing the measures (Article 10 (16.g). Timetable 2019)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Explore and implement to the extent possible the "Fishing for Litter" environmentally sound practices, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations, to facilitate cleanup of the floating litter and the seabed from marine litter caught incidentally and/or generated by fishing vessels in their regular activities including derelict fishing gears (Article 10 (17). Timetable 2017)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Explore and implement targeted activities for the localization and retrieval, and where possible, reuse or recycling of derelict fishing gear including through new environmentally sustainable technologies (Article 10 (18). Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Assessment of marine litter in the Mediterranean (Article 11 (19 to 21). Timetable 2029)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish the Regional Data Base on Marine Litter which should be compatible with other regional or overarching databases (Article 12 (22.b). Timetable 2016											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Establish Expert Group on Regional Marine Litter Monitoring Programme (Article 12 (22.c). Timetable 2014											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Design National Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter (Article 12 (23). Timetable 2017)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Prepare the Guidelines for the preparation of the National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes (Article 12 (25). Timetable 2014)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Prepare regional report on the implementation of the Regional Plan (Article 19 (35). Timetable 2029)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Consider updating periodically the LBS NAPs to integrate marine litter in accordance with the provisions of this Regional Plan and other means to perform their obligations Art. 7 (9)										
	Ensure institutional coordination, where necessary, among the relevant national policy bodies and relevant regional organizations and programmes, in order to promote integration. Art. 8 (11.a)										
	Ensure close coordination and collaboration between national, regional and local authorities in the field of marine litter management Art. 8 (11.b)										
	Apply to the extent possible instruments needed to regulate and prevent marine litter pollution including plastic waste from land-based and sea-based sources, in particular the implementation of economic instruments, bans and design requirements, EPR, safe/formal markets for recycled plastics, fiscal and economic incentives, innovative business practices, best practices to create incentives) Art. 9 (15.1)	If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply								If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Apply enforcement measures to combat dumping, littering on the beach, illegal sewage disposal from land sources in the sea, the coastal zone and rivers Art. 9 (15.3.e)										
	Apply enforcement measures to prevent, reduce and sanction illegal dumping and illegal littering in accordance with national and regional legislation, in particular on coastal zones and rivers Art. 9 (15.3.g)										
	Take the necessary measures to ensure that cruise ships flying their flag or entering their ports implement the procedures for minimizing, collecting, storing, processing and disposing of garbage Art. 9 (15.4.l)										

	Take the necessary measures to promote best practices to prevent plastic waste and particularly single use plastic products in tourism and leisure activities including cruise shipping, including through regional cooperation Art. 9 (15.4.m)			
	Implement measures on prevention, response and remediation regarding litter from maritime accidents, including containers lost at sea Art. 9 (15.4.n)			
	Design National Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter to include: (a) harmonization and consistency with the integrated regional monitoring programme based on EcAp; (b) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs); and (c) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs) Art. 12 (24)			
	Prepare specific guidelines, taking into account where appropriate existing guidelines, to support and facilitate the implementation of measures provided for in articles 9 and 10 of the Regional Plan Art. 14 (27)			
	Enhance public awareness and education Art. 16 (29)			
	Encourage appropriate involvement of, and partnerships with, various stakeholders Art. 17 (31)			
	Cooperate directly or with the assistance of the Secretariat or the competent international and regional organizations to address transboundary marine litter cases Art. 18 (33)			

Regional Action Plan on Sewage Sludge Management (COP Decision IG.26/8)	Contracting Parties shall adopt Class A biosolids suitable for use as fertilizer for agricultural crops having met the pathogen reduction requirements set in Table 1 by treatment processes (Article V (7). Timetable 2025)										
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply								If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Contacting Parties shall adopt limit values for heavy metals to ensure that use would not affect human health and the environment as provided for in Table 2 (heavy metals in biosolids) and Table 3 (heavy metals in soil) (Article V (8). Timetable 2025)										
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply								If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Contracting Parties shall establish the required infrastructure for the implementation of the requirements of the applicable measures of this Regional Plan with regards to the use for agricultural land applications and/or for energy/nutrient recovery (Article V (12). Timetable 2035)										
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply								If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Set classes for sludge with limit values for pathogen contents for biosolids to ensure that use would not affect human health and the environment Art. V (7)										
	Consider adopting Class B biosolids suitable for use as fertilizer for non-food crops having met the pathogen reduction requirements set in Table 1 by treatment processes Art. V (7)										
	Specify the conditions for use of sludge in its different states (stabilized, treated, untreated) taking into consideration the proximity of sludge application to various types of human activities and civil structure facilities/natural features Art. V (9)	If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	

	In the event that limit values set in Tables 1 to 3 (pathogens and heavy metals in biosolids and soil) cannot be met, the Contracting Parties shall apply alternative means to agricultural use including incineration and regulated landfilling Art. V (10)	If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply		If your answer is "No", please go to next question
	Apply adequate treatment processes to reduce volatile organic compounds and diminish possible odor emissions in the different stages of sludge treatment, transport and application in agriculture and other suitable uses Art. V (11)			
	Reduce energy costs and increase water savings during treatment by using BAT and applying BEP Art. V (13)			
	Implement technologies targeting energy efficient treatment of sludge such as pretreatment of sludge, solar drying, bio-drying, composting, etc. Art. V (14)			
	Promote implementation of adaptation measures for climate change protection Art. V (15)			
	Take measures to ensure monitoring of the quality of sewage sludge in the WWTP or after treatment outside the WWTP Art. V (16)			
	Exchange and share best practices directly or with the support of the Secretariat including BAT, BEP, sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, resource efficiency, WEFE Nexus in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the urban wastewater treatment plants Art. VI (17)			
	Report on implementation of measures stipulated in this Regional Plan in line with the reporting requirement and timelines provided in Article 26 of the Convention and Article 13, paragraph 2(d) of the LBS Protocol Art. VIII (19)			

Regional Action Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment (COP Decision IG.26/8)	All agglomerations are provided with collecting systems for urban wastewater for those with a population equivalent (p.e.) of more than 15,000 (Article V (6). Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	All agglomerations are provided with collecting systems for urban wastewater for those with a population equivalent (p.e.) between 2000 and 15,000 (Article V (6). Timetable 2030) *(Alternative deadline under consideration)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Adopt emission limit values as provided for in Appendix I of the Regional Plan for: (i) discharge of effluents from urban wastewater treatment plants to the environment; (ii) reuse of reclaimed wastewater for agriculture irrigation; and (iii) discharge of industrial wastewater into collecting systems and urban wastewater treatment plants (Article V (7). Timetable 2025)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	All discharges from agglomerations over than 15,000 p.e. are subject to the extent possible to tertiary treatment provided that the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the recipient environment is maintained (Article V (9). Timetable 2030) *(Alternative deadline under consideration)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	All discharges from agglomerations of size of between 2000 and 15,000 p.e. are subject to the extent possible to secondary treatment provided that the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the recipient environment is maintained (Article V (9). Timetable 2030) *(Alternative deadline under consideration)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question		
	Competent authority or appropriate body adopt emission limit values appropriate to the nature of industry discharging industrial effluents to collecting systems connected to urban WWTPs (Article V (15). Timetable 2025)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question		
	Industrial wastewater discharged into collecting systems and urban WWTPs shall meet, as a minimum, the emission limit values Set in Appendix I.C (Article V (16). Timetable 2035)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question		
	Promote nature-based solutions to the extent possible for small agglomerations of less than 2000 p.e. Art. V (10)													
	Ensure that urban wastewater treatment plants, built to comply with the requirements of Articles 7 and 8, are designed, constructed, operated and maintained to ensure sufficient performance under normal local climatic conditions Art. V (11)													
	Ensure that WWTPs are designed to account for seasonal variations of loads; volume and characteristics of the local municipal wastewater; and limitation of pollution of receiving water. Art. V (12)	If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		

	Implement measures for segregating collecting systems for storm water and municipal wastewater, if technically and economically feasible; Art. V (13.i)			
	Prevent or if not possible minimize sewage and wastewater treatment plants' overflow due to rainwater penetration and flooding; Art. V (13.ii)	If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply		If your answer is "No", please go to next question
	Address impacts of points of discharge of treated wastewater; Art. V (13.iii)			
	Adopt tools for conservation of surface water runoff in built environment; Art. V (13.iv)			
	Reduce pollutant loads and litter in storm water runoff from municipal and industrial sources. Art. V (13.v)			
	Promote the reuse of reclaimed wastewater. Art. V (14.i)			
	Implement wastewater reuse systems Art. V (14.ii)			
	Take measures to ensure regular monitoring of discharged effluent wastewater, receiving water, reclaimed wastewater and industrial effluents Art. V (17)			
	Collaborate to implement, exchange and share best practices directly or with the support of the Secretariat Art. VI (18)			
	Report on implementation of measures stipulated in this Regional Plan in line with the reporting requirement and timelines provided in Article 26 of the Convention and Article 13, paragraph 2(d) of the LBS Protocol Art. VIII (18)			

Regional ~~Action~~ Plan on Urban Stormwater Management (COPDecisionsIG.26/8)	Establish a regulatory framework to develop stormwater management plans that include nonstructural and structural stormwater control measures (Article V (6a). Timetable 2028											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish a regulatory framework to ensure that stormwater and other wastewater discharge plans, (in case of combined stormwater and sewage collection systems), are based on drainage boundaries instead of administrative boundaries C (Article V (6b). Timetable 2028											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish a regulatory framework to regulate future land use development aiming to maintain as much of its natural hydrology in order to minimize stormwater runoff, increase its infiltration, and harvest where possible rainwater for domestic or industrial or any other uses (Article V (6c). Timetable 2028)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish a regulatory framework to identify the sources that contribute pollutants through stormwater and select the measures for pollution reduction (Article V (6d). Timetable 2028)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish a regulatory framework to establish monitoring programmes for recipient water (e.g. lakes, water streams, groundwater, etc.), as appropriate in order to undertake the proper mitigation measures (Article V (6e). Timetable 2028)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Implement the approved stormwater management plans by considering the implementation of Green Infrastructure (GI) that complements the piped networks in existing urban areas serviced with separate collection systems and Best Management Practices (BMP) in newly developed areas (Article V (7a). Timetable 2030)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement the approved stormwater management plans by considering the construction of separate systems for municipal wastewaters (blackwater from toilets, greywater and industrial wastewater) and urban runoff in newly developed residential, commercial and industrial areas (Article V (7b). Timetable 2030)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement the approved stormwater management plans by reducing the adverse impacts of untreated wastewater overflows discharging from existing combined collection systems of rainwater or snow melt, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe (Article V (7c). Timetable 2030)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by maintaining an updated inventory list on storm water infrastructure and sources of pollution as well as sewage storage capacity structures (Article V (8a). Timetable 2028)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by planning and implementing regular road maintenance, street sweeping, storm-drain maintenance, stormwater hotline response, and landscape and park maintenance (Article V (8b). Timetable 2028)											
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

| | | |

	Adopt regulations for measures that promote the sustainability of aquaculture in terms of fostering responsible, economically viable, environmentally sustainable aquaculture (Article V (9). Timetable 2027)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Implement measures promoting responsible, economically viable, environmentally sustainable aquaculture as per the regulated aspects (Article V (10). Timetable 2030)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Regulate key aspects contributing to the generation of plastic waste from aquaculture activities in the context of sustainable production, as well as processing along the value chain and circular economy (Article V (11). Timetable 2030)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
Regional ~~Action~~ Plan on Agriculture Management (COPDecisionsIG.26/6)	Establish a regulatory framework with the objective to reduce and further prevent pollution caused or induced by nutrients discharged from agricultural activities economy (Article V (6a). Timetable 2028)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish a regulatory framework with the objective to reduce and further prevent pollution caused or induced by irrigation water runoff and percolation (Article V (6b). Timetable 2028)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	
	Establish a regulatory framework for Integrated Pest Management as one of the tools that contribute to low-pesticide-input which keeps the use of pesticides only to levels that are economically and ecologically justified (Article V (6c). Timetable 2028)													
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required					If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly	
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply									If your answer is "No", please go to next question	

	Establish a regulatory framework for Good management practices that contribute to reducing plastic waste generation from agricultural activities in the context of sustainable consumption and production and circular economy (Article V (6d). Timetable 2028)																		
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required										If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply															If your answer is "No", please go to next question		
	Establish extension/advisory services, training programmes and awareness raising campaigns for farmers in order to promote implementation of the appropriate measures on the basis of the regulatory framework established (Article V (7). Timetable 2030)																		
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required										If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply															If your answer is "No", please go to next question		
	Enact support mechanisms to enable farmers to implement, as applicable, the appropriate measures for reducing inputs of pollutants and other wastes from agricultural activities on the basis of the regulatory framework established (Article V (8). Timetable 2030)																		
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required										If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply															If your answer is "No", please go to next question		
	Designate "vulnerable zones" as all known areas of agricultural land which drain into, and contribute to eutrophication of, coastal waters (Article V (9). Timetable 2030)																		
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required										If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply															If your answer is "No", please go to next question		
	Implement measures based on Good Agricultural Practices that contribute to the preservation of the health of the natural systems; further to application of smart strategies to enhance the water, energy and food Nexus; while considering the opportunities and synergies of all systems (Article V (10). Timetable 2030)																		
		If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide title, date of enactment and a summary of the relevant provisions *(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*				On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required										If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		
		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply															If your answer is "No", please go to next question		

ANNEX II

LBS Reporting Format PART IV: IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPs) AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

Table IV – IMPLEMENTATION OF NAPs AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

(Please refer to document UNEP/MED WG.473/Inf.18 on Indicators and related Methodological Factsheets)

Table IV: IMPLEMENTATION OF NAPs AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

EO	NAP INDICATORS	ENTER A NUMERICAL VALUE (UNIT)
Ecologicap Objective 5	**Municipal Wastewater Management**	
	Municipal wastewater collected and wastewater treated	**MILLION CUBIC METER (million m^3) per YEAR ($M.m^3$/Year)**
	Direct use of treated municipal wastewater	**Percentage (%) (UNITLESS)**
	Release of BOD_5/COD [1] from municipal wastewater	**TONNES per YEAR (Ton/Year)**
	Release of Total Nitrogen from municipal wastewater	**TONNES per YEAR (Tons/Year)**
	Release of Total Phosphorus from municipal wastewater	**TONNES per YEAR (Tons/Year)**
	Release of nutrients from industrial sectors	
	Total BOD_5/COD[1] load discharged from industrial installations to the Mediterranean marine environment.	**TONNES per YEAR (Tons/Year)**
	Total Nitrogen load discharged from industrial installations to the Mediterranean marine environment	**TONNES per YEAR (Tons/Year)**
	Total Phosphorus load discharged from industrial installations to the Mediterranean marine environment.	**TONNES per YEAR (Tons/Year)**
Ecologicap Objective 9	**Release of toxic substances from industrial sectors**	
	Total heavy metals load released from industrial installations to the Mediterranean marine environment.	**TONNES per YEAR (Tons/Year)**
	Industrial hazardous waste disposed in environmentally sound manner	
	Total quantity of generated hazardous waste from industrial installations.	**TONNES per YEAR (Tons/Year)**
	Quantity of industrial hazardous waste disposed in environmentally sound manner relative to total quantity of generated hazardous waste from industrial installations.	**Percentage (%) (UNITLESS)**

[1] One of BOD_5 or COD

	Compliance measures aiming at the reduction and/or elimination of pollutants generated by industrial sectors	
	Number of industrial installations reporting periodically loads of pollutants discharged to the marine and coastal environments relative to the total number of industrial installations.	**Percentage (%) (UNITLESS)**
	Number of environmental inspections carried out by enforcement authorities in which industrial installations were found to be in breach of laws relative to the total number of executed inspections.	**Percentage (%) (UNITLESS)**
	Number of eliminated hotspots identified in the updated NAPs relative to the 2025 baselines	**NUMBER**
Ecological Objective 10	**Municipal Waste Generation and Management**	
	Municiap solid waste generation	**MILLION TONNES per YEAR (M.Ton/Year)**
	Waste Collection Coverage	**Percentage (%) (UNITLESS)**
	Waste Captured (and disposed) by the formal waste sector	**MILLION TONNES per YEAR (M.Ton/Year)**
	Environmental Control A: % of waste to uncontrolled dumpsites	**Percentage (%) (UNITLESS)**
	Environmental Control B: Number of Uncontrolled dumpsites in Coastal Areas	**NUMBER**
	Resource Recovery: % of plastic waste generated that is recycled	**Percentage (%) (UNITLESS)**
	Plastic waste generation per capita	**KG/CAPITA (KG/CA)**
	Close/ remediate number of illegal solid waste dump sites [2]	NUMBER
	Construction number municipal solid waste landfills [2]	NUMBER

[2] The same as previous reporting requirement

[**Draft Decision IG.27/4**

Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Welcoming the High-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the UN General Assembly of September 2024, and the adopted Resolution on the Pact for the Future, that calls to action towards 2030 and reaffirms the commitment to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs (New York, September 2024),

Having regard to the Barcelona Convention, in particular Article 4 on general obligations, and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025, adopted by Decision IG.22/2 of COP 19, Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016,

Recalling the COP 23 Ministerial Declaration (Portorož, Slovenia, December 2023) that commits to a swift update of the MSSD 2016-2025, to effectively implement the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional level, seeking to amend current unsustainable trajectories and place the region on alternative pathways to sustainability and resilience,

Welcoming the publication "The Mediterranean by 2050: A Foresight by Plan Bleu" (MED2050 Report); *appreciating* the impressive work carried out by a large number of experts and *expressing* concerns about the alarming trends of the environmental situation and climate change and *highlighting* the need for urgent actions to bring the region back to sustainability paths,

Having considered the report of the 21st Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and its recommendations (MCSD) (Corinth, Greece, 24-26 June 2025), endorsing the MSSD 2026-2035 for onward submission to the 2025 MAP Focal Points meeting and COP24,

1. *Take note* of the Final Evaluation Report of the MSSD 2016-2025 (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.20) implementation acknowledging the progress achieved but also the gaps in timely delivering SDGs in our region;

2. *Adopt* the updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period 2026-2035 and its flagship initiatives, set out in Annex I to this Decision, as the overarching strategic reference document on Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, a regional cooperation framework and a Mediterranean policy response to environmental and socio-economic challenges highlighted in the MED2050 Report to upscale concrete, sustainable and climate resilient development pathways and further boost the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional, sub-regional and national levels;

3. *Invite* the Contracting Parties to engage in upscaling and implementing the MSSD flagship initiatives, as well as encouraging large multi-level stakeholders' involvement in light of the most urgent challenges the Mediterranean countries are facing;

4. *Encourage* the Contracting Parties and Regional Stakeholders to integrate as appropriate the MSSD 2026-2035 objectives, strategic directions, actions into their policies, strategies and plans for Sustainable Development, including through whole of society and whole of government processes;

5. *Encourage* the Contracting Parties and Regional Stakeholders to promote visibility and wide dissemination of the MSSD 2026-2035 at all levels;

6. *Invite* the Contracting Parties and the MCSD Members to collaborate for strengthening technical cooperation among all shores of the Mediterranean in addressing common challenges, build on good practices and raise new funding and sustainable finance to achieve ecological and adaptive transition;

7. Encourage the Secretariat (Plan Bleu/RAC) to communicate the MED2050 Report to better inform policy making;

8. *Invite* international organizations, initiatives and programmes working in the field of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean to contribute to the implementation of the MSSD 2026-2035 and streamline its priorities in their work and commitments;

9. *Call on* all Donors and Funding Institutions that are active in the Mediterranean region, in primis the European Union as a Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and that steers an ambitious Sustainable Development agenda, to provide strong support to the MSSD 2026-2035 at all levels for its implementation including its flagship initiatives and to develop synergies with policies relevant to the implementation of the MSSD 2026-2035, in particular the European Ocean Pact adopted by the European Commission in June 2025 and launched at UNOC-3 and the forthcoming New Pact for the Mediterranean;

10. *Request* the Secretariat to undertake a mid-term review of the status of implementation of the MSSD 2026-2035 under the MCSD leadership, ensuring large participation, taking also into account that 2030 will be critical for the definition of the global Post-2030 SDGs framework and to report its results to COP 26.

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Annex I

Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

Investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social and economic development

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 (MSSD 2026-2035) provides a strategic policy framework, built upon a broad consultation process, for securing a sustainable future for the Mediterranean region consistent with Sustainable Development Goals and to efficiently deliver them at regional and national level. It aims to harmonise the interactions between socio-economic and environmental goals, adapt international commitments to regional conditions, guide national strategies for sustainable development, and stimulate regional cooperation between stakeholders in the implementation of sustainable development. As highlighted in its subtitle ('***Investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social well-being and economic development***'), the Strategy is underpinned by the conviction that investment in the environment, green transition, climate resilience, circular economy supported by the development of green taxonomy and the whole of society's involvement, is the best way to protect the Mediterranean Sea and coasts and achieve Good Environmental Status, secure long-term sustainable job creation and socio-economic development, leaving nobody behind while improving public health, and an enhanced quality of life.

2. The Strategy focuses on addressing cross-cutting issues that lie in the interface between environment and development. It addresses issues across sectoral, institutional and legal boundaries, emphasizing the interlinkages between environmental issues, climate change challenges, sea and coasts' management and multiple use governance, sustainable circular economy, renewable energies, Water-Energy-Food -Ecosystem Nexus, Nature-based solutions, rural development and food security and management, sustainable cities and social challenges. The Strategy is also expected to boost synergies between the work of key national and regional stakeholders, by providing a commonly-agreed framework, thereby leading to increased efficiency in the implementation of sustainable development in the Mediterranean, as well as by further supporting the engagement of civil society, scientists, youth and women, financial institutions, private sector, local communities, thus ensuring an inclusive framework.

3. In particular the need to address climate change as a top priority for the Mediterranean basin is a red flag alert to be urgently addressed, while all key recent reports[1] confirm a worrisome scenario in the short and long term perspectives. The frequent and dramatic impacts on the environment, on key economic sectors of the region and last but not least on our lives, do not admit any further delayed action. Adaptation to climate change is for UNEP/MAP and its Contracting Parties to be jointly addressed. Doing so it will also contribute to further strengthening regional cooperation, weaving more specific and decentralized cooperation with sub-national authorities, municipalities, territories, to ensure targeted adaptation actions.

4. The Mediterranean Sea is home to a large diversity of ecosystems and species subject to considerable pressures and it is home to a large share of the world's marine biodiversity.It is also the victim of decades of unsustainable use, despite the efforts for an effective management. It also suffers most from the impacts of climate change, warming 20% faster than the rest of the world according to the MedECC[2], thus, it holds the highest percentage of threatened marine habitats, including 21% vulnerable and 11% endangered on the EU28 Red List. Its coasts account for 31 per cent of global tourist arrivals. Development of large and mega-cities is increasing pressures from the rising population levels and the accumulation of economic activities in coastal zones. Mediterranean agricultural products and diet have a global reputation, but depend on the

[1] Plan Bleu/RAC State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED 2020); Med2050 foresight exercise; MedECC, 2020: Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1 2020); MedECC 2024: Interlinking climate change with the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin; MedECC, 2024: Climate and Environmental Coastal risks in the Mediterranean

[2] MedECC, 2020: Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report

sustainability of rural landscapes, resources and decent working conditions. Global shipping routes through the Mediterranean constitutes an important transit and trans-shipment area for international shipping, hosting 17% of the world's oil tanker capacity and making the density of maritime traffic exceptional for a semi-closed sea. The recent surge of interest in the exploitation of hydrocarbons and minerals under the Mediterranean seabed poses also increased risks for the environment.

5. Significant discrepancies in development levels between countries, together with conflicts in the region, pose challenges for envisaging a sustainable future of the Mediterranean basin. The fragility of the region is further aggravated by its sensitivity to climate change: the Mediterranean ecosystems are and will continue to be among the most impacted by global climate change drivers

6. The Strategy is formulated, taking into account the outcomes of the **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)** which put particular focus on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the adopted UN Resolution on the **Pact for the Future**[3], that reaffirms the commitment to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs and urgently calls for accelerating progress towards achieving the Goals.

7. The Strategy equally takes into account the **UNGA Resolution 76/296 of July 2022**, **"Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility"**, which highlights that its goals can also be successfully **applied at regional level** and the **2024 UNEA 6, UNEP/EA.6/Res.15** on Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution, scale-up means of implementation to enhance capacity to deliver ocean-related SDGs, as well as the **United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030**[4] with its vision 'The science we need for the ocean we want'.

8. The embeds the commitments and targets steaming from the **2015 UN Paris Agreement,** the **2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF),** the **European Green Deal,** the **International Maritime Organization's Strategy for reducing GHG emissions from ships**, the **Post-2020 SAPBIO**[5] **and other UNEP/MAP recently adopted policies, including Programmes of Measures to achieve Good Environmental Status of Mediterranean Sea and Coasts.**

9. The Strategy will be endorsed in 2025, an important milestone year both at the global as well as at the regional Mediterranean level for the protection, conservation and sustainable use of marine environment and its resources: it coincides with the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3, Nice, France, 9-13 June 2025) that gave renewed impetus to the acceleration of global efforts and mobilization of all actors towards the achievement of SDG 14; the activation of implementation of numerous concrete new commitments with secured financing, by a wide array of stakeholders, submitted at the preceding 9th Our Ocean Conference (OOC-9, Athens, Greece, 15-17 April 2024); the likely entry into force of the historic Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement); the 50 year anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30 years of the Post Rio Barcelona Convention, that culminated with the Ministerial Declaration renewing their commitment for a sustainable Mediterranean, and their remarkable achievements and unique institutional role in the protection and preservation of the Mediterranean Sea and its sustainable development; the EU Ocean Pact and the upcoming New Pact for the Mediterranean, providing integrated frameworks to strengthen policy coherence and a thriving blue economy for the Mediterranean region; the entry into force of the designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SOx ECA) further limiting air pollution from ships, pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI; and finally, the 30 year anniversary of the establishment of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), the advisory body of UNEP/MAP for integrating environmental considerations into

[3] Resolution A/RES/79/1 adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2024
[4] https://www.unesco.org/en/decades/ocean-decade
[5] Decision IG.25/11 on the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)

socioeconomic policies and promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean, responsible for the elaboration of the Strategy.

10. These milestone achievements reaffirm the strong commitment and vision towards sustainability and acceleration of the green transition in the region, through the constructive collaboration of all stakeholders.

11. The institutional landscape is characterized by regional initiatives focusing on increased collaboration between all shores of the Mediterranean, such as the **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** and **Horizon Europe initiative** and its Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters"[6] that aims to protect and restore the health of ocean and waters by 2030. Other regional and sub-regional initiatives, as the **WestMed Initiative[7] and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)[8]**, focus on sustainable development issues to be addressed at the Mediterranean level, looking also at the most significant sources of environmental degradation in the region.

12. The Strategy is built around the following vision:

A prosperous, climate resilient, and peaceful Mediterranean region in which people enjoy a high quality of life and where sustainable development takes place within the carrying capacity and within the limit of acceptable change of biologically diverse healthy, productive, conserved, restored wisely used and effectively managed ecosystems.

13. This is achieved through common objectives, shared actions, strong involvement of all stakeholders, cooperation, solidarity, equity and participatory governance.

14. A set of **guiding principles** also informs the Strategy: the importance of an integrated approach to environmental and sustainable development planning; an openness to a plurality of future development models; a balanced approach to territorial development; the precautionary and polluter pays principles; a participatory approach to policy and decision-making; the importance of evidence-based policy; the reconciliation of long and short-term in terms of planning and evaluation; transparency; and, the partnership between the UNEP/MAP system and other international and regional organizations.

15. The Strategy follows a **structure** based on **six objectives** that lie in the interface between environment and development, which were chosen to provide the scope for an integrated approach to address sustainability issues. The first Objective on climate change reflects the urgency to accelerate related adaptation actions, objectives 2, 3 and 4 reflect a territorial approach, while the last two objectives are cross-cutting, addressing key policies and areas, as follows:

1 Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority

2 Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems

3 Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development

4 Plan-and manage sustainable, resilient Mediterranean cities

5 Accelerate transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance

[6] Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters
[7] https://westmed-initiative.ec.europa.eu
[8] https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu

6 Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development

16. A set of **strategic directions** is formulated for each of the six overall objectives. The strategic directions are complemented by **national and regional actions**, as well as **flagship initiatives** and **targets**. The actions aim at providing guidance and inspiration for the most effective implementation of the Strategy. Not all countries may have the necessity or the resources to undertake all the proposed actions: it may be preferable to adapt the proposed actions to national needs. The **targets** are inspired by the global and regional agendas for sustainability and SDGs of relevance for the Mediterranean Region, considering its specificities, and monitor the Strategy progress at the objectives' level' along with the framework of regional and global indicators. The **flagship initiatives** have an upscaled key role in the framework of the Strategy implementation, as concrete initiatives and best practice that can lead the way in supporting the countries and stakeholders to partner up, commit and promote replication and spin off initiatives on sustainable development, both at regional and national level.

Objective 1: Address climate change with the emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority

Targets
Target 1: By 2030, Contracting Parties should minimize the impact of climate change and Mediterranean Sea acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, as well as investments on climate-resilient infrastructures, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity
Target 2: By 2030 Contracting Parties should develop strategies that include information on climate change risks, its priorities, plans and actions to build adaptation and climate resilience
Target 3: by 2030 Contracting Parties should develop and submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5°C, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 43% and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050
Target 4: By 2030, Contracting Parties will reach a minimum of 20% of renewable energy in their energy mix, by increasing the renewable energy share derived from renewable resources in total final consumption, thus encouraging shifting towards energy transition, including soil management and food systems' transformation and building sectors

Strategic Directions
1.1: Increase scientific knowledge, education, raise awareness, and develop technical capacities to deal with climate change and ensure informed decision-making at all levels, recognising and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems
1.2: Accelerate the uptake of climate smart and climate resilient responses
1.3: Leverage existing and emerging climate finance mechanisms, including international and domestic instruments, and enhance the engagement of the private and finance sectors
1.4: Encourage institutional, policy, legal and legislative reforms and initiatives for the effective mainstreaming of climate change responses into national and local development frameworks in all sectors
1.5 Promote economy decarbonization energy transition and deployment of renewable energies

1.6 Strengthen national and local capacities on the application of nature-based solution for climate change adaptation and mitigation

Objective 2: Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems

Targets
Target 5: By 2030, Contracting Parties have ratified the Barcelona Convention Protocols and the appropriate legislative measures to implement them at the national level have already been taken
Target 6: By 2030 Good Environmental Status of marine and coastal environment is maintained and enhanced through effective implementation of Ecosystem Approach and commitment under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
Target 7: By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, and sustainably managed by applying ecosystem-based approaches including biodiversity and climate change-informed marine spatial planning, and by conducting environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments
Target 8: By 2030 Contracting Parties shall ensure effective implementation of the legally binding measures adopted under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols on wastewater, marine litter, plastic pollution and under IMO International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention and its Annexes)

Strategic Directions
2.1 *Strengthen implementation, compliance and monitoring with regional requirements of regulatory and policy frameworks of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention for coastal and marine management*
2.2 *Promote balanced and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources*
2.3: *Promote well connected-ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas, other effective area-based conservation measures and nature-based solutions at national, transboundary and Mediterranean level and enhance stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss*

Objective 3: Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development

Targets
Target 9: By 2030, Mediterranean Countries ensure that at least 75% of their population use safely managed drinking water services and at least 30% use safely managed sanitation in a multi-level context of water stress, competing demands and growing shortages, particularly for vulnerable populations and women.
Target 10: By 2030, Mediterranean Countries ensure that at least 90% of the population has access to affordable, safe, and nutritious food all year round, through the promotion of resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems, including local supply chains

Strategic Directions
3.1: *Promote the circular/regenerative use, management and conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Natural Resources and ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region*
3.2: *Promote conservation and use of indigenous or traditional plant varieties and domestic animal breeds, value traditional knowledge and practices in rural management decisions*
3.3: *Promote inclusive and sustainable rural development, with a specific focus on poverty eradication, One Health, food security, women's empowerment and youth employment, including equitable and sustainable access to basic local services for rural communities*
3.4: *Ensure access of local producers to distribution channels and markets, including the tourism market*

Objective 4: Plan and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities

Targets
Target 11: By 2030, all Mediterranean Countries have substantially reduced waste generation through prevention, recycling and reuse, particularly by ensuring that at least 60% of municipal solid waste is sustainably recycled, composted or managed, including separate collection and material recovery, including biowaste, with emphasis on packaging waste and on the most environmentally damaging SUP products as a priority.
Target 12: By 2035, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have adopted regulatory and policy frameworks with health-based standards for air quality having regard to the World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines.

Strategic Directions
4.1: *Apply holistic and integrated spatial planning processes and other related instruments, as well as improved compliance with respective rules and regulations, to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion and reduce pressures on the environment*
4.2: *Encourage inclusive urbanization and strengthen capacities for participatory and integrated human settlement planning and management*
4.3: *Promote the protection and rehabilitation of historic urban areas*
4.4: *Promote sustainable production, use of sustainable products and effective waste management within the context of a more circular economy, as well as to foster sustainable consumption patterns among citizens*
4.5: *Promote urban spatial patterns and technological options that reduce the demand for transportation, improve urban air quality and stimulate sustainable mobility and accessibility in urban areas*
4.6: *Promote green infrastructures and renewable energies and improve energy efficiency to contribute towards reducing the ecological footprint of the built environment*
4.7: *Enhance urban resilience in order to reduce vulnerability to risks from natural and human-induced hazards including climate change*

Objective 5: Accelerate transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance

Targets
Target 13: By 2030, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have in place effective regulatory and policy frameworks, including economic incentives, aimed at facilitating the development of sustainable business models that integrate circularity and eco-innovation principles in the green and blue economies, while contributing to the development of non-pollutant and socially inclusive economies, in line with the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean.
Target 14: By 2035 Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have established sustainable finance frameworks that mobilize capital towards green and sustainable investments, while fostering collaboration among all stakeholders.

Strategic Directions
5.1: *Create green, just and decent jobs for all, particularly youth and women, to eradicate poverty and enhance social inclusion*
5.2: *Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, to support the shift towards circular economy approaches and sustainable business models*
5.3*: Encourage innovation, public private partnerships and sustainable solutions to advance towards the objectives of a just low-carbon, circular, green and blue economy*
5.4: *Promote the integration of sustainability, circularity and climate change principles and criteria on the programming and evaluation frameworks of public and private investment*
5.5: Promote an integrated financial ecosystem through a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance aiming to foster the channeling of private and public capital into sustainable investments.

Objective 6: Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.

Targets
Target 15: By 2030, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have formal mechanisms in place to ensure subsidiarity and synergies between policies at different levels of decision-making and across sectors in the long-term and across borders thus enhancing policy coherence on sustainable development (PCSD), including involvement of stakeholders.
Target 16 : By 2030, ensure that all learners, including the general public, acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
Target 17: By 2035, Mediterranean Countries have acceded to the Aarhus Convention.

Strategic Directions
6.1: *Enhance regional, sub-regional and cross-border dialogue and cooperation, including on emergency-preparedness*
6.2 *Strengthen the role, awareness and capacities of sub-national and local governments/ municipalities and of National and Regional Parliaments for implementing national and subnational sustainable development strategies and thus contribute to the achievement of SDG and MSSD objectives*
6.3: *Promote the engagement of civil society, scientists, youth and women, financial institutions, private sector, local communities and other stakeholders in the governance process at all levels, in order to secure inclusive whole of society processes and integrity in decision-making*
6.4: *Promote the implementation, and monitoring of the SD Strategies at all levels of government, considering synergies and tradeoffs between different policies and sectors, including intersectional management (WEFE NEXUS) by improving policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) based on whole of government approach, inter-ministerial coordination and multi-level government*
6.5: *Promote education and research for sustainable development*
6.6: *Strengthen regional capabilities for information management and enhance the promotion of evidence-informed policymaking and foresight*

17. The third chapter of the Strategy focuses on **implementation, funding and monitoring** aspects and its implementation.

18. Although facilitated by the UNEP/**MAP system and its Components**, it is the participation and active role of all stakeholders that will play a decisive role in the delivery of the Strategy. The UNEP /MAP system provides leadership and guidance with respect to implementing the Strategy. The UNEP/MAP action plans formulated with a view to implementing the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention, as well as other key existing regional mechanisms and instruments, are essential tools for implementing the Strategy. The UNEP /MAP system is of primary importance to provide support and technical guidance to the Contracting Parties to the Convention, as well as for coordinating implementation actions and monitoring processes. The **Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development** and its **Steering Committee** are key bodies within this system for leading and supporting the implementation of the Strategy, its evaluation and update processes.

19. **Intergovernmental and regional and sub-regional organizations** also have a very important role, working in tandem with each other and with the UNEP/MAP system, to facilitate synergies with countries using the Strategy as a common platform.

20.. Local authorities are key actors of the Strategy implementation as around 70% of SDG's rely on their effective work, while they are closer to citizens and can therefore support related engagement.

21. Delivering the 2030 Agenda as a whole requires youth and women's empowerment, and inclusive policies that leave no one behind. In the implementation of the Strategy, the role of Civil society, the youth and women's role becomes more pronounced notably in the framework of the implementation of circular green and blue economy, not only through corporate social responsibility, but also through more sustainable consumption and the production processes, and to take up important tasks related to awareness and sensitization.

22. **The private sector** is a key partner for the implementation of the Strategy. As a key player in the reinforcement of green circular economy, the private sector can be one of the strongest allies in the process of implementing the Strategy.

23. For **funding bodies**, the Strategy contains a set of widely-agreed regional objectives, as well as strategic directions within these objectives, which will help such bodies to position and assess funding proposals aimed at advancing sustainable development in the region.

24. Putting in place adequate **institutional structures** is a key priority in providing for effective implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy in this area rests on two pillars: Put in place or strengthen structures for sustainable development implementation at national and regional scale, and ensuring their adequate resourcing; and, strengthen regional processes for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy.

25. Implementation of the Strategy, based on the ambitious but necessary and realistic vision of boosting a sustainable Mediterranean on strong economic and social foundations, needs significant **financial resources**. The Strategy includes a series of actions to strengthen capacity for financing its implementation such as a project portfolio, capacity building processes and an investment facility for funding sustainable development actions in the Mediterranean.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

26. Sustainable development seeks to address the needs of current and future generations, utilizing natural resources and ecosystems in ways that preserve and sustain them, while further accelerating the decarbonization process, and ensure equitable access to them in the present and the future. It sets the framework for securing viable and lasting development and decent livelihoods for all, which are particularly important considerations in the current challenging Mediterranean socio-economic context.

27. The Strategy takes into account the outcomes of the **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)** which put particular focus on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Resolution on the **Pact for the Future**[9], that reaffirms the commitment to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs and urgently calls for accelerating progress towards achieving the Goals.

28. The Strategy equally takes into account the **UNGA Resolution 76/296 of July 2022**, **"Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility"**, which highlights that its goals can also be successfully **applied at regional level**, the **2024 UNEA 6, UNEP/EA.6/Res.15** on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution, scale-up means of implementation to enhance capacity to deliver ocean-related SDGs, as well as the **United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030**[10] with its vision 'The science we need for the ocean we want'.

29. The Strategy embeds, inter alia, the commitments and targets stemming from the **2015 UN Paris Agreement,** the **2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF),** the **European Green Deal,** the **International Maritime Organization's Strategy for reducing GHG emissions from ships**, the **Post-2020 SAPBIO**[11] **and other UNEP/MAP policies adopted after 2016, including Programmes of Measures to achieve Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.**

30. The Strategy will be endorsed in 2025, an important milestone year both at the global as well as at the regional Mediterranean level for the protection, conservation and sustainable use of marine environment and its resources: it coincides with the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3, Nice, France, 9-13 June 2025) that gave renewed impetus to the acceleration of global efforts and mobilization of all actors towards the achievement of SDG 14; the activation of implementation of numerous concrete new commitments with secured financing, by a wide array of stakeholders, submitted at the preceding 9th Our Ocean Conference (OOC-9, Athens, Greece, 15-17 April 2024); the likely entry into force of the historic Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement); the 50 year anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30 years of the Post Rio Barcelona Convention, that culminated with the Ministerial Declaration renewing their commitment for a sustainable Mediterranean, and their remarkable achievements and unique institutional role in the protection and preservation of the Mediterranean Sea and its sustainable development; the EU Ocean Pact and the upcoming New Pact for the Mediterranean, providing integrated frameworks to strengthen policy coherence and a thriving blue economy for the Mediterranean region; the entry into force of the designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SOx ECA) further limiting air pollution from ships, pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI; and, finally, the 30 year anniversary of the establishment of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), the advisory body of UNEP/MAP for integrating environmental considerations into socioeconomic policies and promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean, responsible for the elaboration of the Strategy.

31. These milestone achievements reflected in the Strategy reaffirms the strong commitment and vision towards sustainability and acceleration of the green transition in the region, through the constructive collaboration of all stakeholders.

32. Sustainable development is of key importance for the Mediterranean: it is a closed sea, in which water renewal is limited by the narrow connection to the ocean, and therefore particularly sensitive to pollution. In addition, its mild climate makes it home to a large diversity of ecosystems and species. The Mediterranean is also subject to considerable pressures. With its rich history and exceptional natural and cultural landscapes, its coasts accounted for 30 per cent of global tourist arrivals in 2011, while in previous years the figure had reached more than 35 per cent. The Mediterranean is the first

[9] Resolution A/RES/79/1 adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2024
[10] https://www.unesco.org/en/decades/ocean-decade
[11] Decision IG.25/11 on the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)

world tourist destination with 360 million tourists in 2020 with a forecast to reach 500 million by 2030 (UNWTO, 2019), largely concentrated from June to September and on the coast. Approximately half of the 2017 arrivals -170 million - are in Mediterranean coastal areas, intensifying the concentration of human-made pressures in coastal zones, particularly during the summer season. Moreover, the Mediterranean region hosts 26 million cruise passengers/year[12].

33. At the same time, international tourism receipts reached 190 billion Euros, representing approximately 26 per cent of the global total. Urban agglomerations on the Mediterranean coasts, along with tourist infrastructure, have resulted in the development of large and mega-cities[13], with consequent pressures from the rising population levels and the accumulation of economic activities in a particularly fragile environment Mediterranean, coastal and sea products and services, the agricultural products, as well as Mediterranean diets, have a global reputation, but depend entirely on the sustainability of coastal and marine resources and rural landscapes, and decent working conditions. Global shipping routes through the Mediterranean make the density of maritime traffic exceptional for a semi-closed sea. The recent surge of interest in the commercial exploitation of hydrocarbons and minerals under the Mediterranean seabed also poses increased risks for the Mediterranean environment.

34. Significant discrepancies in development levels and living standards between countries, together with the conflicts in the region, which are already negatively affecting investment and development, pose also challenges for envisaging a sustainable future of the Mediterranean basin. The fragility of the region is further provoked by its sensitivity to climate change: in its Sixth Assessment Report[14], the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that "during the 21st century, climate change is projected to intensify throughout the region. Air and sea temperature and their extremes (notably heat waves) are likely to continue to increase more than the global average (high confidence)". Over the last three decades, marine heatwaves (MHWs) in the Mediterranean Sea have caused mass-mortality events in various marine species, and critical losses for seafood industries. In the future, MHWs may undermine many benefits and services that Mediterranean ecosystems normally provide, such as food, maintenance of biodiversity, and regulation of air quality[15].

35. The Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC) have confirmed that due to global and regional trends in the drivers, impacts of Climate Change will be exacerbated in the coming decades, especially if global warming exceeds 1.5 to 2°C above the pre-industrial level. Significantly enhanced efforts are needed in order to adapt to inevitable changes, mitigate change drivers and increase resilience[16].

36. The aim of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 is to provide a strategic policy framework, built upon a broad consultation process, for securing a sustainable future for the region. The rationale behind the Strategy is the need to accelerate the sustainable development of the region, by equally tackling interlinked key challenges as climate change, biodiversity protection and green transition, by harmonizing the interactions between socio-economic and environmental goals, in line with the SDGs and Agenda 2030 to adapt international commitments to regional conditions, to guide national sustainable development strategies and to stimulate regional cooperation between stakeholders in the implementation of sustainable development. The Strategy is underpinned by the conviction that investment in the environment and steady progress towards decarbonization is the best way to secure long-term, sustainable job creation and socio-economic development, and an essential vehicle for the achievement of social and economic objectives. For this reason, the Strategy focuses on addressing cross-cutting issues that lie in the interface between environment and development. It addresses issues across sectoral, institutional and legal boundaries, emphasizing the interlinkages between environmental issues and economic and social challenges, rather than specific economic sectors such as tourism or agriculture. The Strategy is also expected to lead to synergies being forged between the work of important national and regional players and stakeholders, by providing a commonly agreed framework, thereby leading to increased efficiency in the

[12] 2020 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean: Summary for Decision Makers (SoED 2020)
[13] The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) in its 2018 "World Urbanization Prospects" report defines megacities as urban agglomerations with over 10 million inhabitants
[14] Sixth IPCC Synthesis Report (AR6) was released on 20 March 2023
[15] 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report
[16] First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) on "Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future", MedECC, 2020

implementation of sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

37. In this framework, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has a pivotal cross cutting role, therefore integrating ESD into strategic planning and community-based initiatives is crucial to support understanding, resilience and sustainable practices of all stakeholders, including citizens, towards adaptation to climate change, marine conservation, sustainable urban development, and green economic models in the Mediterranean region.

2.1. Background

38. At the 12th Conference of the Contracting Parties to Barcelona Convention in Monaco in November 2001, in line with the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention decided to prepare a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development.

39. The Strategy 2005-2015 was developed as a result of a consultation process that mobilized Mediterranean stakeholders, including Governments and civil society through the participation of non-governmental organizations and key experts and adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2005 at their 14th meeting in Portoroz, Slovenia. The 2016-2025 Strategy has been formulated taking into account the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which put particular focus on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and included an agreement to draft Sustainable Development Goals.

40. The need for the Strategy remains strong today, as while the new global and regional context has changed significantly, and the pressures and challenges are even more pronounced. At the same time, under the Barcelona Convention new regional instruments, voluntary and legally binding measures have been developed and are under implementation to address these pressures.

Mandate for the review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development

41. In light of the outcomes of Rio+20, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention requested, at their 18th Ordinary Meeting held in Istanbul, Turkey, in December 2013, that a review of the Strategy be launched (Decision IG.21/11), with a view to submitting a new strategy for consideration and adoption by the Contracting Parties at their 19th meeting, to be held in February 2016 in Greece. The Decision emphasizes the importance of synergies with the global Sustainable Development Goals process, in order to ensure coherence between global and Mediterranean regional objectives and targets, while allowing for regional innovation and specificities.

42. The 23rd meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols of 5-8 December 2023, Portoroz, Slovenia (COP23), mandated the Secretariat to update the 2016-2025 MSSD.

43. in order to effectively implement the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and its SDGs at the regional level, seeking to amend current unsustainable trajectories and place the region on alternative pathways to sustainability and resilience, thus accelerating the progress towards achieving Good Environmental Status[17].

Assessments of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

44. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development draws upon the findings of four assessments carried out to inform the review process, the first focusing on implementation between 2005 and 2010, and the other ones addressing the influence of the regional strategy on national strategies for sustainable development and the implementation of the two MSSD cycles.

[17] COP23 Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/MED IG.26/L.3)
https://cop23-slovenia.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/23ig26_L3_eng_portoroz-ministerial-declaration.pdf

45. In 2009, the UNEP/MAP Secretariat carried out a review and assessment of national strategies for sustainable development in the Mediterranean, in order to "provide an overall assessment of the actions and initiatives carried out so far by the Mediterranean countries for sustainable development and hence allow for a better appreciation of the state of play". It concluded that the Strategy has played a role more at the regional level, however, it noted that the UNEP/MAP initiative to assist in the preparation of national strategies was worthwhile and had been embraced by a number of countries.

46. In 2011, an assessment of the implementation of the Strategy 2005-2015 was carried out five years after its adoption, which offered a number of useful conclusions related to the emphasis on emerging priorities, such as climate change adaptation and the green economy, on the need to elaborate tangible targets and indicators, the reinforcement of the governance framework, as well as the opportunities for synergies with other programmes, organizations and initiatives [18].

47. In addition, the assessment also reported that at a national level-the entity responsible for coordinating the formulation and implementation of sustainable development strategies faced challenges in providing leadership and cross-government support.

48. Both the 2019 MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation and the 2024 MSSD Final Evaluation concluded that the Strategy has brought concrete learnings and best practices, including the flagship initiatives, that could significantly upscale the implementation of the Strategy. The two Evaluations also recognized that additional efforts related to its monitoring, means of implementation and capacity building actions need to be undertaken to ensure reinforced impact of the Strategy at regional, national and local level, to achieve the identified targets and to deliver the SDGs. In order to tackle the gap between policy vision and implementation processes, a more effective participatory process of stakeholders is to be promoted, as well as a more operational integrated approach among the different Strategic Directions, Action and Flagship Initiatives under the same Strategy Objectives and among Objectives. Breaking down fragmentation and achieving the deep transformative changes requires better connecting SDG-14 (Life below water) with the other SDGs, and focusing on synergies between climate action and sustainable development, providing win-win solutions, and minimizing trade-offs. In particular SDG-13 (Climate Action) is a lever to achieve the SDG-14 in the Mediterranean as the region is a climate hot-spot. In addition, adaptation and mitigation actions planned by countries to strengthen the resilience of coastal and marine areas, contribute to the achievement of other Strategy objectives/SDGs, in particular SDGs 15 (Land), 6 (Water and Sanitation), 7 (Energy), 8 (Sustainable economic growth), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (Cities and Infrastructure) and SDG 12 (Consumption and Production). Complete ownership and contribution of the Strategy by regional and national stakeholders also outside the UNEP/MAP system and partners is essential, as framework for cooperation effectively supporting the achievement of the SDGs in the region. The Strategy builds on and enhances strong and coherent interlinkages between all SDGs, thus ensuring an integrated and holistic approach that takes into account the overall integrity and inclusive approach of Agenda 2030. Financing the Strategy, improving its governance, outreach and coordination with regional and national stakeholders are also aspects that require further attention in order to ensure a concrete impact.

2.2. The Mediterranean Region

49. With its long history, its rich natural and cultural heritage, the Mediterranean Sea is a meeting point between three continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. Surrounded by 21 countries, it is the world's largest semi-closed sea.

Rich natural and cultural resources

50. Encompassing seven marine eco-regions, 75 coastal hydrological basins, and 224 coastal administrative regions, the Mediterranean Sea occupies a basin of almost 2.6 million km², has a coastline of 46,000 km, with an average water depth of approximately 1,500 m. The riverine systems that are the main source of nutrients and their related human activities have a significant impact on the

[18] UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.358/4: http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications- opinion-files/7166.pdf

health of the Mediterranean Sea.

51. The Mediterranean Sea is home to a large share of the world's marine biodiversity, but it is also the victim of decades of unsustainable use, despite the efforts for effective management. it also suffers most from the impacts of climate change, warming 20% faster than the rest of the world according to the MedECC[19], thus, it holds the highest percentage of threatened marine habitats, including 21% vulnerable and 11% endangered on the EU28 Red List.

52. The Mediterranean Sea hosts a very high percentage of the world's marine biodiversity and recognized as one of the 25 top global biodiversity hotspots. The peculiar geographical setting of the sea makes it very vulnerable to various anthropogenic pressures, such as overfishing, heavy maritime traffic, and land-based pollution, including the diffusion of non-native invasive species.

53. Home to 17,000 species of fauna and flora representing respectively 7.5% and 18% of the world's marine flora and fauna, the Mediterranean Sea is a hotspot of biodiversity in an area covering less than 1 per cent of the world's oceans and less than 0.3 per cent of its volume. The species diversity of the Mediterranean, although unevenly distributed between the eastern and western basins, is higher than in most other regions of the world with a large number of endemic species and critical levels of habitat loss, due to the geological history of this sea, its close communication with the Atlantic and its position at the junction of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa which make it a melting pot of biodiversity. Non-indigenous species (NIS) are increasingly present in the Mediterranean Sea generating significant changes in the fauna and flora composition, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean [20].

54. The Mediterranean region is home to some of the oldest human settlements in the world giving it unique cultural heritage and cultural landscapes. This has forged, over thousands of years, strong bounds among the people of the region and given added meaning to the sense of belonging to the Mediterranean. Despite their diversity, the regional identity of the Mediterranean countries has been strengthened by centuries of commerce and communication. It is still one of the world's busiest shipping routes, that constitutes an important transit and trans-shipment area for international shipping, as well as a realm for Mediterranean seaborne traffic (movement between a Mediterranean port and a port outside the Mediterranean) and short sea shipping activities between Mediterranean ports, and hosting 17% of the world's oil tanker capacity. Despite covering less than 1% of the world's oceans, the Mediterranean Sea accounted for more than a fifth (21-22%) of global shipping activity measured by the annual number of port calls, and around 9% of the annual container port throughput in recent years[21]. Shipping contributes around 2.6% of total global greenhouse gas emissions, a figure that could more than triple by 2050. This would represent 23% growth from 2015 to 2035. Implementing and promoting the Mediterranean SOx Emission Control Area[22], effective as of May 2025, engaging in the process for the designation of the Mediterranean as a whole as Nitrogen oxides emission control area (NECA), and decarbonation is crucial.

Mediterranean coastal zones: A vital interface between land and sea

55. The Mediterranean coastal zones form a crucial interface between land and sea. They have historically been densely populated, hosting extensive infrastructure and activities that have progressively intensified, leading to significant environmental impacts. As hubs for human activity, including tourism, fishing, and trade, these coastal zones are integral to the region's economy while facing pressures from urbanization and environmental degradation. These areas serve as transition zones, where the land meets the ocean, which drives changes in landforms, biodiversity, and the distribution of resources. Human activity along coasts further intensifies these land-sea interactions, impacting the balance of these sensitive regions.

19 MedECC 1st Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1)

[20] 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report

[21] 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report

[22] On 15 December 2022 the 79th session of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) adopted the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SOx ECA), with effect from 1 May 2025, to further limit air pollution from ships, pursuant to Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).]

56. It is estimated that approximately one third of the Mediterranean population is concentrated in its coastal regions, whereas 70% of the population lives either in cities - which are mostly coastal- or in coastal hydrological basins and 30% in rural areas knowing that rurality in the southern shore of the Mediterranean is more pronounced than in the North[23]. According to Plan Bleu the Mediterranean hosts 7% of the world population corresponding to 512 million inhabitants in 2018 in the 22 riparian countries with 314 million inhabitants in the South and East and 198 million in the North. In 2021, the population of the Mediterranean countries reached 532 million, increasing by close to 20 million people in only 3 years between 2018 and 2021. It reaches 65 per cent for the southern countries of the region, with around 120 million inhabitants. The population of the riparian states grew from 276 million in 1970 to 532 million in 2021 and is predicted to reach 630 and 690 million by 2050[24]. However, the distribution of population between the Mediterranean countries of the European Union and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries has changed dramatically over this period: in 1960, the Southern and Eastern countries represented 41 per cent of the total population, while today this figure is 65 per cent. This population growth is associated with a significant increase of the urban population, which grew from 48 per cent in 1960 to 67 per cent in 2010 and 70% in 2020[25].

Socio-economic trends

57. Mediterranean countries' economy grew less than the world average between 2000 and 2017, leading to a decreasing share of the Mediterranean world's gross domestic product (GDP) in the world GDP: from 12.9% in 2000 to 11% in 2010 and 9.8% in 2017[26]. The GDP growth rates in the south and east Mediterranean countries are higher than those of the North Mediterranean countries. However, they are considered low when compared to the population growth rates, as the demographic growth is still high in the southern Mediterranean countries. In 2021, the average income per capita in the South and East Mediterranean countries (10 000$) is more than 4 times lower than the average income in the North Mediterranean countries (40 000$). The share of the Mediterranean GDP in the world GDP is decreasing from 14.1% in 2000 to 12.6% in 2010, 11.3% in 2018 and 8% in 2021. This value is to be considered with attention because the GDP per inhabitant has increased since 2018 for all of the Mediterranean countries (except for Lebanon, Libya and The Syrian Arab Republic) but less than the other countries in the world[27]. The economic growth in the Southern and Eastern countries was accompanied by significant improvements in key social indicators as represented by the Human Development Index.

58. Traditional resource-based activities (i.e. fisheries, aquaculture forestry, agriculture, and primary industries), secondary industries (e.g. shipping, food processing, housing and construction) and services (e.g. shipping and tourism) will continue to dominate economic development in the Mediterranean coastal regions. Emergent resource-based activities (i.e. marine and deep-sea mining of non-living resources, renewable energies, underwater cables and pipelines, blue biotechnology) have to be taken into account as a source for job creations but also as possible drivers of impacts on the environment. There is a need to anticipate the development of these emerging and fast-growing new activities[28].The potential for economic opportunities in coastal cities remains a strong attractive force, attracting populations from the hinterland and fueling immigration from often economically depressed rural areas. These new coastal cities' inhabitants will demand employment, food, water, energy, housing, and other goods and services, exerting further pressure on the coastal ecosystems and environments, and therefore presenting a substantial development challenge for the Mediterranean.

59. Within the region, poverty continues to afflict many: the Arab Forum for Environment and Development reports that it affects 65 million people in the Middle East and Northern Africa. Economic insecurity is aggravated by high unemployment rates in the general population, which increase among youth. Sharp income disparities still exist among countries, and in some cases growth

[23] 2020 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean: Summary for Decision Makers (SoED 2020)
[24] MED2050 Report: Mediterranean Foresight Report for 2050
[25] 2020 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean: Summary for Decision Makers (SoED 2020)
[26] 2020 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean: Summary for Decision Makers (SoED 2020)
[27] MSSD dashboard indicator 3, 2023
[28] 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report

figures conceal deterioration in regenerative natural capitals. That raises questions about the ability of Mediterranean economies to create the millions of new jobs projected to be required to accommodate new entrants into the labor force, while keeping current unemployment rates stable. The impacts of poverty and unemployment have contributed to social marginalization, which is further compounded by income disparities, and gives rise to social and political instability. Demands for change across the Mediterranean reveal that the mounting economic, social, and environmental strains and the implications on livelihood security have become unsustainable. In many countries it is because sustainable development planning was absent that civil and armed conflict arose. Similarly, at the regional level, current and emerging socio-economic and political challenges and their impacts remain major concerns for sustainable development.

60. Despite demographic and geopolitical challenges, human development in the Mediterranean region has generally improved over the past decade. The gap between northern and southern/eastern shores has narrowed, though it remains. Education, especially in Southern and Eastern countries, has seen significant progress, with girls' enrollment now matching or exceeding boys at all levels. However, women's participation in the workforce remains low due to work-life balance issues, gender discrimination, and sociocultural barriers. Youth unemployment is also a significant concern, often three times higher than national averages.

61. Over the past two decades, the share of agriculture and industry in GDP has declined in favor of services, which now account for over half of national GDP in many countries. Mediterranean economies still depend heavily on unsustainable material consumption and carbon emissions, despite some improvements. High import dependency, particularly for fossil fuels and cereals, combined with trade deficits and non-diversified economies, limits resilience. Government debt has also risen, exceeding 100% of GDP in one-third of Mediterranean countries, posing risks to financial sustainability and public investment in the environment. At the regional level, current and emerging socio-economic and political challenges and their impacts remain major concerns for sustainable development.

62. In recent decades, production and consumption patterns in the Mediterranean have significantly changed due to demographic growth, urbanization, and rising living standards, leading to increased resource consumption and environmental degradation. The demand for processed food, manufactured goods, and coastal tourism has contributed to food loss, packaging waste, and the depletion of vital resources like water and energy. This situation is exacerbated by inefficient industrial processes and inadequate waste management. In 2016, the Barcelona Convention's Contracting Parties adopted the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), recognizing the need to change consumption patterns to protect marine and coastal environments[29].

2.3. Formulating the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

63. The preparation and update of the Strategy is a composite process that combines different interrelated steps and required the development of a number of parallel activities, including the outcome of two independent evaluation process of the status of the implementation of the Strategy for the period 2016-2025. The Strategy formulation process was inclusive and led by the members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), its Steering Committee and the inputs provided by experts through the establishment of technical groups on Circular Economy, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Ocean Economy/Sustainable Finance.

3. MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2026-2035: OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTIONS

64. The aim of this Strategy is to provide a strategic policy framework to secure a sustainable future for the Mediterranean region and efficiently deliver SDGs at regional and national level. To this end, the rationale behind the Strategy is the need to harmonise the interactions between socio-economic and environmental goals, in line with the SDG and 2030 Agenda to adapt international commitments to regional conditions, to guide national sustainable development strategies, and to stimulate regional

[29] 2020 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean: Summary for Decision Makers (SoED 2020)

cooperation between stakeholders in the implementation of sustainable development. In this respect, sustainable development translates into the need to take into account environmental, social and economic goals in decision-making at all scales and across all sectors. The Strategy is underpinned by the conviction that investment in the environment, decarbonization, climate resilience and circular, green and blue economy is the best way to protect Mediterranean sea and coasts and secure long-term, sustainable job creation and socio- economic development, and an essential vehicle for the achievement of social and economic objectives. Education for Sustainable Development supports all the Strategy objectives as a Cross-Cutting enabler.

65. The Strategy is built around the following vision:
A prosperous, climate resilient, and peaceful Mediterranean region in which people enjoy a high quality of life and where sustainable development takes place within the carrying capacity and in the limit of acceptable change of biologically diverse healthy, productive, conserved, restored wisely used and effectively managed ecosystems.

66. This is achieved through common objectives, shared actions, strong involvement of all stakeholders, cooperation, solidarity, equity and participatory governance.

67. This vision is encapsulated in the subtitle of the Strategy, which is '***Investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social well-being and economic development***'.

68. A set of guiding principles also informs the Strategy: the importance of an integrated approach to environmental and development planning; an openness to a plurality of future development models; a balanced approach to territorial development; the precautionary and polluter pays principles; and the Do No Significant Harm Principle (DNSH); a participatory approach to policy and decision-making; the management of demand in order to reduce consumptions; the importance of evidence-based policy; the reconciliation of long- and short-term for planning and evaluation (at least over a few decades); transparency, accountability and, the partnership between the UNEP/MAP system and other international and regional organizations.

69. The Strategy focuses on addressing cross-cutting issues that lie in the interface between environment and development. It is based on a set of cross-cutting themes that were chosen to provide scope for an integrated approach to address sustainability issues, as follows: Seas and coasts; Source to Sea; Natural resources, rural development and food; Water-Energy-Food -Ecosystem Nexus; Sustainable cities; Climate; Transition towards a green and blue economy; Governance.

70. The first four themes reflect a territorial approach, where complex sustainability issues can be addressed together: a concern over seas and coasts was a major outcome of Rio+20, as well as a cornerstone of the cooperation under the Barcelona Convention; the Source-to-Sea approach was highlighted in the Portoroz Ministerial Declaration of COP 23; rural areas provide a context for addressing a set of inter-related rural issues; and, cities were the theme of the Istanbul 18th Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2013. The four cross-cutting themes that follow are the Water-Energy-Food -Ecosystem Nexus, which is an integrated approach, very important for achieving the SDGs; climate change, which is a major sustainability issue from a global and regional perspective; the green and blue economy, which provides a key link between the environment and the economy and is a major focus of the Rio+20 Summit; and governance, which emerged during the consultation as a key issue for implementing sustainability in the Mediterranean region. These themes have been used as a basis for formulating the six objectives of the Strategy, as follows:

1 Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority

2 Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems

3 Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development

4 Plan-and manage sustainable, resilient Mediterranean cities

5 Accelerate transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance

6 Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.

71. These objectives correspond closely to the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, as indicated in Table 1 below. Nevertheless, due to the cross-cutting nature of the objectives, almost all the Sustainable Development Goals are indirectly relevant to all the Strategy's objectives.

Table 1. Linking the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 to the Sustainable Development Goals

Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 objectives	**Sustainable Development Goals**
1 Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority	7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all 13. Take urgent action to mitigate climate change and its impacts
2 Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems	6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
3 Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development	2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
4 Plan and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities	6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
5 Transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance	8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
6 Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development	5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 objectives	**Sustainable Development Goals**
7.Cross-cutting sustainable development goals related to social issues	1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all 8- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

The six objectives represent the backbone of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 Each objective covers a range of sustainability issues, as presented in Box 1:

Box 1. List of issues addressed by the six objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

1. Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority

- Scientific knowledge and tools on climate change not sufficiently accessible and used for decision-making
- The damage caused by climate change, including extreme events and long-term steady changes, increases in key vulnerable populations and economic sectors
- Insufficient number of adaptation plans and accompanying capacities to implement them
- Growing trend of greenhouse gas emissions within and beyond the energy and industry sector
- Slow pace in emergence of climate-friendly societies due to limited access to best available technologies and alternative development practices
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation costs largely unmet at national and local levels,
- Untapped potential of Circular economy practices and Sustainable Business Models to foster climate change mitigation/adaptation
- Over-reliance on public funding and state-led initiatives
- Need to improve the understanding on the assessment process and communication on the progress made by Mediterranean countries in implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- Lack of a common Mediterranean energy strategy and need to improve energy cooperation
- Still poor dissemination, awareness-raising, and media communication on the issues and challenges of climate change.
- Disruption of water, food and energy access (WEFE nexus)

2. Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems

Continued environmental degradation and increased risks from marine pollution and marine noise, including from plastic pollution and Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

- Loss of biodiversity and introduction of Non-indigenous species
- Ecosystem fragmentation and degradation
- Unsustainable exploitation of living resources in ecological systems,
- Impacts from exploitation of non-living marine resources, including hydrocarbons
- Incidental catches and collisions with threatened or endangered species and/or species in bad conservation
- Protected sensitive or vulnerable areas at risk from insufficient spatial coverage, planning, management and funding
- Increased linear coastal urbanization resulting in inadequate protection and management of land, urban sprawl owing to illegal construction and gentrification of coasts, and unrestricted tourism development leading to loss of public and natural open spaces
- Increased coastal vulnerability to natural hazards such as flooding and erosion

3. Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development

Natural resources and ecosystem services

- Loss of biodiversity and local varieties of crops and indigenous breeds from:
  - Overexploitation or illegal use of water and other natural resources
  - Habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, and lack of appropriate valuation
  - Non-indigenous and invasive species
  - Genetically modified organisms and Intensive monocultures/single-crop farming
  - Climate change
- Pollution of soil, water and air and extraction of limited natural resources
- Degradation and fragmentation of terrestrial ecosystems, notably wetlands, forests, dunes, as well as use of non-regenerative practices Insufficient awareness of ecosystem services and their economic benefits from society, industries and policymakers, and lack of appropriate valuation
- Cross-border issues in the management of natural resources and livestock production

Rural development and food

- Need to promote circular approaches to the use of natural resources in food production especially in the use of water for irrigation
- Vulnerability of small producers to economic and climatic changes and natural resource scarcity
- Low provision of social services and infrastructure in certain rural areas
- Loss of agricultural land, erosion and desertification, coupled with an expanding rural exodus
- Socio-economic inequalities affecting rural populations, particularly women and youth
- Logistical deficit at local, national and regional levels, including lack of access of local and small producers to land, water, credit, and markets
- Agricultural production and market controlled by large players, leaving limited access for small- scale producers and local products
- Loss of traditional know-how and aging farmers
- Insufficient collective organization and lack of participation of local communities in natural resource management
- Insufficient consideration of water, ecosystems, food and energy, in line with the WEFE nexus approach

4. Plan and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities

- Urban quality of life and health degraded by traffic congestion, noise, poor air quality, inadequate supply of sanitation and increased generation of urban waste and untreated urban wastewater
- Resilience reduced by natural and human-induced risks, particularly those triggered by climate change
- Unsatisfactory urban economic and social cohesion, especially in slums and informal urban settlements, which is further increased by regional territorial imbalances, resulting in rural migration to large cities that increases urban poverty
- Increased demand for energy, coupled with inefficient use of energy, and low usage of renewable energy sources
- Degradation of historic urban areas
- Need to increase circularity and reuse of construction and demolition waste as well as create more robust and resilient infrastructure, and raise awareness about the dangers represented by organized crime and toxic waste
- Continued rise in waste generation and food waste due to growing population and increased consumption patterns
- Unsustainable consumption and production patterns that negatively impact energy consumption and transportation choices
- Low capacity of local authorities for youth sensitive, integrated forms of urban management, children and the elderly/disabled person.

5. Accelerate Transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance
➢ Socio-economic inequalities between and within countries and high unemployment in particular for youth and women ➢ Just Economic growth that does not take into account environmental, gender and social impacts, including living wages and fair employment conditions for all ➢ Unsustainable lifestyles based on high resource-consumption patterns and low recycling rates, limited consumer awareness and insufficient product information ➢ Insufficient education and raising-awareness policies/strategies addressed the entire society for adopting sustainable consumption patterns and understanding the benefits of recycling and circular economy ➢ Infrastructure limitations on existing waste management and recycling systems to handle the scale of circular economy initiatives, requiring significant investment and upgrade ➢ Difficult adoption of Circular Economy practices within the business and industry sector, especially for micro and small companies, due to higher initial investment costs and risk exposure ➢ Lack of financial incentives and policy support for businesses to adopt circular practices ➢ Environmentally harmful subsidies (EHS) and inefficient production facilities ➢ Investment flows financing unsustainable facilities and inefficient infrastructure ➢ Policy uncertainties increasing the risk of investments in green technologies and processes ➢ Need to enhance green financing instruments and appropriate-regulatory frameworks and economic mechanisms/ incentives as well as, to address the existence of harmful subsidies ➢ Wrong price/market signals and fiscal incentives not valuing intangible and natural capital and externalities ➢ Lack of reliable data to assess the environmental impacts and economic benefits of circular practices makes it challenging to promote and scale these initiatives effectively. ➢ Inefficient trade markets and cooperation at regional level ➢ Low level of regional economic competitiveness ➢ Lack of targeted policy measures aiming at developing sustainable business models that generate both socio-economic, gender-oriented and environmental benefits ➢ Lack of criteria that take due consideration of environmental, climate and in general sustainability objectives in the selection of public and private investments (green taxonomy) ➢ Relatively high dependence on natural resources for economic development Reduced incentive and weak support/guidance for young start-up researchers
6. Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development
➢ Poor capacities for responding to emergencies, and poor understanding of the relationship between population flows and environmental sustainability ➢ Lack of both human and financial resources and competences within local authorities and local communities ➢ Non adequate involvement of stakeholders, and consensus building mechanisms, including non-state actors' as youth and women, private sector and financial institutions ➢ Low level of participation and empowerment in decision-making at various levels ➢ Fragmentation of responsibility in different levels of governance and between sectors, and lack of decentralization ➢ Lack of coherence and synergies between policies at different levels of decision-making across sectors in the long-term and across borders (Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development - PCSD) ➢ Insufficient planning, management, implementation and monitoring of existing legal instruments ➢ Scientific knowledge and tools relevant for sustainable development not sufficiently accessible and used for decision- making Inadequate awareness, education, and research and innovation regarding the understanding of sustainable development challenges and opportunities ➢ Need to advance public trusteeship concepts in the existing instruments for better and more equitable governance and more effective and efficient public participation ➢ Insufficient levels of awareness among Members of National and International Parliaments of the importance of their role in fostering sustainable development practices and legislations

- Insufficiency, unavailability of scientific knowledge and data and insufficient use for better informed policy making
- Lack of coordination mechanisms and tools to ensure vertical and horizontal collaboration among different levels of government and among different sectors

70. A set of strategic directions has been formulated for each of the six objectives of the Strategy, in order to ensure that the relevant issues are addressed. Table 2 lists the strategic directions for each objective. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the objectives, there are interlinkages between the strategic directions, and the implementation of one strategic direction may synergistically affect the implementation of another. Further strategic directions and actions have been elaborated in Chapter 3, which focuses on ensuring implementation and monitoring of the Strategy. Education for Sustainable Development is critical and is embedded cross cuttingly in the Strategy.

Table 2. Strategic directions under the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

Objective	Strategic direction
1. Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority	**1.1:** Increase scientific knowledge, education, raise awareness, and develop technical capacities to deal with climate change and ensure informed decision-making at all levels, recognising and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems
	1.2: Accelerate the uptake of climate smart and climate resilient responses
	1.3: Leverage existing and emerging climate finance mechanisms, including international and domestic instruments, and enhance the engagement of the private and finance sectors
	1.4: Encourage institutional, policy, legal and legislative reforms and initiative for the effective mainstreaming of climate change responses into national and local development frameworks in all sectors
	1.5 Promote economy decarbonization energy transition and deployment of renewable energies
	1.6 Strengthen national and local capacities on the application of nature-based solution for climate change adaptation and mitigation
2. Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems	**2.1** Strengthen implementation, compliance and monitoring with regional requirements of regulatory and policy frameworks of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention for coastal and marine management
	2.2 Promote balanced and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources
	2.3: Promote well connected-ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas, other effective area-based conservation measures and nature-based solutions at national, transboundary and Mediterranean level and enhance stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss
3. Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development	**3.1:** Promote the circular/regenerative use, management and conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Natural Resources and ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region
	3.2: Promote conservation and use of indigenous or traditional plant varieties and domestic animal breeds, value traditional knowledge and practices in rural management decisions
	3.3: Promote inclusive and sustainable rural development, with a specific focus on poverty eradication, One Health, food security, women's empowerment and youth employment, including equitable and sustainable access to basic local services for rural communities

Objective	Strategic direction
	3.4: Ensure access of local producers to distribution channels and markets, including the tourism market
4. **Plan and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities**	**4.1:** Apply holistic and integrated spatial planning processes and other related instruments, as well as improved compliance with respective rules and regulations, to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion and reduce pressures on the environment
	4.2: Encourage inclusive urbanization and strengthen capacities for participatory and integrated human settlement planning and management
	4.3: Promote the protection and rehabilitation of historic urban areas
	4.4: Promote sustainable production, use of sustainable products and effective waste management within the context of a more circular economy, as well as foster sustainable consumption patterns among citizens
	4.5: Promote urban spatial patterns and technological options that reduce the demand for transportation, improve urban air quality and stimulate sustainable mobility and accessibility in urban areas
	4.6: Promote green infrastructures and renewable energies and improve energy efficiency to contribute towards reducing the ecological footprint of the built environment
	4.7: Enhance urban resilience in order to reduce vulnerability to risks from natural and human-induced hazards including climate change
5. **Accelerate Transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance**	**5.1:** Create green, just and decent jobs for all, particularly youth and women, to eradicate poverty and enhance social inclusion
	5.2: Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, to support the shift towards circular economy approaches and sustainable business models
	5.3: Encourage innovation, public private partnerships and sustainable solutions to advance towards the objectives of a just low-carbon, circular, green and blue economy
	5.4: Promote the integration of sustainability, circularity and climate change principles and criteria on the programming and evaluation frameworks of public and private investment
	5.5: Promote an integrated financial ecosystem through a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance aiming to foster the channeling of private and public capital into sustainable investments.
6. **Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.**	**6.1:** Enhance regional, sub-regional and cross-border dialogue and cooperation, including on emergency-preparedness
	6.2 Strengthen the role, awareness and capacities of sub-national and local governments/ municipalities and of National and Regional Parliaments for implementing national and subnational sustainable development strategies and thus contribute to the achievement of SDG and MSSD objectives
	6.3: Promote the engagement of civil society, scientists, youth and women, financial institutions, private sector, local communities and other stakeholders in the governance process at all levels, in order to secure inclusive whole of society processes and integrity in decision-making
	6.4: Promote the implementation, and monitoring of the SD Strategies at all levels of government, considering synergies and tradeoffs between different policies and sectors, including intersectional management (WEFE NEXUS) by improving policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) based on whole of government approach, inter-ministerial coordination and multi-level government
	6.5: Promote education and research for sustainable development
	6.6: Strengthen regional capabilities for information management and enhance the promotion of evidence-informed policymaking and foresight

71. The strategic directions are complemented by actions to be taken at national and regional levels, which are accompanied by a broad indication of Responsible Actors, timeframes and indicators. Flagship initiatives are also identified, which demonstrate the vision of the Strategy in an exemplary way; these initiatives are indicative of a regional or (multi) national action that carries significant potential for results, demonstration and visibility.

72. A set of targets has also been developed for the Strategy, bearing in mind its focus on the interface between the environment and socio-economic development. The main source for the targets was the Sustainable Development Goals. The targets are summarised by objective in Table 3 below and appear in the Strategy under the relevant objective and strategic direction.

Table 3. Targets in the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

73. The Strategy aims at contributing to an ambitious set of targets through the implementation of its flagship initiatives and actions at regional, national and local scale.
Its targets are inspired by the global agenda for sustainability and SDGs of relevance for the Mediterranean Region, considering its specificities.

MSSD Objectives	Targets
1. Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority	**Target 1**: By 2030, Contracting Parties should minimize the impact of climate change and Mediterranean Sea acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, as well as investments on climate-resilient infrastructures, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity
	Target 2: By 2030 Contracting Parties should develop strategies that include information on climate change risks, its priorities, plans and actions to build adaptation and climate resilience
	Target 3: by 2030 Contracting Parties should develop and submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5°C, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 43% and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050
	Target 4: By 2030, Contracting Parties will reach a minimum of 20% of renewable energy in their energy mix, by increasing the renewable energy share derived from renewable resources in total final consumption, thus encouraging shifting towards energy transition, including soil management and food systems transformation and building sectors
2. Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems	**Target 5:** By 2030, Contracting Parties have ratified the Barcelona Convention Protocols and the appropriate legislative measures to implement them at the national level have been already taken
	Target 6: By 2030 Good Environmental Status of marine and coastal environment is maintained and enhanced through effective implementation of Ecosystem Approach and commitment under Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
	Target 7: By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected

	areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, and sustainably managed by applying ecosystem-based approaches including biodiversity and climate change-informed marine spatial planning, and by conducting environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments
	Target 8: By 2030 Contracting Parties shall ensure effective implementation of the legally binding measures adopted under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols on wastewater, marine litter, plastic pollution and under IMO International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention and its Annexes)
3. Promote sustainable resources management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable	**Target 9:** By 2030, Mediterranean Countries ensure that at least 75% of their population use safely managed drinking water services and at least 30% use safely managed sanitation in a multi-level context of water stress, competing demands and growing shortages, particularly for vulnerable populations and women. **Target 10:** By 2030, Mediterranean Countries ensure that at least 90% of the population has access to affordable, safe, and nutritious food all year round, through the promotion of resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems, including local supply chains
4. Plan and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities	**Target 11:** By 2030, all Mediterranean Countries have substantially reduced waste generation through prevention, recycling and reuse, particularly by ensuring that at least 60% of municipal solid waste is sustainably recycled, composted or managed, including separate collection and material recovery, including biowaste, with emphasis on packaging waste and on the most environmentally damaging SUP products as a priority.
	Target 12: By 2035, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have adopted regulatory and policy frameworks with health-based standards for air quality having regard to the World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines.
5. Accelerate Transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance	**Target 13:** By 2030, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have in place effective regulatory and policy frameworks, including economic incentives, aimed at facilitating the development of sustainable business models that integrate circularity and eco-innovation principles in the green and blue economies, while contributing to the development of non-pollutant and socially inclusive economies, in line with the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean.
	Target 14: By 2035 Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have established sustainable finance frameworks that mobilize capital towards green and sustainable investments, while fostering collaboration among all stakeholders.
6. Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.	**Target 15:** By 2030, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have formal mechanisms in place to ensure subsidiarity and synergies between policies at different levels of decision-making and across sectors in the long-term and across borders thus enhancing policy coherence on sustainable development (PCSD), including involvement of stakeholders.
	Target 16 : By 2030, ensure that all learners, including the general public, acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality,

	promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
	Target 17: By 2035, Mediterranean Countries have acceded to the Aarhus Convention.

74. The Strategy takes as a given the implementation of all national, regional and international obligations relevant to the Mediterranean, even if it does not explicitly mention them.

75. The actions proposed are aimed at providing guidance and inspiration, as they summarize the opportunities for developing national actions and regional collaboration within and outside the UNEP/MAP system for the most effective implementation of the Strategy. It is understood that not all countries may have the necessity or the resources to undertake all the proposed national level actions. It may be preferable, in line with national planning procedures, to adapt the proposed actions to national needs. National actions should therefore serve as a reference framework to help countries design national policies to implement the strategic directions. For the purposes of the Strategy, which has a focus on the Mediterranean region, sub-national regional authorities are included under the term 'local authorities'.

Objective 1: Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority

Vision and Actions

76. Addressing climate change is a priority for the Mediterranean. As highlighted in the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Mediterranean region, considered one of the world's major climate change hotspots, is highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of global warming.

77. Climate variability and change is already becoming increasingly evident in the Mediterranean. In recent decades, warm days and nights, heat waves, extreme precipitation and soil dryness have increased and cold days and nights have decreased. Regarding sea level rise, there are areas in the Mediterranean Sea with current average increases of more than 6 mm/year, but also with decreases of more than 4 mm/year.32 All model projections agree on the region's future warming and drying with potential huge risks and costs to the region's economy, population centres and biodiversity. More specifically, in the first MedECC Assessment Report annual average temperatures on land and sea across the Mediterranean Basin are 1.54°C higher than during pre-industrial times and they are projected to rise until 2100 by an additional 3.8 to 6.5°C for a high greenhouse gas concentration scenario and 0.5 to 2.0°C for a scenario compatible with the long-term goal of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement to keep the global temperature well below +2°C above the pre-industrial level[30].

78. In the near future, warm temperature extremes will increase, and heat waves will intensify in duration and peak temperatures. For 2°C of global warming above the pre-industrial value, maximum daytime temperatures in the Mediterranean will likely increase by 3.3°C. With 4°C global warming, nearly all nights will be tropical (night time temperature for at least five days above a location-dependent threshold) and there will be almost no cold days (below a location-dependent threshold) with dramatic effect on populations. Since the beginning of the 1980s, average Mediterranean Sea surface temperatures have increased throughout the basin, but with large sub-regional differences in the range between +0.29 and +0.44°C per decade, with stronger trends in the eastern basins (Adriatic, Aegean, Levantine and north-east Ionian Sea), marine heat waves have become longer and more intense .

79. Despite strong regional variations, a summer rainfall will likely be reduced by 10 to 30% in some regions, increasing existing water shortages, desertification and decreasing agricultural

[30] Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report

productivity. Aquifer recharge will be strongly impacted by warming and reduced rainfall, particularly in semi-arid areas. At current extraction rates, overexploitation of groundwater is likely to continue having a greater impact on decreasing groundwater levels than climate change[31].

80. Depending on the extent of climatic disruption, the consequences of climate change are expected to worsen already critical situations present in the region. The Mediterranean will face an increased risk of desertification and soil degradation, sea level rise, an increase in the duration and intensity of droughts, changes in species composition, habitat losses, and agricultural and forests production losses, resulting in an increased risk of coastal erosion, infrastructure damage and threatened water and food security. Changes in climate are also affecting and modifying the composition of forest stands and mix of species that affect carbon storage and balance. Social acceptance of these changes has to be taken into account by managers in a dynamic conservation forest perspective. The Middle East and North Africa region, which already has one of the lowest water availabilities per capita world-wide, is expected to be more severely affected. These risks all have social and human impacts related to increased vulnerability, particularly for the groups already living in poor conditions. In addition, given the inherent physical characteristics of small islands, which are emblematic of the Mediterranean Sea, the Sixth Assessment Report reconfirms their high level of vulnerability to climate stressors.

81. All Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols have ratified the 2015 Paris Agreement and are officially committed to achieve global peaking and 'climate neutrality' by the second half of the century. The overall contribution of the region to global greenhouse gas emissions is low: in 2021, Mediterranean countries contributed to 1,2% of the global CO2 emissions but it varies considerably. Since 2018, CO2 emissions have decreased in most of the Mediterranean countries except Libya, Morocco, Malta, Algeria and less in Tunisia and Türkiye. The COVID-19 period contributed to reducing C02 emissions but since 2021 the trend is again rising. In the northern Mediterranean, the CO2 emissions per capita are extremely diverse: from 1.6 tons per capita in Albania to above 5.95 tons in Slovenia, in 2021. The differences in CO2 emissions per capita are also significant in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries: from 1.26 tons in the Syrian Arab Republic to 11 tons in Libya[32] Nevertheless, carbon footprints are increasing steadily in southern Mediterranean countries as well, which highlights the need to mitigate climate change. In particular, the energy sector, accounting for 85 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in the Middle East and North Africa region[33], and the transport sector play a crucial role in mitigation efforts.

82. In the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable 2026-2035 a range of actions are recommended to address common adaptation and mitigation challenges. Other climate change-related initiatives followed, in particular the Union for the Mediterranean Expert Group on Climate Change, with a mandate to provide a multilateral and multi-stakeholder platform for exchange of information, best practices, and opportunities for cross-border cooperation.

83. However, progress towards a green, low-carbon and climate-resilient Mediterranean region remains limited and constrained by a number of issues and barriers that still need to be addressed. Scientific knowledge, data and information from research and monitoring systems remain insufficiently developed and shared. When such information resources have been developed, they are often not easily applicable in decision-making processes. Moreover, even when information is applicable , it is often not used. Awareness of the co-benefits of climate change policies for economic development is low, which hampers their implementation. Regional cooperation efforts are scattered and would benefit from better coordination. Persistent market distortions and substantial financing and technology gaps across the region limit the shift towards more climate-friendly development models, especially in the area of renewable energies and energy efficiency. In addition, public participation, the involvement of the private and finance sectors, and the capacity to benefit from international funding mechanisms need to be fostered.

84. Adapting to climate change is as important as addressing its root causes. The acknowledgement of

[31] First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) on "Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future", MedECC, 2020
[32] Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development dashboard indicator No. 21 (2023 data)

the diverse socio-economic, environmental and political contexts within individual Mediterranean countries is also critical. The Mediterranean countries need to identify and develop a country-based approach as well as a regional approach to climate change adaptation, with common regional priorities in order to benefit from a more tailored and coordinated response and to increase the resilience of the Mediterranean to climate change. This is the main purpose of the updated Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Zones (RCCAF) framework which will assist stakeholders and policy makers at all levels across the Mediterranean in order to: (i) promote appropriate institutional and policy frameworks, increase awareness and stakeholder engagement and enhance capacity building and cooperation; (ii) Identify, assess and implement best practices (including low regret measures) for effective and sustainable adaptation to climate change impacts; (iii) promote leveraging of existing and emerging finance mechanisms relevant to climate change adaptation, including international and domestic instruments; (iv) promote better informed decision- making through research and scientific cooperation and improved availability and use of reliable data, information and tools.

85. The Mediterranean region is at a crossroads with regard to climate change and development. If left unaddressed, climate change will pose a serious risk to economic growth and may jeopardize the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in most Mediterranean countries. Climate change is no longer considered an environmental or scientific issue but rather a developmental challenge that requires urgent and dynamic policy and technical responses at the regional, national and local levels. Adaptation is not only about responding directly to the impacts of climate change but also about addressing wider sources of existing vulnerabilities. Mitigation is not only about avoiding dangerous climate change but also an opportunity to re-orientate the way natural resources are used, in more sustainable directions.

Objective 1: Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
Target 1: By 2030, Contracting Parties should minimize the impact of climate change and Mediterranean Sea acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, as well as investments on climate-resilient infrastructures, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity	**MSSD Core indicator 6 a),** Atmospheric Surface temperature**; 6 b),** Sea surface temperature Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations	**SDG Indicator 14.3.1** Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations **Target 8 Indicators of KMGBF:** **Component indicators** **Complementary indicators**
Target 2, By 2030 the Contracting Parties should develop strategies that include information on climate change risks, its priorities, plans and actions to build adaptation and		**SDG Indicator 13.2.1** Number of countries with nationally determined contributions, long-term

Objective 1: Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority		
climate resilience		strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Target 3: by 2030 Contracting Parties should develop and submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5°C, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 43% and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050	**MSSD Dashboard indicator 21**, Green House Gas emissions per capita (related to GDP) **MSSD Core indicator 5,** Carbon dioxide emissions per capita	**SDG 13,** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts **Indicator 13.2.1**, Number of countries with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change **Indicator 13.2.2**, Total greenhouse gas emissions per year
Target 4: By 2030, Contracting Parties will reach a minimum of 20% of renewable energy in their energy mix, by increasing the renewable energy share derived from renewable resources in total final consumption, thus encouraging shifting towards energy transition, including soil management and food systems transformation and building sectors	**MSSD Dashboard Indicator 22b** Renewable energy share in the total energy consumption	**SDG 7,** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all **Indicator 7.2.1,** Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption

86. Climate change policies need to be based on sound scientific knowledge and data, coupled with awareness raising and technical capacities to ensure informed decision-making at all levels, recognising and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems (strategic direction 1.1). At a national level, the Strategy focuses on the strengthening of monitoring systems and the establishment of innovative communication programmes with the cooperation of academic institutions, centres of excellence and national and intergovernmental institutions, also through dedicated education programmes and sensitization campaigns. It also emphasizes assessment and enhancing the climate change adaptation capacity of ecosystems such as coasts, wetlands and forests, as well as their mitigation services, as in the case of forests and marine areas – considering that these actions are often already available without the need for upfront investment as well as the need to support Countries in developing legal indicators for efficient climate governance. At a regional level, the Strategy promotes a Mediterranean research agenda to be implemented through synergies, data sharing and harmonization, and regional level education through various schemes such as Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) programmes

on Mediterranean climate change issues and responses. This section contains also a regional action for enhancing regional capacities for climate change monitoring and analysis through multi-country data-sharing agreements and integration of existing climate observation and early warning systems. This calls for the promotion of harmonised indicators and tools for climate change vulnerability and mitigation assessments such as climate risk analysis and adaptation planning under uncertainty, disaster risk management, climate change economic costs, as well as monitoring, reporting and verification of emissions/reductions in greenhouse gases. The flagship initiative Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), an open and independent international scientific expert network, providing information to decision-makers and the general public on the basis of available scientific information and on-going research, further focuses on the promotion of a regional science-policy interface mechanism, including the social and behavioral sciences, with a view to preparing consolidated regional scientific assessments and guidance on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation option, as the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1)[33], the Special Report on Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks in the Mediterranean[34] and the Special Report Interlinking climate change with the Water – Energy – Food – Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin[35].

Strategic Direction 1.1: Increase scientific knowledge, education, raise awareness, and develop technical capacities to deal with climate change and ensure informed decision-making at all levels, recognising and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
1.1.1. Upgrade, sustain and expand climate, weather and water monitoring systems.	National governments, government specialized agencies, National and Regional Parliaments regional and global institutions, academia	2030
1.1.2. Assess, communicate, protect and enhance climate change adaptation capacity of ecosystems such as coasts, wetlands and forests, as well as their mitigation services, as in the case of forests and marine areas.	National governments, government specialized agencies, National and Regional Parliaments, regional and global institutions, academia	2030
1.1.3. Establish national climate clearinghouses to ensure that the relevant knowledge, data and information reach the various types of stakeholders.	National governments, academia, regional and global institutions, private sector	2030
1.1.4. Raise public awareness through environmental education campaigns, youth events and ensure climate change is mainstreamed in the formal educational curricula, including through dedicated courses.	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, local authorities, regional and global institutions, academia, civil society, youth	2030
1.1.5. Ensure training programs for local authorities and community leaders, teachers, educational stakeholders, youth to increase knowledge on climate adaptation and resilience.	Educational Institutions, academia, schools, professional development Institutions, Environmental Education Centers	2030

[33] MedECC, 2020: Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report. https://www.medecc.org/medecc-reports/climate-and-environmental-change-in-the-mediterranean-basin-current-situation-and-risks-for-the-future-1st-mediterranean-assessment-report/
[34] MedECC, 2024: Climate and Environmental Coastal risks in the Mediterranean. https://www.medecc.org/medecc-reports/med-coastal-risks/
[35] MedECC, 2024: Interlinking climate change with the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin. https://www.medecc.org/medecc-reports/climate-wefe-nexus/

Strategic Direction 1.1: Increase scientific knowledge, education, raise awareness, and develop technical capacities to deal with climate change and ensure informed decision-making at all levels, recognising and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
Regional		
1.1.6. Promote a Mediterranean research agenda on climate change by encouraging collaborative programmes and networking amongst research centres and universities.	Regional and global institutions, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) academia, research centres, civil society	2035
1.1.7. Enhance regional capacities for climate change monitoring and analysis through multi-country data-sharing agreements and integration of existing climate observation and early warning systems.	Regional and global institutions, PAM-CGS, academia, research centres, civil society	2030
1.1.8. Promote harmonised indicators and tools for climate change vulnerability and mitigation assessments, including climate risk analysis and adaptation planning under uncertainty, disaster risk management, climate change economic costs, as well as monitoring, reporting and verification of emissions/reductions in greenhouse gases.	Regional and global institutions, academia, specialized governmental agencies, civil society, MedECC	2030
1.1.9. Establish regional courses (promote a "Mediterranean Climate Change Literacy Program") and diplomas; promote e-learning and massive open online course (MOOC) programmes on Mediterranean climate change issues and responses.	Regional and global institutions, academic networks, specialized governmental agencies, civil society, MedECC	2030
1.1.10. Develop legal indicators for efficient climate governance in the Mediterranean	Regional and global institutions, National and Regional Parliaments, academic networks, specialized governmental agencies, civil society	2030

87. Strategic direction 1.2 seeks acceleration in the uptake of climate-smart and climate-resilient responses that can assist in addressing climate change issues. At a national level, a key action to be undertaken is the designing, financing and implementation of national technology investment plans for climate change. At the Mediterranean level, the Strategy promotes climate change adaptation and mitigation knowledge-sharing platforms and supports mechanisms aiming at fostering collaborative R&D and innovation programmes between universities, governments and businesses, including start- ups and SMEs. This calls for the utilisation of existing structures within the UNEP/MAP system to support the dissemination of regional climate knowledge, also hosting a web-based regional climate change clearinghouse mechanism that will contain information on climate change monitoring, research, practical tools and projects. A regional action

focuses on the creation of a Mediterranean Climate Technology Initiative, taking advantage of such existing initiatives at the global, European and national levels.

Strategic Direction 1.2: Accelerate the uptake of climate smart and climate resilient responses		
Actions **National**	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
1.2.1. Design, finance and implement national technology investment plans for climate change.	National governments, regional and global institutions, private sector	2030
Regional		
1.2.2. Develop regional climate change adaptation and mitigation knowledge-sharing platforms and support mechanisms aiming at fostering collaborative R&D and innovation programmes between universities, governments and businesses, including start-ups and SMEs.	Regional and global institutions, academia, civil society, private sector	2030
1.2.3. Create climate change specific funding lines on innovation open to southern and eastern Mediterranean countries under large-scale international programmes (e.g. European Union Research Programmes Climate KIC, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)	Regional and global institutions, national governments, private sector, civil society	2030
1.2.4. Utilize existing structures within the UNEP/MAP system and its partnerships, to support the dissemination of regional climate knowledge, also hosting a web-based regional climate change clearinghouse mechanism that will contain information on climate change monitoring, research, practical tools and projects.	UNEP/MAP, regional and global institutions, civil society, MedECC, PAM	2030

88. Strategic direction 1.3 focusses on the leverage of existing and emerging climate finance mechanisms, including international and domestic instruments, and on enhancing the engagement of the private and finance sectors. Financing in support of responses to climate change issues will be mobilised through various instruments including pricing, targeted subsidies, national funds, eco-taxes, concessional interest rates, and others as appropriate, at the national level, while encouraging the shift of public and private spending and consumption habits towards green and climate-friendly practices, processes and products. New fund-raising opportunities need to be developed that advocates the legal frameworks and economic policies that incentivize green practices. Conducive legal frameworks are also required. At a regional level, the focus is on assisting countries to strengthen institutional and technical capacities to improve access to international climate funding mechanisms, including non-conventional and innovative funding, and ensure effective delivery of funds.

Strategic Direction 1.3: Leverage existing and emerging climate finance mechanisms, including international and domestic instruments, and enhance the engagement of the private and finance sectors		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
1.3.1. Set up suitable domestic financial instruments to finance the costs of adaptation and mitigation efforts at national level while encouraging climate -friendly investment.	National governments, local authorities, private sector	2030
1.3.2. Establish conducive legal and legislative frameworks for leveraging private sector investments and developing partnerships between public and private actors in the delivery of climate change actions.	National governments, civil society, private sector	2030
1.3.3 Capacity building for stakeholders on bonds to access climate/green and sustainable finance		2030
Regional		
1.3.4. Assist countries and relevant international organizations to strengthen institutional and technical capacities to improve access to international climate funding mechanisms, including non-conventional and innovative funding and ensure effective delivery of funds.	Regional institutions, national governments, National and Regional Parliaments	2030

89. Strategic direction 1.4 addresses mainstreaming climate change at the legislative and policy levels. It provides a particular focus on measures concerning energy and transport, and delivering sustainable no/low regret adaptation measures across all vulnerable sectors and territories such as coastal and urban areas, water management, agriculture, health, and tourism. The inclusion of climate measures into coastal policies and plans is particularly highlighted. With respect to energy, the Strategy seeks to mainstream climate change through scaling up investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy, promoting universal energy access, reforming energy subsidies, and ensuring that energy projects are assessed for their climate impact. Coordination mechanisms will be reinforced and the effective involvement of local authorities in planning and implementation will be enhanced. At the regional level, the Strategy calls for enhancing national structures and strengthening the implementation of commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as implementing high-level regional initiatives including the UNEP/MAP updated Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, and other regional initiatives. The national efforts will be supported by a regional climate change knowledge and innovation centre contributing also to regional coordination and cooperation. Country-specific analysis of legal needs guided by regional climate objectives on climate change adaptation and project designed to support countries in this process, offering technical and financial assistance to strengthen legal frameworks is key to facilitate cross-border knowledge exchange and best practice sharing, allowing the region to make significant progress.

Strategic Direction 1.4: Encourage institutional, policy legal and legislative reforms and initiatives for the effective mainstreaming of climate change responses into national and local development frameworks in all sectors		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
1.4.1. Mainstream climate change into national legislation and policies with a focus on measures concerning energy and transport and on delivering no/low regret adaptation measures across all vulnerable sectors and territories such as coastal and urban areas, water management, agriculture, health, and tourism; introduce climate change measures into urban and coastal policies and plans.	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
1.4.2. Mainstream climate change in the energy sector through scaling up investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy, promoting universal energy access and reforming energy subsidies and ensuring that energy projects are assessed for their climate impact.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2030
1.4.3. Establish designated climate change coordination mechanisms or utilize existing mechanisms within countries involving all relevant stakeholders.	National governments, local authorities, regional and international organizations, UfM, academia, civil society, private sector	2030
1.4.4. Enhance the leadership and capacity of local authorities addressing climate change issues, through twinning and capacity-building programmes and greater access to climate finance.	National governments, local authorities, regional and international organizations, academia, civil society, private sector	2030
1.4.5. Implement and monitor commitments and obligations under the UNFCCC climate agreement and its implementation mechanisms.	National governments, local authorities, civil society	2030
1.4.6. Implement high-level regional initiatives, including the UNEP/MAP Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, and other regional initiatives as appropriate.	Regional and international organizations, national governments, local authorities, academia, civil society	2030
1.4.7. Implement a country-specific analysis of legal needs guided by regional climate objectives on climate change adaptation	Regional and international organizations, national governments, local authorities, academia, civil society	2030
Regional		

Strategic Direction 1.4: Encourage institutional, policy legal and legislative reforms and initiatives for the effective mainstreaming of climate change responses into national and local development frameworks in all sectors		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
1.4.8. Provide policy tools and guidance through the available climate change knowledge and innovation platforms for enhancing national governance, legal and investment frameworks in terms of climate change strategies and action plans and regional coordination and cooperation.	Regional and international organizations, national governments	2030
1.4.9. Mobilize resources and support for the development of trans-Mediterranean power grids for efficient utilization of renewable energy sources in the region, including solar energy.	Regional organizations, national governments, local authorities, private sector	2030

90. Strategic Direction 1.5 is strictly linked to Objective 5 'Transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance', as well as with Objective 4 'Plan-and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities' and Strategic Direction 4.6, Promote green infrastructures and renewable energies and improve energy efficiency, to contribute towards reducing the ecological footprint of the built environment. Related Actions under Strategic Direction 1.5 are therefore complementary. In 2021, Mediterranean countries contributed to 1,2% of the global CO2 emissions, while the expected impacts of climate and environmental changes necessitate an accelerated energy transition in the countries of this region to enable a secure, sustainable and inclusive development.[36] In fact, economy decarbonization and deployment of renewable energies play a pivotal role in contributing to decline of the greenhouse gas emissions, and by leveraging on resource-efficient, low-carbon and circular economy as well as on a diverse range of renewable energy sources. At national level Action 1.5 proposes the development of country-specific cost-effective and inclusive economy decarbonisation policies and strategies/Actions Plans as well as the definition of complementary policies on reallocation of public/private sector budget/investment, long-term infrastructure planning, emissions pricing standards, as well as on labor market adaptation and related reskilling needs. The flagship imitative on delivering 1TW of renewable energy capacity in the Mediterranean by 2030 (TERAMED) stands as concrete response towards accelerating the uptake of climate-smart and climate-resilient.

Strategic Direction 1.5 Promote economy decarbonization energy transition and deployment of renewable energies		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
1.5.1 Design and deploy country-specific cost-effective and inclusive decarbonisation policies and strategies/Actions Plans, the pivotal role of green technologies, research and innovation, digitalization and Artificial Intelligence to support low-carbon economic activities	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, sub-national and local authorities	2030
1.5.2 Definition of complementary policies on reallocation of public/private sector budget/investment, Long-term infrastructure planning, carbon emissions pricing standards and regulations to enhance the cost-effectiveness of decarbonisation strategies	National governments, private sector and investors	2030

[36] Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1)

Strategic Direction 1.5 Promote economy decarbonization energy transition and deployment of renewable energies		
1.5.3 Development of policies and Action Plans on labor market adaptation and related reskilling needs for a low-carbon and circular economy	National governments, educational/academic institutions	2030
1.5.4 Development of policy frameworks and Plans to streamline renewable energy infrastructures and projects, including on renewable energy technologies, and catalyze private sector investments	National governments, sub-national and local authorities, private sector and investors	2030

91. Nature-based solutions are recognised for their potential to address the threats, providing multi-purpose solutions to support ecosystem restoration and enhancement of ecosystem services to protect society against negative impacts of climate change. In March 2022, the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly adopted the Resolution UNEP/EA.5/Res.5[37] on the definition of nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development, while at the UNFCCC COP27, nature-based solutions emerged for their potential to address climate change. Nature-based solutions are typically stakeholder-driven and tailored to regional conditions therefore it is key to empower regional and local authorities and stakeholder communities to identify and implement them on capacity building and knowledge sharing. To this aim, Strategic Direction 1.6 focuses on the development of activities aimed at strengthening national and local capacities, while building on the exiting regional platforms and networking initiatives, including the EU Missions on adaptation to climate change and on ocean and waters.

Strategic Direction 1.6 Strengthen national and local capacities on the application of nature-based solution for climate change adaptation and mitigation		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
1.6.1 Assess the national and local capacity needs for implementing nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation	National governments, sub-national and local authorities	2030
1.6.2 National Guidelines for the development of national and local capacities for the application of nature-based solution for climate change adaptation and mitigation	National governments, sub-national and local authorities	2030
1.6.3 Promotion of trainings, educational programmes and learning platforms/hubs policies, knowledge and best practices on nature-based solution for climate change adaptation and mitigation	National governments, educational/academic institutions Environmental Education/ESD Centers	2030
Regional		
1.6.4 Support national, sub-national and local capacities to participate and set up regional and sub-regional projects, networks and Platforms on best practices exchanges on Nature-Based Solutions, taking also into account the activities and network of the EU Missions on adaptation to climate change, water and ocean and future developments	National governments, sub-national and local authorities, regional and sub regional organizations/institutions	2035

[37] http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39864/NATURE-BASED%20SOLUTIONS%20FOR%20SUPPORTING%20SUSTAINABLE%20DEVELOPMENT.%20English.pdf

Objective 2: Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems

Vision and Actions

92. The objective focusing on healthy marine and coastal areas sits firmly and historically in the basin approach taken by MAP and the Barcelona Convention. The 1975 MAP was the first ever regional seas programme under the UNEP umbrella. The Barcelona Convention was adopted in 1976 by the Mediterranean countries and the European Community. Since then various protocols have been adopted under the Convention to help with the protection of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal regions. The protocols currently cover dumping from ships and aircraft, oil and harmful pollution emergencies, land-based pollution, specially protected areas and biological diversity, pollution from exploitation of the continental shelf, hazardous wastes and most recently, integrated coastal zone management.

93. In the last decade the Convention has actively worked on developing Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) approach and framework, recognizing it as an essential component of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

94. The 2005 Strategy established the sea and coastal zones as one of its seven priority fields of action, deeming this priority as essential in making real progress in the sustainable development of the Mediterranean. In the years since its adoption, there have been a number of sub-regional, regional and global developments relevant to this objective, which include:

- **Higher profile for marine issues within sustainable development**. Rio+20 increased the focus on marine issues through its chapter on oceans and seas. In addition, there is increasing recognition of the role of marine areas in economic development, as the concept of the blue economy illustrates. In addition, at the Mediterranean level, the Istanbul Declaration19 contains a commitment from the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, "to make the Mediterranean an exemplary model in implementing activities effectively protecting the marine and coastal environment as well as contributing to sustainable development".

- **The COP23 Ministerial Declaration commits the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to intensify the activities at all levels,** to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to a swift update of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 in order to effectively implement the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and its SDGs at the regional level, seeking to amend current unsustainable trajectories and place the region on alternative pathways to sustainability and resilience.

- **The growing relevance of the MSSD and of the awareness of the global community and the of Contracting Parties on the importance to connect SDG-14 (Life bellow the Sea) with the other SDGs**, particularly those with ocean-related targets. Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supporting Governments in opening up to new and concrete opportunities to secure the sustainable long-term development of the sea[38]. Marine Spatial Planning approach can be a concrete example of a tool that concretely enhances linkages among SDGs at national and regional level.

- **Stronger regional policy instruments under the Barcelona Convention**. The adoption (2008) and entry into force (2011) of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean, including the 2023 Conceptual Framework for implementing Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) recognized the importance of an integrated management approach for the sustainable development of coastal zones. In addition, since 2008 the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention committed

[38] https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/ID_8_Leveraging_interlinkages.pdf

to apply the ecosystem-based approach – through the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap – to the management of human activities while enabling a sustainable use of marine goods and services, with the view to achieving or maintaining good environmental status of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal regions, their protection and preservation, as well as preventing their subsequent deterioration.

- **Sub-regional policy development**. The European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (2008) and the associated criteria and indicators have become applicable to European Union Member States. In addition, Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) is recognised as an important tool for integrated planning. The European Union Macro Regional Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is also being implemented at sub-regional level, with a pillar focusing especially on Blue Growth.

- **Launch of a regional process since 2008 aiming at the establishment of protected areas in the areas beyond national jurisdiction,** on the basis of joint proposals by neighbouring countries for inclusion in the List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance. The further resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (General Assembly resolution 72/249), adopted by consensus; the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (A/CONF.232/2023/4), recognizing that action is needed from the Mediterranean Region as a contribution to its early entry into force and the pivotal role of the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties in this process.

- **Global recognition of Mediterranean marine areas in need of protection, including areas of national jurisdiction and deep-sea habitats and the importance of the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs).** The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2014 listed 15 Mediterranean areas meeting the scientific criteria for ecologically- or biologically-significant marine areas, due to issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. The 30 by 30 Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed, as well as the Target 1.4 and 1.5 of Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO).

95. Increased realization of the economic value of the open sea and the need for blue growth has promoted an increase in the exploration for and exploitation of non-living open sea resources (e.g. oil, gas) and emphasized the need for robust integrated maritime spatial planning to support sustainable development.[22] Therefore the Strategy promotes the blue economy concept through strong partnerships between maritime sectors and public authorities in regard to the sustainable and equitable use of marine areas and resources. In addition, the global momentum behind assessing vulnerabilities and the impacts of climate change and delivering an effective and efficient response has grown rapidly over the last decade, leading to the increased inclusion and mainstreaming of climate change in many sectors associated with coastal and marine areas.

The strategy for marine and coastal areas rests on three pillars:

- Strengthen compliance with implementation and monitoring of regional requirements and policy frameworks of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention for coastal and marine management (strategic direction 2.1)

- Promote balanced and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources (strategic direction 2.2)

- Promote well connected ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures at national and Mediterranean level and enhance stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss (strategic direction 2.3)

Objective 2: Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
Target 5: By 2030, Contracting Parties have ratified the Barcelona Convention Protocols and the appropriate legislative measures to implement them at the national level have been already taken	**MSSD Dashboard** **Indicator 6**: Number of ratifications and level of compliance as reported by Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties	No corresponding SDGs
Target 6: By 2030 Good Environmental Status of marine and coastal environment is maintained and enhanced through effective implementation of Ecosystem Approach and commitment under Barcelona Convention and its Protocols	**Indicators of:** a) Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) b) Quality Status Report for the Mediterranean (MED QSR)	**SDG 14,** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development **Indicator 14.2.1**, Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to manage marine areas
Target 7: By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, and sustainably managed by applying ecosystem-based approaches including biodiversity and climate change-informed marine spatial planning, and by conducting environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments	**MSSD Dashboard Indicator 7:** Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine territorial waters **MSSD Dashboard Indicator 9a:** Number of protected areas participating in the Green List initiative **MSSD Dashboard Indicator 10**: Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems **MSSD Core indicator 10** Evolution of Mediterranean protected areas and their associated surfaces % of MPAs with effective management plans in place	**SDG 14,** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development **Indicator 14.2.1,** Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to manage marine areas **SDG 15,** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss **Indicator 15.5.1,** Red List Index

Objective 2: Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
	Protected area and OECM management effectiveness (MEPCA) indicator	
Target 8: By 2030 Contracting Parties shall ensure effective implementation of the legally binding measures adopted under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols on wastewater, marine litter, plastic pollution and under IMO International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention and its Annexes)	**Indicator:** Number of Contracting Parties that have ratified the MARPOL Convention and its Annexes	**SDG 6,** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all **Indicator 6.3.1,** "Proportion of wastewater flows safely treated" **SDG 14,** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development **Indicator 14.1.1**, (a) Index of coastal eutrophication; and (b) plastic debris density **Indicator 14.2.1** Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to manage marine areas

96. National actions under strategic direction 2.1 include strengthening implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its protocols, with focus on the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, national coastal conservation initiatives, and the updated Ecosystem Approach Roadmap, as well as delivery of ratified protocols through strengthened national policies and priority actions. These processes, developed in more detail in the strategic direction 6.4(Governance objective), will be supported by regional and sub-regional roadmaps for delivery of protocols and enhanced coordination, exchange of good practices, including technology and local knowledge transfer. Joint efforts will be initiated for the coastal and marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea, including the areas beyond national jurisdiction, as part of the wider efforts to implement the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO).

Strategic direction 2.1: Strengthen implementation, compliance and monitoring with regional requirements of regulatory and policy frameworks of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention for coastal and marine management		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
2.1.1. Strengthen the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and other regional policy instruments, as well as related national action plans and through enhanced prioritization and results-based management through ministries with environmental and budget portfolios and implementing line agencies.	National governments, local authorities, regional institutions, private sector, civil society	2035
2.1.2. Implement the updated Ecosystem Approach Roadmap and in synergy with the implementation of MSP, to achieve healthy marine ecosystems and conserve marine biodiversity	UNEP/MAP, national governments	2035
2.1.3. Transpose the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (where ratified) and its Action Plan into national policies and further its implementation, and implement COP 23 MSP Decision IG.26/10	National governments, local authorities, regional institutions, with the support of UNEP/MAP (PAP/RAC)	2030
2.1.4. Support national coastal conservation initiatives and strengthen or develop specific national laws for management of coastal areas, including concepts such as public trusteeships.	National governments	2030
2.1.5. Create or strengthen delivery nodes for ratified protocols through national prioritization and policy strengthening.	National governments	2030
2.1.6 Implement the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO), and its related national action plans.	SPA/RAC in cooperation with regional institutions, national governments, civil society	2030
2.1.7. Ensure All Marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) have adaptive management plans adopted, effectively implemented and periodically reviewed	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, local authorities, regional institutions, civil society	2035
Regional		
2.1.8. Improve regional and sub-regional coordination, exchange of good practices, including technology and local knowledge transfer, including through the MSP Working Group	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society, UNEP/MAP	2035

Strategic direction 2.1: Strengthen implementation, compliance and monitoring with regional requirements of regulatory and policy frameworks of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention for coastal and marine management		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
2.1.9 Develop and implement regional and sub- regional targeted measures and roadmaps, where lacking, for delivery of all Barcelona Convention and its Protocols in synergy with other regional policy instruments as relevant.	Regional institutions, national governments and local authorities	2030

97. In order to address the issues resulting from the unsustainable exploitation of living and non-living coastal and marine resources, the Strategy calls for sustainable and equitable use of marine and coastal resources. A regional advocacy towards integrated marine spatial planning, based on ecosystem approach principles, will support the implementation of the strategic direction.

Strategic direction 2.2.: Promote balanced and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
2.2.1. Promote and support the blue economy concept through strong partnership between maritime sectors and public authorities in regard to the sustainable and equitable use of marine areas and resources, including supporting the coexistence in using marine space, as promoted by COP 23 MSP Decision IG.26/10	National governments, regional institutions, UNEP-MAP	2035
2.2.2. Ensure that the necessary regulatory instruments, including strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment, national development guidelines, and exploration and extraction tender criteria are effectively in place, and amend national regulatory framework as required.	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, regional institutions	2035
2.2.3. Implement relevant legislative and policy measures to control open ocean exploitation within national and regional requirements, including liability regimes.	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, regional institutions, private sector	2035
2.2.4. Translate the Offshore Protocol (where ratified) and its Action Plan into national policies and further its implementation.	National governments, local authorities, regional institutions, with the support of UNEP/MAP (REMPEC)	2035
2.2.5. Safeguard the Mediterranean fisheries by ensuring that all fish stocks are being fished sustainably and effectively.	National governments, regional institutions	2030
2.2.6 Ensure the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean in line with the FAO	National governments, GFCM, UNEP/MAP	2030

Strategic direction 2.2.: Promote balanced and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture, the GFCM 2030 Strategy and the Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol of the Barcelona Convention		
Regional		
2.2.7. Prepare a regional programme on assessment and control regarding open ocean exploration and exploitation of living and non-living resources.	Regional institutions, private sector, with support of UNEP/MAP	2030
2.2.8. Promote MSP implementation, including capacity building and sharing of best practices at regional and sub-regional level	UNEP/MAP	2030
2.2.9 Coastal resilience platform, including regional compendium of adaptation measures for coastal and marine sectors	UNEP/MAP	2030
2.2.10 Develop and implement monitoring, supported by Artificial Intelligence, to assess the overexploitation/loss of natural resources, in particular water, forests, space, sand, etc	UNEP/MAP	2030

98. Strategic Direction 2.3 focuses on the promotion of networks of ecologically protected marine and coastal areas at national and Mediterranean level, as well as the enhancement of stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss. The pressures on protected areas created by insufficient spatial coverage, planning and management processes call for, at the national level, programmes that strengthen the protection of biodiversity and the actual management of such areas. Legal or financing mechanisms accompany actions that raise awareness on the economic, social and environmental value of ecosystem services. The promotion of national and regional networking processes aims at reuniting directors and managers for enhancing the synergies of their actions. At the regional level, the Strategy supports further networking, as well as the promotion of the "Green list" standards to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of park management bodies created at the IUCN World Parks Congress, and it launches the flagship initiative on Promote the protection and conservation of Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows as crucial ecosystem.

Strategic direction 2.3: Promote well connected ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas, other effective area-based conservation measures and nature-based solutions at national, transboundary and Mediterranean level and enhance stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
2.3.1. Promote well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and nature-based solutions at national level	National governments, local authorities, civil society	2030

Strategic direction 2.3: Promote well connected ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas, other effective area-based conservation measures and nature-based solutions at national, transboundary and Mediterranean level and enhance stakeholder awareness on the value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
2.3.2. Establish programmes to enhance awareness among local stakeholders on the economic, social and environmental value of ecosystem services and the implications of biodiversity loss for their daily lives.	National governments, local authorities, rural communities, civil society	2030
2.3.3. Set up financial mechanisms (national funds, payment for ecosystem services, compensations) to support policies ensuring the provision of environmental and social services.	National governments, local authorities	2035
2.3.4. Promote Marine literacy and Education targeting coastal communities, schools, and local governance structures. Integrate sustainable fishing practices, and ecosystem restoration into educational curricula. Support community-school based marine stewardship programs for sustainable management	National governments, local authorities, educational Institutions, civil society,	2030
Regional		
2.3.5 Promote a regional network of managers of ecologically protected areas, and nature-based solutions, building on the experience of the existing initiatives	Regional Institutions	2035

Objective 3: Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development

Vision and Actions

99. Rural areas in the Mediterranean are relatively diverse in their history, culture, natural conditions, population density, settlements, economic structure, and human resources and thus require different policy interventions, but share a potential for the establishment of new bases for economic and social development.

100. When addressing the use of natural resources in rural areas, attention must be paid to the protection of terrestrial ecosystems, which provide essential goods and services for human development. Those range from food and water to medicinal plants, fuel, timber, and housing materials. The maintenance of the good status and health of those ecosystems is therefore fundamental for both biodiversity conservation and human well-being.

101. The three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity – conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources – reflect the importance of this theme. The 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and builds on the Convention's previous Strategic Plans, sets out an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. Among the Framework's key elements, 4 goals refer to 2050 and 23 targets tackle 2030. The intention is not only to guarantee the conservation of all biodiversity components, but also to address key socioeconomic aspects, such as poverty reduction, sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry, the needs of women and local communities, traditional knowledge, and public participation.

102. In the northern Mediterranean countries, there has been agricultural and pastoral land abandonment and reforestation campaigns have been effective, while in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries the pressures on ecosystems remain strong, particularly in North African countries because of the high population pressure on land and water resources, urban sprawl, over-exploitation of forests and overgrazing; in addition, desertification processes are exacerbated by climate change, causing increased aridity and extreme events (long periods of drought, devastating floods of land and livestock, large cold spells), with strong socio-economic impacts on farmers. In this context, food cooperation among Mediterranean countries is also a main issue as regards the situation of the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries and the existing complementarities between the North and the South.

103. The Mediterranean agri-food sector consumes significant rural resources and constitutes one of the main drivers of environmental degradation through processes such as desertification of marginal lands and pollution run-off from farming and industry. At the same time the sector is a key player in the conservation of the Mediterranean agricultural landscape and in providing livelihoods and employment. The sustainable management of natural resources, rural development and food production and security are interdependent aspects that ensure the well-being of rural communities and provide significant inputs to downstream industries, from food processing to tourism.

104. All around the Mediterranean's rural areas, and food security are of paramount importance. Given the importance of small and medium-sized farms in the rural areas of the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries and their mobilization of the family workforce, family farms contribute to food security of farm households and local communities by the supply of domestic markets. Furthermore, the intra-family and intergenerational solidarity prevailing in farm households contribute significantly to the fight against food insecurity and social vulnerability of rural populations. However, access to land is increasingly open to foreign capital and investors without much consideration of the effects on agricultural and rural societies at the local level. The southern and eastern Mediterranean countries are also vulnerable to changes in international agricultural prices due to their high dependence on cereal imports. This context makes agricultural and food security issues particularly sensitive.

105. Furthermore, since the impacts of climate change are likely to include the degradation of agricultural water resources and loss of fertile soils, ensuring food security and rural vitality by adapting agriculture to climate change is also necessary. Indeed, small farmers will be directly affected by these impacts, which represent risks in terms of the stability of rural areas. This calls for adaptation strategies and services for agricultural and rural areas, as well as public and private support for those adaptations, such as promotion of agri-environmental practices, alternative agricultural methods, crop diversification, controlling and limiting use of genetically modified organisms, and conservation of water and soil, limiting the consumption of such natural resources.

Objective 3: Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and systems through sustainable forms of rural development		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
Target 9: By 2030, Mediterranean Countries ensure that at least 75% of their population use safely managed drinking water services and at least 30% use safely managed sanitation in a multi-level context of water stress, competing demands and growing shortages, particularly for vulnerable populations and women	**MSSD Dashboard indicator 14**: Proportion of population (in %) using safely managed drinking water service **MSSD Core indicator 7** **a)** Water withdrawal per inhabitant; **b)** Renewable freshwater resources per capita **MSSD Core indicator 8,** Plastic leakages at sea	**SDG 6,** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all **Indicator 6.1.1,** Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services **Indicator 6.2.**1 Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water **Indicator 6.4.2** Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources
Target 10: By 2030, Mediterranean Countries ensure that at least 90% of the population has access to affordable, safe, and nutritious food all year round, through the promotion of resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems, including local supply chains	**MSSD Dashboard Indicator 11:** Global Food Security Index	**SDG 2,** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture **Indicator 2.1.2** Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

106. The Strategy underlines the need for compliance of national legal measures with international and regional commitments to promote the sustainable use, management and conservation of natural resources and ecosystems (strategic direction 3.1). It calls for effective and participatory management of protected areas and exploitation of renewable natural resources for a regulated development in rural areas, including through Environmental Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and permitting processes. The Strategy aims to address the limits to sustainable rural development caused by the unsustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem goods and services, particularly energy, food and water, through improving efficiency. The Strategy takes into consideration that the UN General Assembly recognized in 2010, through

Resolution 64/292, the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights. An improved forests management is equality tacked, both at national and regional level, while water desalinization and natural resources reuse approaches and plans are included. The Flagship initiatives Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus (WEFE Nexus) in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum and the Mediterranean Forest Initiative will concretely support these approaches. The Strategy recommends institutional and legal reforms fostering water cooperation programmes among sectors and cross-borders. The Strategy also suggests adopting policies, regulatory measures and instruments for sustainable exploitation of non-renewable resources and related post-extraction restoration.

Strategic direction 3.1: Promote the circular/regenerative use, management and conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Natural Resources and ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
3.1.1. Ensure that legal measures are in place to conserve/restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in line with international and regional commitments.	National governments, civil society	2035
3.1.2. Ensure Environmental Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and permitting processes are implemented to support the development in rural areas, as well as monitoring and adaptive management of interventions.	National governments, local authorities, regional institutions, civil society, private sector	2035
3.1.3. Put in place participative cross-sectoral resource management strategies to ensure that renewable natural resources are extracted in ways that do not threaten the future use of the resources, and without exceeding their maximum sustainable yield.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
3.1.4. Achieve a sustainable balance between production of food, use of water and use of energy, through improving energy and water use efficiency, promoting the use of renewable energy sources, as well as through the introduction of institutional and legal reforms.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
3.1.5. Develop socio-economic models for national strategic choices for water allocation between agriculture, industry, tourism, and domestic uses, taking into account environmental and social aspects, as well as One Health initiatives and economic development needs.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, Private sector	2035
3.1.6. Ensure that extraction and management of non-renewable resources are carried out in ways that minimize environmental impacts, and that permitting systems include post-extraction restoration.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035

Strategic direction 3.1: Promote the circular/regenerative use, management and conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Natural Resources and ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
3.1.7. Develop action plans for the restoration of land from extractive activities.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
3.1.8. Secure, in a climate change context, water supply considering the development of nonconventional resources such as reuse and desalination withdrawal and also promotion of sobriety in conventional water uses	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2030
3.1.9. Ensure that forests are managed in a sustainable way to allow managers to benefit from goods & services (cultural, regulation, supply) they provide including social consideration (acceptance) of forest stands evolution due to climate change	National governments, local authorities	2035
3.1.10 Develop national plans / strategies to secure means and better prevent fires but also dieback and desertification of the Mediterranean Basin	National governments, local authorities	2030
Regional		
3.1.11. Develop or strengthen cross border water cooperation programmes and networks	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
3.1.12. Strengthen regional plans on reuse and desalination making them more sustainable, in particular regarding brines discharges and CO2 emissions and renewable energy sources for desalination production	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, private sector	2035
3.1.13 Harmonize a monitoring system and assessment programme for a more sustainable management of forests	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities	2035

107. The Strategy aims to promote conservation and use of indigenous or traditional plant varieties and domestic animal breeds, as well as to value traditional knowledge and practices in rural management decisions (strategic direction 3.2). It calls for establishing national seed banks and knowledge repositories and encourages them to engage in regional collaboration. It promotes the valorisation of traditional knowledge and land races, emphasizing the need for supporting their integration in education and training for rural and agricultural practices.

Strategic direction 3.2: Promote conservation and use of indigenous or traditional plant varieties and domestic animal breeds, value traditional knowledge and practices in rural management decisions		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
3.2.1. Establish national seed banks and knowledge repositories of indigenous or traditional plant varieties and domestic animal breeds.	National governments, local authorities, agricultural associationsand cooperatives, civil society, academia, private sector	2030
3.2.2. Support the integration of traditional knowledge in education and training for rural and agricultural practices at national level.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, academia, private sector	2035
3.2.3. Promote the valorisation of traditional knowledge in rural development funding programmes.	National governments, local authorities, donor agencies	2035
3.2.4. Integrate Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Land Stewardship in education programs at a formal and non-formal level. Emphasize soil conservation, water management, and sustainable crop techniques in school education and strengthen collaboration between various actors	National government, educational institutions, environmental education centers, academia, civil society	2035
Regional		
3.2.5. Establish regional collaboration between seed banks and knowledge repositories around the Mediterranean.	Regional institutions, civil society	2035

108. The Strategy addresses the social and environmental consequences created by inequalities affecting rural populations, particularly women and youth, by developing skills and opportunities through participatory rural development programmes that take into account traditional knowledge, skills and crafts in order to add value to rural territories and local cultural assets. Strategic direction 3.3 promotes inclusive and sustainable rural development, with a specific focus on poverty eradication. At a national level, policy measures and fiscal arrangements should encourage rural multi-functionality, coupling tourism and agriculture, benefiting to women's empowerment and youth employment. Such actions should also lead to equitable and sustainable access to basic local services for rural communities. A regional action focuses on international partnerships and networks to build capacity in the promotion of traditional knowledge, skills and crafts, as well as the establishment of capacity development programmes for local communities.

Strategic direction 3.3: Promote inclusive and sustainable rural development, with a specific focus on poverty eradication, One Health, food security, women's empowerment and youth employment, including equitable and sustainable access to basic local services for rural communities

Actions	Responsible Actors	Time frame
National		
3.3.1. Develop participatory rural development programmes and adapt measures and fiscal arrangements to encourage rural pluriactivity and sustainable economic development of vulnerable rural communities, particularly for the benefit of women and youth, taking into account also the vulnerability of such communities to natural and human-induced hazards, which recognise the multi-functionality of rural areas.	National governments	2035
3.3.2. Develop training programmes and businesses to encourage the reviving of traditional skills, arts and crafts in view of the protection and preservation of the local cultural as well as a means to establish economic activities locally.	National governments	2030
3.3.3. Prepare action plans to support the development of rural tourism that will alleviate overcrowding in coastal cities and resorts, stimulate the utilization of locally produced products and generate local employment opportunities.	National governments	2030
Regional		
3.3.4. Develop regional/sub-regional partnerships and networks to build capacity in the promotion of traditional knowledge, skills and crafts, as well as establishment of capacity development programmes for local communities.	Regional institutions	2035

109. In order to ensure an equitable access of local producers and small-scale farmers to distribution channels and markets, including the tourism market (strategic direction 3.4) national programmes supporting agro-ecological and organic technologies will add value to local assets, products, and processes. This will be achieved through the use of innovative products and processes, cooperation schemes, market instruments, marketing plans, and labelling schemes. The Strategy focuses on the added-value of organic, labelled, and conservation agriculture, while controlling and limiting the use of genetically modified organisms. On the demand side, awareness-raising campaigns will be developed in order to sensitise consumers regarding local economic benefits.

Strategic direction 3.4: Ensure access of local producers to distribution channels and markets, including the tourism market		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
3.4.1. Undertake actions to improve access of small-scale producers to markets, including tourism markets, through the use of innovative products and processes, cooperation schemes, market instruments, marketing plans and labelling schemes.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, local cooperatives	2030
3.4.2. Undertake initiatives to raise awareness on environmental, economic and social benefits of consuming local products, including in the tourism sector.	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, local authorities, civil society, local cooperatives	2030
3.4.3. Develop and strengthen agriculture based on agro-ecological and organic technologies, including organic, labelled, and conservation agricultures, controlling and limiting the use of genetically modified organisms, with special support to small-scale farmers.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, rural communities, local cooperatives, private sector	2030

Objective 4: Plan-and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities

Vision and Actions

110. While the SDGs are global in their ambition, their achievement will depend on the ability to transform them into reality at local level. With at least 65 per cent of SDG targets linked to the work and mandates of local and regional governments[39] the localization of the SDGs and a multilevel governance approach is a key accelerator for the 2030 Agenda implementation[40].

111. Although affected by the economic crisis, the urbanization of the Mediterranean population continues at a fast pace, in particular along its southern shores. Two in every three people are already living in the urban areas of Mediterranean countries, which is higher than the world average.

112. By around 2050, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme predicts that the urban population will grow to around 170 million in the countries on the northern shore (140 million in 2005) and to over 300 million to the south and east (151 million in 2005). This fact generates serious challenges: for example, by 2030 some 42 million additional dwellings will be required, mainly in cities.[28] In addition, notwithstanding, most Mediterranean cities, in particular those located on the coast, are not currently being managed sustainably, particularly in relation to the carrying capacity of those coasts. They are insufficiently resilient in terms of coping with natural and human-made risks and hazards, including climate change and the increasing level of risks due to climate change impacts mainly flooding and storm surges. At the same time, the potential of cities as drivers of innovative and sustainable social and economic change is insufficiently recognized. Cities have the potential to be laboratories to test and successfully apply engineering to adapt to climate change impacts, i.e. green infrastructure and Nature based Solutions (NbS) to adapt to "urban heat island effect"; development of green - parks - and blue rivers corridors to generate coolness; design and architecture of buildings to use the effect of wind and increase natural coolness.

113. Mediterranean cities are insufficiently resilient in terms of coping with natural and human-made risks and hazards, including climate change. They are also highly energy-dependent, with low shares of renewable energy used, and their productive capacity in terms of renewable energy, urban agriculture and waste recycling is highly underutilized. Waste generation in the region has grown over the last decade, mostly due to a growing population and increased consumption. Waste management needs significant improvement: while three-quarters of waste is collected, most is disposed of in open dumps, which have negative health and environmental impacts. In 2020, the recycling rate is also widely varying. In the northern countries, the recycling rate rises to 46% in Slovenia, except in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a rate close to 0 (the rate for Israel is 25%). France, Italy and Greece are around 20 to 25%. Croatia, Spain and Cyprus are around 10-17%. Algeria, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Monaco and Morocco are around 5 to 10% (MSSD dashboard indicator 20; 2023). In the Mediterranean, E-Wastes and hazardous wastes respectively represent 8 billion tons and 28 billion tons.[41] In addition, the participation of residents in decision-making on urban matters in many sub-national and local governments/ municipalities remains low, as does the level of access to urban services.

114. Urban growth prospects in the Mediterranean cities point towards an exacerbation of the current challenges: excessive land uptake; more rapid degradation of architectural heritage; aquifer pollution; inefficient and untreated waste management; atmospheric air pollution and noise; and the cumulative effect of all these factors on the environment and on human health. On this basis, if

[39] UN, Inter-agency Policy Briefs on Accelerating Progress on the 2030 Agenda from Local to Global levels: The Critical Importance of SDG Localization, July 2024
[40] UN-Habitat, Multi governance for SDGs localization, December 2022
[41] 2020 State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean: Summary for Decision Makers (SoED 2020)

actions and initiatives aimed at correcting the impacts of urban territorial, environmental, economic and social imbalances are not taken, Mediterranean societies and ecosystems may suffer serious consequences, particularly in combination with the expected impacts of climate variability and change. Those are likely to impact most strongly the coastal zones of the Mediterranean, where the majority of the population lives in cities and in particular within the LEAC which are prone to coastal flooding.

115. Sound policies in favor of social and territorial cohesion in rural areas, which are addressed under Objective 3, are also necessary for ensuring sustainable urban development. Urban sustainability is linked to food security and sustainable forms of rural development: poor rural conditions have strong social and political impacts also on cities, as urban areas are largely populated by rural migrants.

116. Cities are critical for sustainable development in the Mediterranean, because they are engines of economic development, innovation and creativity: the climate friendly cities agenda is an example of the potential of urban areas to contribute to sustainability. For those reasons, a new, sustainable and creative approach to planning and managing Mediterranean urban agglomerations, offering longer- term sustainable solutions, and building on common aspirations and understandings among the relevant stakeholders, is the best hope for the Mediterranean cities' future.

117. Urban green and blue areas in the city have a multitude of positive environmental and socio-cultural functions: mitigating environmental pressures, improving aesthetics, reducing the urban heat island effect, mitigating flooding, and providing direct or indirect urban ecosystem services. Urban green and blue areas, or 'green and blue infrastructures' are networks of natural and engineered ecological systems providing a diverse range of services to increase the resilience of urban systems. While the simple addition of a green area could have a minor effect on the global city sustainability, and a park planned in an inaccessible area would not satisfy the needs of citizens, while requiring many resources to be managed, the same park could acquire greater value if its resultant overall potential ecosystem services (including water management) are taken into account. Several urban best management practices can be applied in Mediterranean cities. Moreover, urban regeneration projects and new urban settlements may also be planned and designed on the basis of urban best management practices related to multifunctional green and blue infrastructure. This will contribute to the transition to environments which are more resilient to changing future conditions.

Objective 4: Plan-and manage sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
Target 11: By 2030, all Mediterranean Countries have substantially reduced waste generation through prevention, recycling and reuse, particularly by ensuring that at least 60% of municipal solid waste is sustainably recycled, composted or managed, including separate collection and material recovery, including biowaste, with emphasis on packaging waste and on the most environmentally damaging SUP products as a priority.	**MSSD Dashboard Indicator 20** Waste generated and treated by type of waste and treatment type National recycling rate, tons of material recycled	**SDG 11,** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable **Indicator 11.6.1,** Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities **SDG 12,** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns **Indicator 12.5.1,** National recycling rate, tons of material recycled
Target 12: By 2035, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have adopted regulatory and policy frameworks with health-based standards for air quality having regard to the World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines.	**MSSD Core indicator 9** Air quality: **a)** concentration of PM2.5**; b)** carbon monoxide emission	**SDG 11,** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable **Indicator 11.6.2,** Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)

118. The Strategy addresses pressures on the environment caused by urban sprawl, particularly in coastal areas, where in some cases triggered by tourism development (strategic direction 4.1). The proposed solutions include strengthening the development of small and medium sized towns as focal points for sustainable regional development, and monitoring and control of coastal urbanization and encroachment. The Strategy underlines the need for strong regulations and tools for spatial planning and tourism. It calls for the promotion of blue and green infrastructure, safe and green public open spaces, which will provide urban ecosystem services that will contribute to improved resilience to climate change and variability. This requires use of spatial planning systems, capacity building and sharing of best practices at the national level, as well as the preparation of regional guidelines for planning multi-functional green and blue infrastructures in the Mediterranean. A flagship initiative promotes and implements the “Environment Friendly City” Award, as per Decision IG.22/19 by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP19 Athens Greece, 9-12 February 2016), complemented by the flagship initiative Mediterranean Network of Zero Net Cities.

Strategic direction 4.1: Apply holistic and integrated spatial planning processes and other related instruments, as well as improved compliance with respective rules and regulations, to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion and reduce pressures on the environment		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
4.1.1. Utilize spatial planning systems and land management instruments for sustainable urban/coastal planning and balanced development in urban areas that incorporate measures for infrastructure provision, and land-take reduction where possible, as well as the provision of multifunctional urban green and blue infrastructures, which provide urban ecosystem services that are also important for climate change adaptation.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities	2030
4.1.2. Ensure that legally binding instruments for tourism development are put in place for those areas that suffer from tourism pressures, and related real-estate expansion and coastal deterioration.	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, local authorities, planning authorities	2030
4.1.3. Strengthen small and medium- sized towns as focal points for regional development that will reduce population pressures on urban agglomerations, including by ensuring appropriate transport links from major urban centres to medium and small ones.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil society	2030
4.1.4. Promote the protection, upgrading and creation of additional public open space that is safe, green and shady, and part of a network of green infrastructure.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil society	2035
Regional		
4.1.5. Monitor coastal urbanization and encroachment at regional level and provide monitoring support to national and local authorities.	Regional and international institutions, national governments, local authorities, planning authorities	2035
4.1.6. Establish a regional process to build capacity and share good practices on improving compliance with spatial planning regulations.	Regional and international institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society	2030
4.1.7. Set up a process to prepare regional guidelines for planning multifunctional nature-based solutions, green and blue infrastructures, and provide opportunities for exchange of related urban best management practices.	Regional and international institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
4.1.8. Identify Mediterranean urban biodiversity hotspots and share experiences on their protection.	International and regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil society	2030

119. The Strategy promotes participation of urban populations in planning and decision-making to support sustainable urban planning and management (strategic direction 4.2). In this respect securing the flow of information and enhancing capacities for participation are key. At the national level, participatory mechanisms will be established, and governance regimes put in place that allow urban jurisdictions to regulate, register and manage land, within a rights-based framework. In addition, planning measures will support the development of urban models upgrading informal settlements within the urban fabric through forward-looking territorial planning. Regional networks of cities will be developed or strengthened, and a sustainable urban toolbox for the Mediterranean (flagship initiative) will be developed in cooperation with these networks. This will help as to ensure that Mediterranean cities are planned cities to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Strategic direction 4.2: Encourage inclusive urbanization and strengthen capacities for participatory and integrated human settlement planning and management		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
4.2.1. Strengthen urban governance by establishing communication and participatory mechanisms to enhance urban stakeholders' involvement and engagement in decision-making.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil Society private sector	2035
4.2.2. Upgrade informal settlements into cities and anticipate the expected rates of urban growth through more balanced territorial planning and the provision of decent and affordable housing.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil society	2035
4.2.3. Put in place governance regimes that allow urban jurisdictions to regulate, register and manage land, within a rights-based framework.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil society	2035
Regional		
4.2.4. Develop or strengthen regional networking and partnership programmes and regional/sub/regional projects between cities and at the city-region level around the Mediterranean to promote knowledge- sharing and capacity building on sustainable cities.	Regional and international institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society	2035

120. The Strategy focuses on the protection and rehabilitation of historic urban centres as a means to retain population and economic activity, against the trend of increased dereliction and marginalization, based on fiscal and planning incentives (strategic direction 4.3). It also focuses on creating opportunities to strengthen local distinctive character both in planning and in project development in order to enhance local attractiveness. This recognises that retaining the distinctiveness of territories has a potential for economic development and competitive advantage. The Strategy recommends developing or strengthening existing networks of historic cities, involving economic players, including the tourism sector and that representing traditional industries. In addition adequate social dwelling provision coupled with fiscal incentives and the rehabilitation of historic centres could enhance the attractiveness of the historic stock in comparison with peripheral urban expansions. At a regional level, networking between historic centres and connecting them to economic activities are promoted as a means to secure viability

Strategic direction 4.3: Promote the protection and rehabilitation of historic urban areas		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
4.3.1. Utilize forms of integrated and sustainable rehabilitation of historic urban centres, building on good practices to maintain the population in historic centres.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil society, private sector	2030
4.3.2. Provide fiscal and planning incentives to utilize and rehabilitate historic urban centres.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities	2030
4.3.3. Create opportunities to strengthen local distinctive character both in planning and in project development in order to enhance local attractiveness, as a tool for economic development and enhancing competitive advantage.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities	2035
4.3.4. Provide adequate social housing coupled with fiscal incentives and the rehabilitation of historic centres to enhance the attractiveness of the historic housing stock in comparison with peripheral urban expansions.	National governments, local authorities, planning authorities	2030
Regional		
4.3.5. Develop or strengthen existing networks of historic cities in the Mediterranean, involving economic players, including the tourism sector and that representing traditional industries.	International and regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, planning authorities, civil society, private sector	2030

121. Solid and liquid waste production and management remain major concerns in many urban regions in the Mediterranean (strategic direction 4.4). The Strategy promotes national measures for implementing innovative waste management solutions, in line with the waste hierarchy: prevention, reduction, reuse, sorting, recycling, recovery, and, as the least preferred option, disposal. It is also a priority to foster sustainable consumption patterns among citizens and develop behavioral change schemes that will lead to reduction in waste volumes and to develop legal and financial frameworks to support sustainable waste management. At the regional level, an assessment of the effectiveness high-tech and low-tech solutions (flagship initiative), including but not limited to awareness-raising and economic measures that have been implemented, will be carried out with a view to their more widespread utilization in waste reduction efforts. Finally, the Strategy also includes a regional action to develop a database of generated and treated waste and related material flows.

Strategic direction 4.4: Promote sustainable production, use of sustainable products and effective waste management within the context of a more circular economy, as well as foster sustainable consumption patterns among citizens		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
4.4.1. Implement innovative, integrated and sustainable production, use of sustainable products and efficient waste management solutions, in line with the life cycle assessment, extended producer responsibility and waste hierarchy: prevention, reduction, reuse, sorting, recycling, recovery, and disposal.	National governments, local authorities/municipalities, civil society, private sector	2035
4.4.2. Develop schemes to encourage and educate local communities to change their behavior with regard to the use of products and waste, and raise awareness on consumption patterns	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
4.4.3. Develop legal and financial frameworks for sustainable production and waste management.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
4.4.4. Embed Sustainable Urban Planning and Green Building awareness in School and VET Education Programs and Curricula. Promote education on sustainable transport, green infrastructure, and energy-efficient urban design. Encourage schools and community involvement in sustainable city planning initiatives.	National governments, Educational Institutions, Academia, VET Institutions, Environmental Education Centers, local authorities	2030
Regional		
4.4.5. Develop robust database of generated and treaded waste and related material flows.	Regional organizations, national governments	2030

122. Many Mediterranean cities have increased their dependence on private vehicles, an increase that is further aggravated by urban sprawl, leading to pollution, congestion, high economic and social costs and land sealing for traffic management and parking. The Strategy, under strategic direction 4.5, calls for a reduced dependence on private vehicles by developing efficient integrated public transport systems between coastal cities and their functional regions. It recommends also to anticipate future transport needs, to be provided mainly by collective forms of transport, accompanied by economic and regulatory instruments, and increase virtual connectivity. At the regional level, the development of a sustainable transport and mobility framework for the Mediterranean is included.

Strategic direction 4.5: Promote urban spatial patterns and technological options that reduce the demand for transportation, improve urban air quality and stimulate sustainable mobility and accessibility in urban areas		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
4.5.1. Redesigning transportation offer by promoting alternatives to individual cars, put in place spatial planning provisions that reduce the need for personal private mobility, and improve urban air quality	National governments, local authorities, urban planning authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
4.5.2. Reduce urban traffic congestion and pollution through economic and regulatory instruments promoting low- pollution collective transport systems at the local urban level, maritime public transport (blue ways), multi-modal links, and more sustainable freight transport.	National governments, local authorities, urban planning authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
4.5.3. Increase virtual connectivity at least to basic services in order to reduce the need to travel.	National governments, local authorities, urban planning authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
Regional		
4.5.4. Develop a sustainable Mediterranean transport and mobility framework, taking into account the objectives of the European Union transport policy and other relevant regional initiatives, including guidelines for compact cities, in order to minimize transport and service delivery costs and improve urban air quality.	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society	2035

123. The Strategy promotes green buildings, including the retrofittin of the existing building stock, alternative building materials, reshaping housing organization patterns to contribute towards reducing the ecological footprint of the built environment (strategic direction 4.6). At a national level, various instruments are to be put in place to construct green buildings and retrofit existing buildings (e.g. institutional and legal arrangements, strategies, support schemes, training programmes, and standards). At a regional level, the Strategy focuses on the development of regional standards, certification and quality frameworks to encourage green buildings suitable for the Mediterranean climate. These regional standards and frameworks will provide guidance to national level efforts to encourage green buildings suitable for the local environment.

Strategic direction 4.6: Promote green infrastructures and renewable energies and improve energy efficiency to contribute towards reducing the ecological footprint of the built environment		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
4.6.1. Put in place institutional and legal arrangements, strategies, support schemes, training programmes and standards to construct green buildings, retrofit existing buildings and improve energy efficiency	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, local authorities, civil society, private sector, professional associations (architects, civil engineers)	2030
4.6.2 Ensure green transitions for cities in terms of using alternative building materials, reshaping housing organization patterns with regards to Nature based solutions (NBS) and improve energy efficiency	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector, professional associations (architects, civil engineers)	2035
Regional		
4.6.3. Develop regional/sub-regional standards, certification and quality frameworks to encourage green and improved energy efficiency buildings suitable for the Mediterranean climate.	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector, professional associations	2035

124. Urban areas, particularly those situated close to the coast, are vulnerable to natural and human-induced disasters and large-scale changes, including climate change. Strategic direction 4.7 focuses on enhancing urban resilience, in order to reduce their vulnerability to risks from natural and human- induced hazards including climate change. Besides the regional measures relating to emergency- preparedness, the Strategy also highlights a number of actions required to be undertaken by cities with regard to resilience. At a national level, climate proofing is addressed in the implementation of programmes increasing urban resilience. National guidelines for planning of green and blue infrastructure will be prepared, which will also support urban level climate change adaptation plans. The third national action involves the preparation and implementation of action plans to improve urban resilience to natural and human induced risks, including through natural solutions, smart development and awareness-raising. A fourth national action focuses on undertaking a set of integrated measures to support the productivity of cities in terms of energy production, composting and urban and peri-urban agriculture, including through the recognition of such activities as urban land uses and economic activities, ensuring that necessary health safeguards are in place. At the regional level, the Strategy calls for an inventory of local authorities in the region which are developing natural risk response mechanisms.

Strategic direction 4.7: Enhance urban resilience in order to reduce vulnerability to risks from natural and human-induced hazards including climate change		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
4.7.1. Ensure urban spatial plans are subject to climate proofing.	National governments, local authorities, urban planning authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
4.7.2. Develop national guidelines for auditing and planning of green and blue infrastructure, with reference to natural and human-induced risks, including climate change.	National governments, local authorities, urban planning authorities, private sector, civil society	2035

4.7.3. Prepare and implement action plans, based on prevention, preparedness and response approaches, to improve urban resilience to natural and human induced risks, including through natural solutions, smart development and awareness-raising.	National governments, local authorities, urban planning authorities, civil society	2035
4.7.4. Undertake a set of integrated measures to support the productivity of cities in terms of energy production, composting and urban and peri-urban agriculture, including through the recognition of such activities as urban land uses and economic activities, while ensuring that necessary environmental health safeguards are in place.	National governments, local authorities, urban planning authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
Regional		
4.7.5. Set up an inventory of Mediterranean local authorities developing natural risk response mechanisms, including climate change adaptation actions and relevant good practices.	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society	2030

Objective 5: Accelerate transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance

Vision and Actions

125. The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication has attracted much attention from the international community at a time when the financial crisis, geo politic developments and climate change impacts are seriously affecting socio-economic development. A green economy – called blue economy when applied to the coastal, marine and maritime sectors of the Mediterranean – is one that promotes sustainable development whilst improving human well-being and social equity, and significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In other words, a green economy promotes resilient, low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive economic development.

126. The circular economy offers a transformative approach that prioritizes the continual reduction, reuse, refurbishment, and recycling of products and materials. A circular economy in the blue and green sectors refers to a sustainable economic framework that integrates ecological principles into economic activities, emphasizing the responsible use of natural resources, minimizing waste, and fostering regeneration. In the blue economy, this involves sustainable practices in marine and aquatic systems, ensuring that fishery and marine resource extraction is done responsibly to protect ocean health. In the green economy, it encompasses land-based systems where agricultural practices, renewable energy sources, and resource management prioritize environmental restoration, biodiversity, and carbon footprint reduction.

127. Together, these approaches create a resilient and integrated economy that balances economic growth with sustainable development, increasing environmental resilience, and fostering socio-economic benefits for all, including women and youth, such as job creation and innovation.

128. A Mediterranean circular green and blue economy will generate sustainable development and employment through public and private investments, while reducing carbon emissions and pollution, enhancing energy and resource efficiency, and preventing the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The related sustainable investments would be catalysed by targeted public and private expenditure, innovative policy and regulatory changes, awareness, training and research initiatives, innovation and the uptake of new technologies and processes, progressive tax and job reforms, the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns in general, as well as by increasing the role of social enterprises.

129. This green development path would maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural

capital as a critical economic asset and a source of public benefits, especially for people whose livelihoods and security depend heavily on natural resources. Indeed, the Arab Forum for Environment and Development, in advocating a development model rooted in a green economy as a sound foundation for addressing the shortcomings of Arab economies, also emphasizes the efficient use and deployment of natural assets to diversify the economy, which in turn provides immunity against the volatilities and recessionary pressures of the global economy.

130. This objective related to the transition towards a circular green and blue economy is crucial for the achievement of the Strategy's vision. These new paradigms are likely to illuminate the paths for the necessary decoupling between prosperity and use of resources, and to provide credible responses to the sustainability challenges being faced today. In addition, through its first objective on coastal and marine areas, the Strategy promotes the blue economy concept through strong partnership between maritime sectors and public authorities in regard to the sustainable and equitable use of marine and coastal areas and resources.

131. The green economy explicitly includes the objectives of job creation and social inclusion, in order to promote a more healthy and just society. The social economy, including cooperatives and the voluntary sector, has an important role to play in the green economy. In addition, the active participation of all relevant stakeholders in the necessary transition would be guaranteed in an efficient, consistent and transparent manner, engaging with local communities and respecting cultural contexts. The link with the Strategy's sixth objective on Governance, another cross-cutting objective, is therefore fundamental in facilitating the transition to the green economy. Making the transition to green development will not be a one-time event. Rather, it must be viewed as a long and demanding process guided both by top-down policy prescription as well as bottom-up public participation. This approach will give the ecological transition the political and social legitimacy needed to ensure the wide-scale mobilization of efforts required.

132. A key pillar of the transition to a green and blue economy is finance that supports green and sustainable activities. The terms green and sustainable are often used together in the context of investment, but they represent distinct but complementary concepts. Green investments focus specifically on environmental benefits—such as reducing carbon emissions, conserving biodiversity, or investing in renewable energy solutions. These are targeted towards addressing environmental challenges and directly supporting the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy. On the other hand, sustainable investments take a broader view. They not only consider environmental factors but also incorporate social and governance elements (known as ESG factors). Sustainable investments aim to achieve a balance between economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection, thus ensuring long-term resilience and prosperity. Mediterranean countries require green and sustainable investments and related economic tools to support their transformation and adapt/mitigate climate and environmental change. To achieve this, it is essential to establish a common regional Framework for Green and Sustainable Investments in the Mediterranean. It is also essential to progressively phase-out harmful policies and economic tools, such as Environmentally Harmful Subsidies (EHS), as highlighted by UNEP/MAP & Plan Bleu 2024) while addressing the barriers and challenges that hinder the adoption of greener financial strategies. At the same time, identifying opportunities to enhance green and sustainable finance and related economic instruments will be crucial in promoting sustainability. Additionally, fostering inclusive, multi-level engagement between public and private stakeholders is essential in shaping green finance initiatives, including the involvement of banks and financial institutions in the definition of a sustainable investment system for the Mediterranean. Financial strategies should also reflect societal needs and strengthen community resilience to ensure a just and effective transition.

Objective 5: Accelerate transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
Target 13: By 2030, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have in place effective regulatory and policy frameworks, including economic incentives, aimed at facilitating the development of sustainable business models that integrate circularity and eco-innovation principles in the green and blue economies, while contributing to the development of non-pollutant and socially inclusive economies, in line with the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean.	**New MSSD Indicator:** Percentages of companies per International Standard Industrial Classification SIC codes sustainability reports **New MSSD Indicator:** Number of Mediterranean countries that have implemented the regional SCP Action Plan	**SDG 12**, Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns **Indicator 12.6.1,** Number of companies publishing sustainability reports
Target 14: By 2035 Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have established sustainable finance frameworks that mobilize capital towards green and sustainable investments, while fostering collaboration among all stakeholders.	**New MSSD Indicator:** Number of Mediterranean Countries established a sustainable finance framework	No corresponding SDGs

133. Addressing socio-economic inequalities between and within countries, owing partly to the high unemployment rate, is a key concern for the green economy. The creation of green and just jobs for all is therefore critical, in particular for youth and women, to ensure a sustainable and just development in the Mediterranean region. (strategic direction 5.1). New jobs would be gender-inclusive and provide social solidarity mechanism to workers. The Strategy includes an action to strengthen the role of green jobs in eradicating poverty and enhancing social inclusion through skills assessment and gap analysis for green jobs, which will help develop tailored capacity-development programmes. At an international level, the compilation and dissemination of best practice guidelines, including harmonised regional definitions, to promote the growth in green jobs and green and social entrepreneurship is envisaged.

Strategic direction 5.1: Create green, just and decent jobs for all, particularly youth and women, to eradicate poverty and enhance social inclusion		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
5.1.1. Undertake a skills assessment and gap analysis considering the advances in digitalization and AI, monitor and forecast demand for green jobs to strengthen the role of green jobs in eradicating poverty and enhancing social inclusion.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2030
5.1.2. Develop training and capacity building programmes for green and digital skills and green jobs, particularly for youth and women.	National governments, local authorities, regional institutions, civil society, private sector, academia, education institutions	2030
5.1.3. Raise awareness, particularly among decision-makers, about the potential of the circular economy transition to promote resilient, low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially- inclusive economic development.	National governments, National and Regional Parliaments, local authorities, regional institutions, civil society, private sector, academia	2035
5.1.4. Foster labour justice and gender mainstreaming within green jobs strategies and policy instruments	National governments, local authorities, civil society, academia, private sector	2035
Regional		
5.1.5. Compile and disseminate best practice guidelines, including harmonised regional definitions, to promote the growth in green jobs and green and social entrepreneurship	Regional institutions, national, governments, specialised agencies	2035
5.1.6 Develop and implement strategies to secure funding and establish financial instruments and mechanisms aimed at promoting green jobs	Regional institutions, national, governments, specialised agencies	2035

134. Fundamental changes in the way societies consume and produce are indispensable for achieving sustainable development. Therefore, the Strategy is complemented by the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean. The Action Plan highlights four priority areas of consumption and production, namely food, agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries; goods manufacturing; tourism; and, housing and construction.

135. In the priority area of food, agriculture and fisheries, operational objectives are provided on: the promotion of best environmental practices, technologies and innovation in growing and harvesting; set-up of sustainable business models across different sectors; policy and legal frameworks to promote sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries and food production and consumption; the education of food producers, retailers and consumers; and, support to the development of appropriate market tools and information to promote sustainability.

136. In the priority area of goods manufacturing, operational objectives are provided on: the integration of best available technologies and practices throughout the value chain of goods production; integrated policy-making and legal framework to promote sustainable consumption, production and recovery, to move towards a circular economy; and, raising awareness of consumers and stakeholders and supporting the development of market structures, increasing the visibility and market share of sustainable and alternative goods and services.

137. With respect to tourism, the Action Plan provides operational objectives addressing: practices and solutions for efficient use of natural resources and reducing the environmental impacts of tourism, respecting the carrying capacities of the destination; regulatory, legislative and financial measures to mainstream sustainable consumption and production in tourism to reduce tourism seasonality and promote local community engagement and empowerment; and, awareness, capacities and skills to support sustainable destinations and green tourism services, and marketing schemes for a competitive and sustainable Mediterranean tourism sector.

138. Finally, for the priority area on housing and construction, the Action Plan provides operational objectives on the following topics: innovation, knowledge and integration of best available technologies and environmental practices for achieving resource efficiency throughout the life cycle of a building; regulatory and legal frameworks to enhance the contribution of housing and construction to sustainable development, social integration and cohesion; and, awareness-raising and capacity- building with stakeholders in urban planning, housing and construction to mainstream sustainable urban development.

139. The implementation of the action plan, thus strategic direction 5.2, will be secured through awareness raising programmes on sustainable lifestyles targeting the wider public. Regional capacity building to support countries in implementing the Action Plan is also envisaged.

Strategic direction 5.2: Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, to support the shift towards circular economy approaches and sustainable business models		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
5.2.1. Implement the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector, academia	2035
5.2.2. Undertake awareness-raising and education programmes on sustainable lifestyles for promoting sustainable behaviour and increase the understanding of the benefits of circularity and sustainable consumption among citizens.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, educational Institutions, Environmental Education ESD Centers	2030
5.2.3 Foster the set-up of sustainable business models across different sectors	National governments, local authorities, private sector, civil society	2035
Regional		
5.2.4. Carry out capacity building programme to support countries in implementing the Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Action Plan for the Mediterranean.	UNEP/MAP, SCP/RAC	2035

140. A large part of the pollution in the Mediterranean is due to inefficient industrial processes and poor management of waste. Apart from harming the environment and health, it also jeopardizes the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of industries. Strategic direction 5.3 promotes resource efficiency and eco-innovation as critical tools to allow businesses and economies to be more productive, while reducing cost, waste and use of raw materials. Creating and connecting green and social incubators and training programmes, including through partnerships between universities, businesses and research centres at national and regional scales is also necessary. At a regional level, a Mediterranean network of green and social incubators and training programmes is envisaged. A flagship initiative to create a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation is also included.

Strategic direction 5.3: Encourage innovation, public private partnerships and sustainable solutions to advance towards the objectives of a just low-carbon, circular, green and blue economy		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
5.3.1. Adopt regulatory and economic incentives to foster sustainable business models that integrate circular economy principles and Increase capacity for eco-innovation in the industry and service sectors, and the adoption of of eco-design principles that extend all along the lifecyle of products through circular economy models, including to promote market uptake.	National governments, civil society, academia, private sector	2035
5.3.2. Support networks of Business Support Organizations (BSOs and circular economy hubs adopting sustainable and circular approaches for businesses and entrepreneurs.	National governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035
5.3.3. Promote and support collaborative partnerships between universities, businesses and research centres, civil society organizations (CSOs) and public institutions fostering cooperation to drive innovation	National governments, local authorities, civil society, academia, private sector	2035
Regional		
5.3.4. Create a regional/sub-regional of circular economy incubators including social innovation, and training programmes and enhance the capacities and networks of Business Support Organizations (BSOs) for sustainable business development	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector	2035

141. Misallocation of capital contributes to the development of inefficient, underused and environmentally harmful infrastructure. The Strategy promotes the integration of sustainability principles and criteria into decision-making on public and private investment through the provision of tools and guidelines (strategic direction 5.4), while externalities are often not sufficiently addressed by markets and policies, creating misleading price signals and incentives for business-as-usual practices linked to a high-carbon economy and by integrating the polluter-pays principle extended producer responsibility and payment for ecosystem services based on economic valuation. This is linked to strategic direction 2.2 under the marine and coastal areas objective. The integration of sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels and promoting key instruments such as eco-design criteria and the environmental certification of products and services are also envisaged, together with the promotion to extended producer responsibility. In the public sector, governments can lead by example by implementing policies that require sustainability assessments for public investments. This could include evaluating projects based on their potential for promoting circularity, minimizing waste, and reducing carbon emissions. At the regional level, capacity- building is required, in addition to improved dialogue with international donors for securing the mainstreaming of economic and social criteria in investments, including capacity-building on market instruments and on integrating the polluter- pays principle. This holistic approach encourages investments in technologies and practices that support a circular economy, such as renewable energy, waste reduction, and resource efficiency, ultimately leading to long-term benefits for both investors and communities. Finally, a flagship initiative focuses on the integration of sustainability principles into public procurement at national and local levels.

Strategic direction 5.4: Promote the integration of sustainability, circularity and climate change principles and criteria on the programming and evaluation frameworks of public and private investment		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
5.4.1. Promote environmental fiscal reform to reduce tax on labour and integrate the polluter-pays principle into finance policy.	National governments	2030
5.4.2. Establish clear sustainability, circularity and climate change criteria for evaluating public and private investments, ensuring that financial flows prioritize resource efficiency, low-carbon innovation, and environmental impact reduction	National governments, private sector, civil society	2030
5.4.3. Promote extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) or similar mechanisms that enhances resource efficiency, waste reduction, and product lifecycle accountability, encouraging industries to design products that are durable, repairable, and recyclable	National governments, private sector, civil society	2030
5.4.4. Raise the awareness of financial actors on the need to mainstream environmental and social impact assessments prior to investments decisions by providing tools and guidelines and enhancing capacities.	National governments, private sector, civil society	2035
5.4.5. Promote eco-design criteria covering the whole lifecycle of products and environmental certification of products and services.	National governments, academia, private sector	2035
Regional		
5.4.6. Provide assistance to countries interested in integrating the polluter- pays principle, extended producer responsibility and payments for ecosystem services into national finance policies.	International institutions, national governments, private sector	2030
5.4.7. Build capacity of national agencies on sustainable investment and promotion corporate social responsibility in private sector, including corporate environmental responsibility.	International institutions, national governments and agencies, private sector	2030
5.4.8. Initiate or strengthen dialogue with international funding institutions with a view to obtaining a commitment regarding the use of environmental and social criteria for investments.	International institutions, national governments, private sector	2035

142. Mediterranean countries require green and sustainable finance and related economic tools to support the necessary transition of the region, particularly to adapt to the impacts of climate and environmental change. To successfully drive this transition, they need a compelling and forward-looking vision that engages the relevant stakeholders at all levels, and fosters support for green and sustainable finance and economic policies. This vision should promote a positive and proactive approach to foster public and private investments that cater to regional, national, and local needs, while ensuring sustainable economic development and enhancing societal well-being, in line with the Strategic Directions of the MSSD. A deeper understanding of the current landscape of green and sustainable finance and related economic tools in the Mediterranean is thus essential. This includes three elements: the mapping of existing financial instruments with recommendations for scaling up the most effective ones in term of sustainability; the scoping of economic activities in the Mediterranean that contribute to sustainability (taxonomy); and the identification of environmentally harmful subsidies in economic sectors that affect the Mediterranean region. This would constitute the Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance, which should be supported by concrete, actionable steps to ensure sustainability while addressing social and employment challenges (green and blue jobs). Mediterranean countries must first tackle the barriers and challenges they face in developing and implementing greener financial strategies. In this context, it is crucial to identify opportunities to enhance green and sustainable finance and related economic tools to promote sustainability. The lack of data and structured finance strategies in some countries underscores the heterogeneity across the region, making the creation of a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance essential for coherent and effective action. Additionally, coherence between public and private financial mechanisms and flows is necessary to ensure that sustainable strategies and action plans are effectively implemented. Finally, Mediterranean countries must engage in discussions about interconnections and synergies between economic, environmental, and social priorities and involve all relevant stakeholders, national and local, in a cross-cutting, inclusive decision-making process to drive the green and sustainable transition forward.

Strategic direction 5.5: Promote an integrated financial ecosystem through a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance aiming to foster the channeling of private and public capital into sustainable investments.		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
5.5.1. Develop national Frameworks for Green and Sustainable Finance identifying financial and policy instruments (e.g., green and blue bonds, concessional loans, grants, investment funds, tax incentives for accelerating the sustainable transition, and climate risk insurance) to facilitate financial flows to sustainable investments, while supporting adaptation, resilience-building, and considering social implications and acceptability.	National governments, local authorities, financial institutions	2030
5.5.2. Develop national green and sustainable finance networks bringing together different stakeholders (e.g. financial institutions, governments, private sector, academia, and NGOs) to enhance collaboration, share best practices, and facilitate knowledge exchange on green and sustainable finance.	National governments, local authorities, financial institutions, private sector, academia	2030
Regional		
5.5.3. Develop a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance that incorporates Mediterranean-specific challenges and priorities to	Regional institutions, national authorities,	2030

Strategic direction 5.5: Promote an integrated financial ecosystem through a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance aiming to foster the channeling of private and public capital into sustainable investments.		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
guide investments in green and sustainable projects, particularly on adaptation, taking into account national priorities.	regional/international donors, Plan Bleu	
5.5.4. Develop a Mediterranean-wide sustainable finance network connecting financial institutions, governments, private sector, academia, and NGOs to foster cross-border collaboration and accelerate sustainable investment (supporting both adaptation and mitigation efforts).	Regional institutions, financial institutions, governments, private sector, academia, NGOs	2030
5.5.5. Develop and implement regional guidelines for green and sustainable budgeting practices to integrate environmental and climate objectives into both annual and multi-year national and regional budgets.	National governments, local authorities, regional/international institutions, Plan Bleu	2030
5.5.6. Identification of major strategic projects, including proposals by local communities, that are key to enhance sustainability in the whole Mediterranean, with the aim to attract capital flow. .	National governments, local authorities, financial institutions, private sector, academia, Plan Bleu	2030

Objective 6: Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.

Vision and Actions

143. Governance is a cross-cutting objective, relevant to each of the other objectives of the Strategy. This objective focuses on improving institutional capacities on sustainable development governance at the national level. Furthermore, the objective focuses in ensuring the full involvement of all stakeholders in promoting and achieving sustainable development at the regional, national and local level. The objective considers the promotion of the role and reinforced awareness and capacities of local authorities in implementing the Strategy objectives, while aspects of governance related to the implementation of the Strategy are addressed in Chapter 3. Governance is characterized by the inclusion of non-state actors in the decision-making process, such as civil society, in particular local authorities, youth and women, financial institutions, private sector, and international organizations. This also involves new forms of cooperation arrangements, either at a national or at a transnational level, such as public-private partnerships. This multi-level governance, with different parallel yet interlinked rule-making systems, demands for a reinforced multi-stakeholder processes for supporting and monitoring policy development and implementation, while science-policy interface should also be further exploited to provide better information for decision-makers, also through a set of core indicators providing a summary of the major environmental and socio-economic challenges the Mediterranean faces, shedding light on the region's progress over the past three decades. The core indicators offer a perspective on the Mediterranean's evolution, reflecting the intricate interplay between education, health, economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and sustainability.

144. Governance issues in the Mediterranean range from endangered peace in the region, to inequalities among and within countries and weak public engagement, involvement and participation. Challenges for environmental governance include horizontal and vertical (due to lack of subsidiarity) fragmentation of responsibility for the environmental dossier, insufficient, uncoordinated and non- results-based planning, management, implementation and monitoring, as

well as weak human, technical and financial resources in the public sector, particularly at the local level. Finally, inadequate awareness and education, research and innovation, and sharing of knowledge and information, are also sustainable development governance challenges faced in Mediterranean countries.

145. Effective inclusive and efficient governance requires that participation in decision-making and cooperation to ensure social justice considerations are taken into account. Participation and cooperation need to be strengthened, and more sustainable development opportunities to address inequalities should be found. Governance has to be flexible and adaptive; it should devise new forms of institutions based on discussion and participation, as well as innovative legal conceptions and constructive practices directly related to sustainability governance, taking also into account the new digital world and the opportunities it offers.

146. Finally, wide variations in the development models of Mediterranean countries do not allow a "one policy for all" approach and therefore emphasis needs to be placed on their specific needs and contexts. Fragmentation of responsibility needs to be addressed through increased policy integration and coordination. Horizontal institutional reforms including, inter alia, legal, administrative and taxation reforms (such as green national accounting, green tax reform) and efforts to fight corruption, are some of the approaches to be considered. The science-policy interface should also be expanded to provide better information for decision-makers and the public.

Objective 6: Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
Target 15 : By 2030, Contracting Parties/Mediterranean Countries have formal mechanisms in place to ensure subsidiarity and synergies between policies at different levels of decision-making and across sectors in the long-term and across borders thus enhancing policy coherence on sustainable development (PCSD), including involvement of stakeholders.	**New MSSD Indicator:** Number of countries with mechanisms addressing marine and coastal environment subject to strategic environment impact assessment and policy consultation **New MSSD Indicator:** Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development	**SDG 17,** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development **Indicator 14.2.1.** Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to marine areas **Indicator 17.14.1,** Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development
Target 16: By 2030, ensure that all learners, including the general public, acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote	**MSSD Core indicator 3**, Average years of schooling **MSSD Dashboard Indicator 28**: Education for Sustainable	**SDG 4,** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Objective 6: Improve governance at all levels, cooperation and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.		
Targets	**Indicators**	
	Regional	**Global**
	MSSD Dashboard and Core indicators **UNEP/MAP System other indicators**	**Relevant Global Indicators**
sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.	Development **New MSSD Indicator:** Extent to which education for sustainable development is mainstreamed in the national education policies, curricula and teacher education	**Indicator 4.7.1,** Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (*a*) national education policies; (*b*) curricula; (*c*) teacher education and (*d*) student assessment
Target 17: By 2035, Mediterranean Countries have acceded to the Aarhus Convention.	**MSSD Dashboard Indicator 27**: Effective public participation and public access to environmental information **New MSSD Indicator:** Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information	**SDG 16,** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels **Indicator 16.10.2,** Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information

147. Strategic direction 6.1 addresses enhanced regional, sub-regional and cross-border dialogue, cooperation, and networking processes, including emergency-preparedness mechanisms. At the national level, the Strategy focuses on preparedness / prevention plans and alert mechanisms in case of (natural and human-made) disasters, as well as adaptive actions. At the regional level, an action to strengthen regional dialogue through cooperation and networking, including on emergency-preparedness is included, along with an action to strengthen regional and sub-regional dialogue and cooperation to better understand the relationship between environmentally-sustainable development and the challenges and opportunities related to population flows.

Strategic direction 6.1: Enhance regional, sub-regional and cross-border dialogue and cooperation, including on emergency-preparedness		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		

6.1.1. Strengthen preparedness / prevention and cooperation plans and alert mechanisms in case of (natural and human-made) disaster, as well as adaptive actions.	National governments, local authorities, civil society	2035
Regional		
6.1.2. Strengthen regional and sub- regional dialogue, cooperation and networking processes, including on emergency-preparedness.	National governments, international institutions, civil society	2035
6.1.3. Strengthen regional and sub- regional dialogue and cooperation in order to better understand the relationship between environmentally- sustainable development and the challenges and opportunities related to population flows.	International institutions, national governments, local authorities, academia, civil society	2035

148. Strategic Direction 6.2 addresses strengthening the governance of the Strategy as a crosscutting endeavor that concerns the systemic reinforcement of the role of sub-national and local governments/municipalities in the Strategy decision-making and implementation processes, in order to further promote and encourage stakeholders' engagement and action at local level as well as a stronger inclusive processes, therefore upscaling the impact of the Strategy on the ground.

Strategic direction 6.2: Strengthen the role, awareness and capacities of sub-national and local governments/ municipalities and of National and Regional Parliaments for implementing national and subnational sustainable development strategies and thus contribute to the achievement of SDG and MSSD objectives

Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
6.2.1. Strengthen the institutional capacity and of sub-national and local governments/ municipalities to integrate and implement the MSSD objectives, while Strengthening coordination and collaboration mechanisms with national governments/authorities	National governments and sub-national and local government/municipalities	2035
6.2.2. Enable the implementation of SDGs and MSSD objectives at the sub-national and local level through training programs aimed at public policy coherence	National governments and sub-national and local government/municipalities	2035
6.2.3 Implement awareness campaigns for inclusive decision-making and participatory governance, also by strengthening ESD networks for policy understanding.		2035
Regional		
6.2.4. Promote at regional level the exchange of best practices among sub-national and local governments/ municipalities on institutional capacity building for sustainable development and local stakeholders' engagement	Regional Conventions, National governments and sub-national and local government/ municipalities	2035

149. The Strategy promotes the engagement of civil society, scientists, local communities, youth and women, financial institutions, private sector, and other stakeholders in the governance process at all levels, in order to secure inclusive processes and integrity in decision-making. Public participation is particularly important at the local level, which is the level of government closest to the people, and the level of decision-making where many environment-related decisions are taken. Increased

public participation has to be achieved through support for national, sub-national and local governments and institutions by means of improved legal frameworks and human and financial resources and has to include skills related to partnership- building, negotiation and conflict resolution. The Strategy also envisages support for and strengthening of the organizational capacity of local, national and regional stakeholders, including voluntary organizations, cooperatives, associations, networks, and producer groups, in terms of legal frameworks and human and financial resources. That will contribute to better decision-making, implementation of policies, plans and projects, and monitoring. At the regional level, accession to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) is encouraged as a flagship initiative.

150. The Strategy promotes the engagement of civil society, scientists, local communities youth and women, financial institutions, private sector in the governance process at all levels, in order to secure inclusive processes and integrity in decision-making (strategic direction 6. 3). Public participation is particularly important at the local level, which is the level of government closest to the people, and the level of decision-making where many environment-related decisions are taken. Increased public participation has to be achieved through support for national, sub-national and local governments and institutions by means of improved legal frameworks and human and financial resources and has to include skills related to partnership-building, negotiation and conflict resolution. The Strategy also envisages support for and strengthening of the organizational capacity of local, national and regional stakeholders, including voluntary organizations, cooperatives, associations, networks, and producer groups, in terms of legal frameworks and human and financial resources. That will contribute to better decision-making, implementation of policies, plans and projects, and monitoring.

Strategic direction 6.3: Promote the engagement of civil society, scientists, youth and women, financial institutions, private sector, local communities and other stakeholders in the governance process at all levels, in order to secure inclusive whole of society processes and integrity in decision-making		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
6.3.1. Set up, where relevant, and strengthen the capacity of national governments sub-national and local authorities for public participation in terms of legal frameworks and human and financial resources	International institutions, national governments, local authorities, academia, civil society	2035
6.3.2 Support and strengthen the capacity and awareness of local, and national stakeholders and non-state actors, also by strengthening ESD networks for civic engagement in sustainability projects	National governments, local authorities, regional actors and initiatives, civil society	2035
6.3.3 Develop and implement policies that promote gender equality in coastal management and decision-making processes, including targeted training programs to build women's knowledge and skills in coastal resource management, fisheries, marine conservation, and environmental governance	National governments, civil society, academia	2035

151. The Strategy promotes implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements to guide actions at national and regional levels (strategic direction 6.4). It highlights the importance of ensuring policy coherence, based on mechanisms for inter-ministerial coordination and cross-sectoral planning. The Strategy promotes the implementation of the precautionary principle through instruments such as environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments. It encourages the support, through legal provisions where relevant, of partnerships in planning and implementation, including but not limited to private sector involvement, public-private partnerships, and innovative financing at regional (subnational) and/or local level. A flagship initiative is included to develop capacity-building programmes on issues related to implementation and compliance with environmental obligations and agreements, including environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments.

Strategic direction 6.4: Promote the implementation, and monitoring of the SD Strategies at all levels of government, considering synergies and tradeoffs between different policies and sectors, including intersectional management (WEFENEXUS) by improving policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) based on whole of government approach, inter-ministerial coordination and multi-level government		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
6.4.1. Ensure ratification, compliance and implementation of global and regional agreements related to environmental sustainability, to guide actions at national and regional levels.	International institutions, national governments, local authorities, academia, civil society	2035
6.4.2. Ensure the adoption of the precautionary principle and its application by undertaking environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments and other relevant procedures.	National governments, local authorities, academia, civil society, private sector	2035
6.4.3. Enhance inter-ministerial coordination and cross-sectoral planning and multi-level governance through policy coherence for sustainable development.	National governments, local authorities, civil society	2035
6.4.4. Encourage and support, through legal provisions where relevant, partnerships in planning and implementation, including but not limited to private sector involvement, public-private partnerships, and innovative financing at regional (subnational) and/or local level.	International institutions, national governments, local authorities, academia, civil society, private sector	2035

152. The Strategy promotes education and research for sustainable development (strategic direction 6. 5). in particular through the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development. The aim of the latter Strategy is to encourage Mediterranean countries to develop and incorporate education for sustainable development into their formal education systems, in all relevant subjects, in particular in green and blue economy sectors and circular economy related professions, as well as in non-formal and informal education. The objectives of this Strategy focus on the following aspects of education for sustainable development: policy, legislation and other regulatory and operational support frameworks; promotion through formal, non-formal and informal learning; equipping educators with the competence to include sustainable development in their teaching; accessible and adequate tools and materials; research and development; and, cooperation at all levels, including exchange of experience and technologies within the region.

153. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development also includes an action to strengthen research capabilities in the area of sustainable development, as well as the science-policy interface. At the regional level, the Strategy underlines the value of large-scale programmes (e.g. European Union Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programmes) to promote sustainable development research and innovation, and the importance of encouraging and supporting partnerships amongst countries. It promotes also the exchange of good practices and knowledge in all aspects of education and learning for sustainable development.

6.5: Promote education and research for sustainable development		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
6.5.1. Implement the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, which promotes the integration of the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, and taking in due account the United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030	Regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, civil society, academia and educators	2035
6.5.2. Strengthen knowledge and research capacity at the national level, through long-term provision of training opportunities, particularly in the green and blue economy sectors and circular economy related professions, transfer of knowledge and research infrastructure development.	International institutions, national governments, local authorities, educational and scientific communities, private sector, and civil society	2035
6.5.3. Strengthen the science-policy interface, to support decision making by scientific analysis and data, through research fora, seminars, and other opportunities for exchange, and taking in due account the United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030.	International institutions, national governments, local authorities, academia, civil society	2035
Regional		
6.5.4 Promote research and innovation by ensuring that large-scale programmes and initiatives (e.g. European Union Horizon Europe Research Programmes) take into account Mediterranean priorities for sustainable development.	International institutions, academia, civil society	2030

154. Strategic direction 6.6 addresses regional capabilities for information management in relation to scientific data on sustainable development and environment. In order to allow for appropriate knowledge-based decision- and policy making, as well as policy foresight, national information centres will be established, which will collect existing and new information. Joint knowledge-creation and knowledge-sharing initiatives with stakeholders, including the scientific community, the private sector and civil society are envisaged, which follow the European Union's Shared Environmental Information System principles on data-sharing and fair data management principles. At the regional level, capacity-building on data and information production and sharing and the coordination of national monitoring programmes are included. A flagship initiative is also envisaged to establish a publicly-accessible Mediterranean integrated information system, through which synergy is established between national governments, international institutions and the private sector, to collect and transparently display information on the state of the environment and the status of delivery on the protocols to the Barcelona Convention. This will draw on data and support systems already in place, for example the UNEP/MAP Knowledge Management Platform as the hub of UNEP/MAP knowledge heritage, following commitments of the adopted UNEP/MAP data policy.

Strategic direction 6.6: Strengthen regional capabilities for information management and enhance the promotion of evidence-informed policymaking and foresight		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
6.6.1. Establish or strengthen support for data monitoring processes, including through survey information, as well as national centres providing integrated and publicly accessible information.	National governments, regional institutions, civil society, private sector	2030
6.6.2. Foster joint knowledge-creation and knowledge-sharing initiatives between stakeholders that respect the European Union's Shared Environmental Information System principles on data sharing.	International institutions, national governments, and local authorities, academia, civil society	2035
Regional		
6.6.3. Develop capacity on data and information production, sharing and management and enhance technology where necessary to create comparable and compatible data, and support informed policy making and policy foresight evidence based, also through a set of core indicators providing a summary of the major environmental and socio-economic challenges	Regional institutions, national governments, academia Plan Bleu/RAC INFO /RAC	2035
6.6.4. Coordinate national and regional monitoring programmes at the regional level, including through annual workshops.	Regional institutions, national governments, National and Regional Parliaments	2035

4. ENSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2026-2035

155. The implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 is a collective process. Although facilitated by the UNEP/MAP system, it is the participation and active role of all stakeholders that will play a decisive role in its delivery.

156. The UNEP/MAP system, which includes the UNEP/MAP Secretariat and the Regional Activity Centres, as well as the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, will provide leadership and guidance with respect to implementing the Strategy. Indeed, the main UNEP/MAP policies and related measures formulated with a view to implementing the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention as well as other key existing regional mechanisms and instruments are essential for the implementation of the Strategy (Box 2). In addition, the UNEP/MAP system will provide support and technical guidance to the Contracting Parties, as well as the coordination of implementation actions and monitoring processes, as well as a platform for the exchange of relevant information, experience and synergies developed at regional or sub-regional level.

157. The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development is a key structure within the UNEP/MAP system for supporting the development and implementation of the Strategy. As a central point of reference and bringing together representatives of the Parties and stakeholders involved with sustainable development, it will work closely, supported by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat, with the relevant organizations for the effective implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy represents a policy and action oriented framework for the Commission's work.

158. Intergovernmental and regional and sub-regional institutions also have a very important role to play in the implementation of the Strategy. Working in tandem with each other and with the UNEP/MAP system, as well as facilitating synergies with Contracting Parties using the Strategy as a common platform, they can be critical for successful implementation. They will not only create an important critical mass of significant national and regional players working in a coordinated way towards sustainable development but will also have a positive effect on using the limited human and financial resources needed for the implementation of joint activities more efficiently. For these partners, the Strategy represents a coherent and integrated set of priority strategic directions and actions that need to be implemented to achieve sustainable development in the region, in which their actions and objectives are placed within an overall framework.

159. The private sector is a key partner for the implementation of the Strategy. As a key player in the emerging green economy, the private sector can be one of the strongest allies in the process of implementing the Strategy. This is not only through corporate social responsibility, but also through more sustainable consumption and production processes that are part of its core business, through the integration of innovative technologies, and through improved upstream and downstream processes of the industrial, artisanal and marketing chains. That will also contribute towards the sustainability of its own operations. For the private sector, the Strategy provides an indication of issues, directions and actions that have to be implemented to further sustainable development goals at regional, national and local level, and the type of discussions that have to be held within the context of sustainable development in the near future. This indication is of prime importance for business planning.

160. Science is key to success: all action and policy development at the national or regional level must rely on a strong evidence bases. The analytical tools that will allow the forecasting, planning and assessment of sustainable development-related impacts and actions need to be developed with the scientific community, which itself needs to direct its research capacity in support of decision making. For academia, the Strategy contains a series of sustainable development concerns that require assistance from science to understand.

161. Civil society has always been an important group of stakeholders in the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development. In the implementation of the Strategy, its role becomes more pronounced: besides being a catalyst for supporting and monitoring the implementation process at the regional and national level, civil society can take up important tasks related to awareness and sensitization, as well as acting as the third pillar of democracy, along with decision-makers and judicial entities, to ensure transparency and secure the participation of the people. For

civil society, the Strategy contains a set of strategic directions that at once inform its work along with other partners and it provides a fertile ground for the development of projects.

162.. Delivering on SDG-14 and the 2030 Agenda as a whole will require youth and women empowerment, and inclusive policies that leave no one behind. Young people in the Mediterranean are solution-oriented, seeking green jobs and opportunities from a sustainable blue economy that delivers on its promises, including in the digital space. At the same time, the role of women in sustainable development is multidimensional and their voices need to be included at every forefront; they are often the first responders to their families, have unique ideas and perspectives, and often drive change at various levels. Local authorities are key actors of implementation for two main reasons: a) They are implementors by nature, since around 70% of SDG's rely on the effective work of local (including metropolitan) authorities; b) They are closer to citizens, both organized or individuals; the engagement of general public and citizens is very relevant to the implementation of the Strategy. Through its proximity, local authorities may be firsthand enhancers of those behavioral changes.

163. National and Regional Parliaments play a pivotal role in supporting implementation, by fostering their oversight exercise, also through parliamentary assemblies and regional fora.

164. Funding institutions are also key partners for the implementation of the Strategy. For these partners, the Strategy contains a set of widely agreed regional objectives as well as strategic directions within these objectives, which will help such bodies to position and assess funding proposals aimed at advancing sustainable development in the region.

Box 2: Existing regional programmes and frameworks constituting essential tools for implementing the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035

- Integrated coastal zone management is recognised as the way forward for the sustainable development of coastal zones and is characterised by a distinctive integrated approach to providing solutions to the complex environmental, social, economic and institutional problems of the coastal zones. As indicated by Article 2 of the **Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management for the Mediterranean** under the Barcelona Convention, "Integrated coastal zone management means a dynamic process for the sustainable management and use of coastal zones, taking into account at the same time the fragility of coastal ecosystems and landscapes, the diversity of activities and uses, their interactions, the maritime orientation of certain activities and uses and their impact on both the marine and land parts". The adoption of this protocol is a fully achieved policy-objective of the initial Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (2005). Its implementation is supported by the Action Plan 2012-2019.

- The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention committed to apply the ecosystem-based approach – through the **Ecosystem Approach Roadmap** – to the management of human activities while enabling a sustainable use of marine goods and services, with the view to achieving or maintaining good environmental status of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal regions, their protection and preservation, as well as preventing their subsequent deterioration. They recognize the ecosystem approach as an integrated operational approach for the successful implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its protocols while enhancing sustainable development in the region, as well as a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

- The **Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean** (entered into force in 1999) is implemented through the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) adopted in 2021. In addition, the extension of the network of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and the adoption and implementation of a Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures in the Mediterranean represent important achievements for the region.
  The Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan for the Mediterranean,

which is under preparation, aims at achieving the shift to sustainable patterns of consumption and production in priority economic sectors while addressing related environmental degradation challenges. It supports the implementation of sustainable consumption and production actions at the regional level and identifies actions to guide the implementation of the sustainable consumption and production at the national level, addressing key human activities which have a particular impact on the marine and coastal environment and related transversal and cross-cutting issues

- The adoption by the Contracting Parties of Regional Plans on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, on Urban Wastewater Treatment, on Sewage Sludge Management, on Agriculture Management, on Aquaculture Management and on Urban Stormwater Management, are major breakthroughs to combat marine pollution from Land Based Sources and Activities

- The **Offshore Action Plan** includes priority actions and measures for the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to ratify the Offshore Protocol; designate Contracting Parties' representatives to participate to the regional governing bodies; establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme; establish a financial mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan; promote access to information and public participation in decision-making; enhance the regional transfer of technology; develop and adopt regional offshore standards; develop and adopt regional offshore guidelines; establish regional offshore monitoring procedures and programmes; and, report on the implementation of the Action Plan.

- **The Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas,** which is under preparation, aims to increase the resilience of the Mediterranean marine and coastal areas to climate change through the development of a regional approach to climate change adaptation. Once adopted, this framework will form the basis for the development of a detailed Regional Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan.

- **The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM).** This regional organisation plays a major role in ensuring sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean. The implementation of the GFCM 2030 Strategy for fisheries and aquaculture will further support that objective.

- **The Ministerial Declarations and other frameworks established under the Union for the Mediterranean, including the** 2030 GreenerMed Agenda**.**

- With a 2030 target, **the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters"** aims to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters through research and innovation, citizen engagement and blue investments. The Mission's new approach will address the ocean and waters as one and play a key role in achieving climate neutrality and restoring nature. Cross-cutting enabling actions will support this objective, in particular broad public mobilisation and engagement and a digital ocean and water knowledge system, known as Digital Twin Ocean. The Mission supports regional engagement and cooperation through area-based "lighthouses" in major sea/river basins: Atlantic-Arctic, Mediterranean Sea, Baltic-North Sea, and Danube-Black Sea. Mission lighthouses are sites to pilot, demonstrate, develop and deploy the Mission activities across EU seas and river basins.

- **The Environmental Reports on Resolutions unanimously adopted by all the 31 Member Parliaments of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) at the 17th, 18th and 19th PAM Plenary Sessions**, recalling the crucial role of National and Regional Parliaments in implementing the provisions of the Barcelona Conventions and its Protocols, to facilitate the advancement of SDGs in the region. The 2024 "Parliamentarian's guide to protecting the Mediterranean Sea and coast" (UNEP, 2024) is a concrete tool for parliamentarians engage for stronger enforcement of, and compliance with, the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols**.**

- Endorsed at the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change of the Union for the Mediterranean, the **Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development** encourages the Mediterranean countries to develop and incorporate education on sustainable development into their formal education systems, in all relevant subjects, and in non-formal and informal education. This will equip people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development, making them more competent and confident and increasing their opportunities for acting for a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature and with concern for social values, gender equity and cultural diversity.

- **WestMed Initiative** was adopted by the European Commission on 19 April 2017 and endorsed by the Council of the EU on 26 June 2017. In 2018 a common roadmap was agreed for the development of a sustainable blue economy in the sub-basin to generate growth, create jobs and provide a better living environment for Mediterranean populations, while preserving the services performed by the Mediterranean ecosystem. The roadmap includes 6 priorities: Maritime safety and the fight against marine pollution; Maritime cluster development; Skills development and circulation; Sustainable consumption and production; Biodiversity and marine habitat conservation and restoration; Development of coastal communities and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

- The Macro-regional Strategy for the Mediterranean has appeared in recent years as an important tool to accelerate changes and address challenges and menaces regarding climate change, biodiversity loss, protection and restoration and sustainable development promotion. The European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions of the European Union and the European Economic and Social Council have approved or expressed resolutions and opinions to support such strategy. This Mediterranean Strategy salutes these steps and will consider the developing of this initiative as a potential enhancer of the implementation of this Strategy.

- The European Union (DG-MENA) funded **"Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) in the Neighborhood South region"** aims to improve the protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing the resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region, strengthening the formulation, enforcement and implementation of the relevant policies and the two regional frameworks, namely the MAP/Barcelona Convention and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

- Under t**he New Pact for the Mediterranean**, the EU is expected to renew commitment to strengthen engagement with the region, addressing shared challenges and opportunities for sustainable development, inclusive growth, and regional stability. Building on the foundations of the 2021 Agenda for the Mediterranean, the Pact is expected to promote concrete initiatives for deeper, impact-driven cooperation.

- **The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)** is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council in 2014. The general objective of the EUSAIR is to promote economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity. With four EU members and four Western Balkan countries the strategy will contribute to the further integration of the Western Balkans. The countries are aiming to create synergies and foster coordination among all territories in the Adriatic-Ionian Region in the four thematic areas/ pillars: sustainable tourism, environmental quality, connecting the region and blue growth.

- **The Interreg Euro-MED Programme 2021-2027** supports cooperation across Mediterranean borders. The programme provides funds for projects developed and managed by public administrations, universities, private and civil society organizations to jointly implement transnational projects.
  The Programme brings together partners from 69 regions of 14 countries from the Northern shore of the Mediterranean with a common objective: a climate neutral and resilient society for the benefit of its citizens. The total programme budget amounts to about 294M€ for the 2021-2027 period.

The Interreg Euro-MED Programme funds projects willing to bring solutions to answer 4 complementary missions: Strengthening an innovative sustainable economy, Protecting, restoring and valorising the natural environment and heritage, Promoting green living areas, Enhancing sustainable tourism.

- **The Interreg Next Med Programme 2021-2027** aims to contribute to smart, sustainable, fair development for all across the Mediterranean basin by supporting balanced, long-lasting, far-reaching cooperation and multilevel governance. The programme's mission is to finance transnational cooperation projects that address joint socio-economic, environmental and governance challenges at Mediterranean level such as the uptake of advanced technologies, competitiveness of SMEs and job creation, energy efficiency, sustainable water management, climate change adaptation, transition to a circular and resource efficient economy, education and training, health care, etc. The cooperation area covers 15 countries: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia – and two new members, namely Algeria and Türkiye.

4.1. Institutional structures and means for the implementation of the Strategy

165. Further reinforcing adequate institutional structures is a key priority in providing for effective implementation of the Strategy. The existing management system for the Strategy implementation faces a number of challenges.

166. In order to improve sustainable development governance, it is essential that the right structures are put in place or strengthened, and properly resourced (strategic direction 7.1). At a national level, it is essential to ensure the wide participation of relevant organizations in sustainable development management through the setting up of sustainable development commissions, councils, fora, and networks as appropriate in each national context. These coordination and consultation bodies should serve to achieve wide and high-level political support at national level, particularly with key ministries whose competencies affect or are effected by, sustainable development, including the prime minister, where relevant, and must be supported by adequate human and financial resources.

167. At a regional level, it is essential that the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development should have its proper funding and its human resources and that MAP's own governance and funding programmes are designed to take into account the need for resources for sustainable development. A second regional action reflects on the need to enlarge the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development to ensure the participation of a larger number of relevant international organizations and stakeholder groups from the Mediterranean region involved in sustainable development processes.

168. Improving visibility and outreach of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, particularly within the United Nations system, such as within the Conferences of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention and at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development is essential. This would entail the establishment of a ministerial level of action through organization of regular four-yearly sessions dedicated to sustainable development of the Mediterranean at the ministerial level within the framework of the Conferences of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The final action under this strategic direction focuses on ensuring that the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development fulfils its role in promoting the exchange of good practices and networking in areas relevant to its remit.

Strategic direction 7.1: Put in place or strengthen structures for sustainable development implementation at national and regional scale, and ensure their adequate resourcing		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
National		
7.1.1. Ensure a wide participation of relevant organizations in sustainable development management at the national level through the setting up of sustainable development commissions, councils, fora, and networks as appropriate.	National governments, local authorities as authorities to be taken into account to ensure the participation of relevant organizations in sustainable development at National level	2035
Regional		
7.1.2 Improve the impact of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development in the regional context through strengthening of the administrative and financial support for its operation, in particular by strengthening the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit as the Commission Secretariat for it to be able to coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 and the regular reporting on progress.	UNEP/MAP	2035
7.1.3 Enlarge the MCSD participants as observers to ensure the participation of a larger number of relevant international organizations and stakeholder groups including women and youth from the Mediterranean region involved in sustainable development processes.	Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, UNEP/MAP UFM, WestMed Initiative, EUSAIR macro regional strateg, Interreg Euro-Med, Interreg Next South, Interreg Adrion, Ocean Mission, Mediterranean Committee on ESD Action Plan	Ongoing
7.1.4 Enhance coordination at the regional level between related frameworks in order to acknowledge the MSSD as the overarching Strategic Reference document for the region.	Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, UNEP/MAP UFM, WestMed Initiative, EUSAIR macro regional strateg, Interreg Euro-Med, Interreg Next South, Interreg Adrion, Ocean Mission, Mediterranean Committee on ESD Action Plan	Ongoing
7.1.5. Improve visibility and outreach of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and the MSSD, with the support of a communication strategy, particularly within the United Nations system, such as within the Conferences of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention and at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, to complement the four-yearly ministerial sessions on sustainable development at the Conference of the Parties	Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, UNEP/MAP	2035

Strategic direction 7.1: Put in place or strengthen structures for sustainable development implementation at national and regional scale, and ensure their adequate resourcing		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
to the Barcelona Convention.		
7.1.6. Ensure that the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development fulfils its role in promoting the exchange of good practices and networking in areas relevant to its remit on sustainable development, as well as through appointing 'champions' where relevant.	Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, UNEP/MAP	2035

169. The second strategic direction in this section focuses on establishing mechanisms for management of sustainable development processes, in particular the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 at the regional level (strategic direction 7.2). The actions recommended take on board the understanding that policies and strategies exist within a policy cycle, beginning with policy formulation and continuing with policy implementation and monitoring and then policy review.

Strategic direction 7.2: Establish regional processes for the implementation and monitoring of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
Regional		
7.2.1 Ensure that the regular programmes of work of UNEP/MAP allocate the necessary resources for leading the implementation and monitoring of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035	Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, UNEP/MAP, Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	2035
7.2.2 Strengthen the support of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development to national/local authorities	UNEP/MAP	2035
7.2.3 Undertake a participatory mid- term and final evaluations of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable 2026-2035 based on the first 5 years of data regarding its implementation, using indicators associated with the actions, as well as the proposed dashboard of Sustainability Indicators.	UNEP/MAP	2035
7.2.4 Review the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035 issuing a new Strategy for the period 2036-2045, based on the MSSD final evaluation.	UNEP/MAP	2035

4.2. Financing the implementation of the Strategy

170. Implementation of the Strategy, based on the ambitious but necessary and realistic vision of establishing a sustainable Mediterranean on strong economic and social foundations, needs significant financial resources. The resources for financing the Strategy implementation cannot and

should not be expected to come from only one or a few sources. It is, again, a collective effort, through which the sum will be much greater than the addition of the parts, thanks to the synergies developed and economies of scale achieved.

171. In that sense, the national budgets of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, allocating funds for the implementation of strategic targets aligned with the Strategy and the mobilization of resources for participation in regional and sub-regional actions aligned with the Strategy can significantly assist in promoting implementation, while at the same time serving national objectives and policies

172. The private sector needs to be in a central place of this process. By mobilizing resources for its own research, development and integration of technologies into the production process, and shifting some of the resources invested annually in marketing and promotion activities, it can play a very significant role in critically strengthening the process of implementation. For that purpose, the UNEP/MAP system, as well as the Contracting Parties and other stakeholders, such as civil society, need to develop close working relations with the private sector and construct a platform of trust and synergy through which 'win-win' collaborations will be established for the implementation of actions in the context of the Strategy.

173. Strategic direction 7.3 addresses the need to strengthen capacity for financing the Strategy. The first action in this regard relates to the development of a project portfolio drawn from the Strategy to support fundraising activities. The second action relates to the provision of capacity-building workshops on fundraising. In addition, the Strategy recommends the creation of an investment facility for sustainable development implementation in the Mediterranean, involving international financial institutions, development banks, the European Union and bilateral donor agencies. Finally, the Strategy encourages private sector to engage with civil society and foster greater corporate social responsibility.

Strategic direction 7.3: Strengthen capacity for financing the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time frame**
Regional		
7.3.1. Build a project portfolio aimed at supporting the implementation of Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development actions, and associate possible funding sources with the portfolio.	UNEP/MAP	2030
7.3.2. Provide capacity-building workshops to national governments and stakeholders, as well as sub-regional bodies in fundraising to improve their access to funding.	UNEP/MAP, UFM, National and Regional Parliaments, other regional and international organizations/initiatives/ programmes, WES/BCA, INTERREG Med/ PRIMA Programmes	2035
7.3.3. Mapping funding opportunities and develop a MSSD funding strategy and create an investment facility for sustainable development implementation in the Mediterranean, involving international financial institutions, development banks, the European Union and bilateral donor agencies, as well as engaging with the private sector	UNEP/MAP, regional and international organizations, national governments, European Union, WB, EBRD, EIB	2035

4.3. Monitoring system and a regional dashboard on the implementation of the Strategy

174. A comprehensive monitoring system and relevant indicators are necessary to assess the implementation of the Strategy. This is done using the MSSD dashboard indicators.

175. The set of indicators monitor the progress of sustainable development issues are available online (https://wesr.unep.org/article/dashboard), on an interactive way. The MSSD Dashboard indicators should be subject to regular update.

176. The implementation of the Strategy is subject to an independent Mid-Term evaluation in 2030 that should take into account the forthcoming global sustainability framework and recommend the necessary directions as appropriate.

177. The Strategy is subject to a final evaluation in 2035. Both evaluations should be independent, participatory and inclusive involving the MCSD members, partners and stakeholders and be accompanied by an updated evaluation of the MSSD Dashboard indicators to assess sustainability trends.

178. On the existing reporting systems and through countries involvement, strong partnerships with regional and national experts and stakeholders, Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are encouraged to proceed with periodic evaluation of the Strategy and its dashboard to timely consider the regular update of national and regional datasets, while it will allow precise and up to date analysis of the progress towards the sustainable development of the region based on the sustainability dashboard, utilizing on primary basis the data from already existing reliable sources.

Strategic direction 7.4: Ensure the regular monitoring of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2026-2035		
Actions	**Responsible Actors**	**Time Frame**
National		
7.4.1. Provide data on a biannual basis for monitoring the Strategy, reporting on the progress of the MSSD biannually	National governments, regional organizations, UNEP/MAP	2035
Regional		
7.4.2. Ensure that the Strategy monitoring systems are built taking into account the existing and planned data-sharing and information systems of the MAP, complementing with the potential of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development meetings for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy using breakout groups.	UNEP/MAP, National governments, regional organizations, Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, UNEP/MAP	2035
7.4.3 Update and populate the dashboard of sustainability indicators for the Mediterranean, with the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development playing an advisory role in the selection process.	UNEP/MAP, Plan Bleu, Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development	2035

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
Objective 1 Address climate change with emphasis on adaptation to its impacts and promote Energy Security and Transition as a priority	Regional science-policy interface mechanism to prepare consolidated regional scientific assessments on climate change trends, impacts and adaptation and mitigation options (**MedECC**)	UNEP/MAP, Plan Bleu/RAC, UfM
	Launching of educational initiatives (e.x. Mediterranean ESD Network: Platform for collaboration among schools, universities, and civil societies Mediterranean Green Skills Program: Training for youth and women in sustainable business practices)	CYPRUS, Mediterranean Committee on Education and Sustainable Development, WES/BCA
	Delivering 1TW of renewable energy capacity in the Mediterranean by 2030 (**TERAMED**)	ECOUNION and RAED. Regional governments, international organizations, private sector stakeholders, and civil society groups

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
Objective 2 Improve the health, productivity, restoration and resilience of the marine and coastal ecosystems	**Achieving 30 by 30 MPAs/ OECMs Targets** (Update of MEDFUND Flagship Initiative)	SPA/RAC Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation; Oceanographic Institute – Prince Albert 1st of Monaco Foundation ; UNEP/MAP Specially Protected Area Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC); Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund; MedPAN; WWF Mediterranean; IUCN Centre for Mediterranean cooperation; French coastal protection agency Conservatoire du Littoral; Mediterranean Small Islands Initiative, MedPAN is the network of Mediterranean marine protected area managers.

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
	Mediterranean Coast Day	PAP/RAC UNEP/MAP and Regional Activity Centres under the Barcelona Convention System Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention UNEP Regional Seas Programme & Regional Seas UNESCO UNEP/MAP— Barcelona Convention system Partners (IGOs and NGOs) Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ocean & Climate Platform International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) WWF-Mediterranean Mediterranean Information Office for the Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MiO-ESCEDE) MedWet Initiative MED SEA Foundation ARTPORT_making waves

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
	Promote the **IUCN Green list** standard in riparian states to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of parks managing bodies created (**IUCN Green list)**	IUCN-Green List Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Spain.
	Promote the protection and conservation of **Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows** as crucial ecosystem (**Seagrass/Posidonia Meadows)**	SPA/RAC The French Biodiversity Agency (OFB), IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, WWF Mediterranean, The Mediterranean Posidonia Network Countries: France, Tunisia, Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Algeria, Türkiye, Italy, Greece.
Objective 3 Promote sustainable resource management, especially water, food security and	Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus (WEFE Nexus) in the Mediterranean Source to Sea continuum (**WEFE NEXUS**)	UfM; DG MENA/DG ENEST; UNEP/MAP; Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) Water and Environment Support mechanism (WES/BCA) Project PRIMA Partnership for Research & Innovation in the Mediterranean area

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
systems through sustainable forms of rural development	**Mediterranean Forest Initiative**	UNEP, FAO and UNDRR UfM, EFIMed, Partner countries of the Mediterranean, Barcelona Convention, UNEP/MAP RACs, Mio-ECSDE, IUCN, CEDARE, Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel (OSS)
Objective 4 Plan-and manage sustainable, resilient Mediterranean cities	**Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award**	UNEP/MAP MedCities
	Mediterranean **Network of Zero Net Cities**	UNEP/MAP MedCities Countries: Contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention, starting for example with the countries of the winner cities of previous 4 IEFCA editions: Izmir, Genoa, Malaga, Ashdod Interested Mediterranean Cities from the 112 NetZeroCities, starting by MedCities members, such as Barcelona, València, Marseille, Rome, Limassol and Izmir Other interested cities: Athens, Tirana, as e.g. Signatories of the Covenant of Mayors PAP/RAC Plan Bleu/RAC and SCP/RAC

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
	Sustainable **urban toolbox** for the Mediterranean (**MedUrbanTools)**	MedCities, Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)
Objective 5 Accelerate transition towards sustainable, green, blue and circular economy and sustainable finance	Create and promote a Mediterranean business award for environmental innovation **(WeMedBusiness Award)**	SCP/RAC, UNEP/MAP
	Sustainable blue tourism	ECO-UNION and IDDRI CSOs: Plan Bleu/RAC, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation. Supportive Countries: France, Spain Implementing countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Montenegro.
Objective 6 Improve governance at all levels, cooperation	Encourage the adoption and implementation of the **Aarhus Convention**	MIO-ECSDE COMPSUD MEPIELAN UNECE Aarhus Convention secretariat, UNEP/MAP, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM (Committee on Energy, Environment and Water),

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
and partnerships in support of resilience and sustainable development.	**Women leadership** for SDGs in the Mediterranean	UNEP/MAP, women representatives of MCSD members PAM Women Parliamentary Forum Countries: France, Slovenia (Current Bureau Chair), Egypt (Next Bureau Chair), Algeria (hosting of 2024 Mediterranean Coast Day), etc UFM Plan Bleu/RAC, PAP/RAC and INFO/RAC Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) ASCAME EPLO CPMR-InterMediterranean Commission OECD – Istanbul Centre

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
	Youth involvement in MSSD decision process and implementation	Mediterranean Youth Group IECD –J-Med NGOs involved in the implementation of SDGs, Med sustainable development in the Med Sea (Mediterranean SOS Network (MedSOS) – Greece; Amici della Terra Italia (Friends of the Earth Italy) – Italy; L'Association de Sauvegarde de la Nature et de l'Environnement (ASNE) – Tunisia; RAED (Arab Network for Environment and Development) – Egypt; DOTO (Diaries of the ocean) - Lebanon Med Countries INFO/RAC Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) MIO-ECSDE Anna Lindh Foundation Académie des Talents Méditerranéens
	Mediterranean Green Week	UFM, UNEP/MAP

MSSD Objective	Flagship Initiative	Partners
	Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development	MIO-ECSDE Cyprus (chair), Greece, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Bureau of the Mediterranean Committee of ESD, international/regional organizations
	Establish a publicly-accessible Mediterranean integrated information system through a triumvirate of national governments, international institutions and the private sector to collate and transparently display information on the state of Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean. **Observatory on Environment and Sustainable Development**	Plan Bleu, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Türkiye

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Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas 2026-2035

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation the Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Having regard to the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean and its provisions on mitigation and adaptation measures to address the effects of climate change, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and the COP 23 recommendations providing for the preparation of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean, in synergy with relevant developments at regional and global levels, herein after referred to as the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas (RCCAF),

Considering that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and its adverse effects, including rising sea temperatures and levels, acidification and deoxygenation and degradation of marine biodiversity, have alarming and fast escalating impacts on human life and on coastal and marine ecosystems as well as on public expenditures,

Concerned about the findings of the relevant Reports of the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention system, the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC) and the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) related to the climate change impacts, risks, present and future challenging scenario for the Mediterranean,

Aware that increasing the resilience to the effects of climate change is crucial for the coastal and marine and socio-economic ecosystems of the Mediterranean,

Having considered the reports of the 21st Meeting of the MCSD (Corinth, Greece, June 2025) and of the Regional Meeting on Climate Change Adaptation (Istanbul, Türkiye, July 2025),

1. *Adopt* the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2026-2035 set-out in the Annex I to this Decision;

2. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to take into account and address the implementation of the RCCAF, through their national and local Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), climate change adaptation strategies and plans, including Marine Spatial Plans, National Determined Contributions in line with their national circumstances and priorities;

3. *Adopt* the Performance Monitoring Matrix (MEL) of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, set out in Annex II to this Decision, as an evolving monitoring tool for assessing the implementation of RCCAF, to be further detailed taking into account existing data-sharing and information systems with the view to ensuring that any reporting obligation created under the MEL, build

on existing tools and data used by Contracting Parties to avoid duplication or further administrative burden;

4. *Encourage* all relevant intergovernmental organizations, donor agencies, industry, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to support the implementation of the RCCAF, including through adequate funding, emphasizing the need for the necessary financial and technical support for adaptation measures to the countries most vulnerable to climate change;

5. *Request* the Secretariat, the CC/RAC and other MAP Components to make every effort to provide coordinated technical support to identify and mobilize external resources to support Contracting Parties in enhancing their capacity and effectively implement the RCCAF which will undergo a mid-term evaluation in conjunction with the MSSD 2026-2035 mid-term review;

6. *Request* the Secretariat and the MAP Components to raise awareness, enhance education and capacity building on climate change in the spirit of the MSSD 2026-2035 and of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education on Sustainable Development and its Action Plan towards 2030.]

Annex I

Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas 2026-2035

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and scope of the Framework

1. The development of the Framework is guided by the following vision:

By 2035 the Marine and Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean countries and their communities have increased their resilience to the adverse impacts of climate variability and change, in the context of Sustainable Development. This is achieved through common objectives, cooperation, solidarity, equity, transparency, accountability and participatory governance.

2. Climate change is one of the most critical challenges that the Mediterranean region is facing, from a demographic standpoint with approximately 30% growth between 2025 and 2050 (from about 500 to 650 million people). It is also one of the regions with the greatest ecological deficit (difference between ecological footprint and biocapacity), it is home to 60% of the world's water-poor human populations.

3. Pressing climate change challenges are expected to rapidly worsen the already acute climatic conditions present in the region and aggravate existing pressures including increased health risks for Mediterranean citizens. Even societal stability might be compromised: demographics in the Basin are on the rise and the more the population grows, especially in the South, the more the Governments and population will have to face civil security issues and an increase of human losses.

4. The adverse climate change context for the Mediterranean Region requires urgent and ambitious preventive remedial action. The Mediterranean has long been identified as a global climate change hotspot, one of the two most responsive regions to climate change globally[1]. A series of landmark scientific reports have confirmed climate change fragility of the Mediterranean region, with warming 20% faster than the global average, verifying its "hot spot" reputation. Climate change impacts, therefore, will continue to exert further pressure on already strained ecosystems and on vulnerable economies and societies. Coastal zones will face heightened disaster risks, including floods, droughts, erosion, and salinization of river deltas and aquifers that sustain food security and livelihoods[2]. Historically, responses to climate-related pressures and hazards in the Mediterranean region have often been limited to short-term and reactive local emergency measures.

5. Building on environmental and socioeconomic resilience against climate change at-national, regional and local levels requires pro-active, long-term integrated planning that addresses the root causes of vulnerability and guides the economic development of the region in a more sustainable direction. The Mediterranean countries need to turn the challenges they face under a changing climate into opportunities to increase their resilience by addressing the reasons that have led many environmental parameters into almost critical status.

6. At their 23rd Meeting, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP23, 5-8 December 2023, Portorož, Slovenia) confirmed their commitment to "enhance actions to address climate change in the Mediterranean and increase protection of the marine ecosystems against the detrimental impacts of climate change, and strengthen scientific knowledge and expertise in this area".

7. The outcome document of the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) entitled "*Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action*", reaffirms the strong global commitment to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources and emphasizes the need to adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change.

8. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue aims to strengthen understanding and action on ocean-related climate issues within the UNFCCC process. This involves enhancing collaboration, sharing knowledge, and identifying opportunities to integrate ocean-based solutions into climate policies and Nationally

[1] Giorgi, F. (2006), Climate change hot-spots, Geophysical Research Letters, 33, L08707.
[2] First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) on "Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future", MedECC, 2020

Determined Contributions (NDCs).

9. Resolution 15 of the 6th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) on Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution, calls upon all Member States 'to encourage investment in sustainable, climate-resilient water and sanitation infrastructure and nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches.'

10. Climate Change, with its accompanying risks and vulnerabilities, is a global common challenge faced by all and with local, regional, national and international dimensions[3]. Therefore international/regional cooperation is required. The Mediterranean region will need a strengthened, cross-border collaborative and coordinated approach to adaptation consistent with the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement's Global Goal on Adaptation process for "enhancing adaptive capacity, in order to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability", and with reference to National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and COP 28 Decision on the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, including its thematic and dimensional targets (Para 9 and 10)[4].

11. The 2021 EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change promotes national, regional and local approaches to adaptation and resilience and strong partnerships with its neighborhood, in particular the Mediterranean region[5].

12. The Main Objective of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF) 2026-2035 is to ~~set~~ consolidate a regional strategic approach to increase the resilience of the Mediterranean marine and coastal natural and socioeconomic systems against the impacts of climate change. The Framework assists policy makers and stakeholders at all levels across the Mediterranean in the development and implementation of coherent and effective policies and measures by identifying strategic objectives, strategic directions and priorities that:

- promote the right enabling environment for mainstreaming adaptation into national and local planning;
- promote and exchange best practices and low-regret measures;
- promote leveraging of necessary funding; and
- exchange and access best available data, knowledge, assessments and tools on adaptation.

13. The RCCAF focus and geographical scope are consistent with the legal framework set by the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols for the marine and coastal environments of the Mediterranean Sea and the coastal zones of the 21 countries that border it. The Framework recognizes that climate change is having and will have heavy impacts that do not respect the boundaries of a coastal zone as it is usually defined and that coastal adaptation actions may be required further inland, in particular in inland watersheds.

14. At the national level, the implementation of this strategic framework is linked to the work carried out under the Barcelona Convention, and is complementary to the provisions of the ICZM protocol, Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) implementation, and other relevant instruments. The time scale of the Framework is aligned with the MSSD 2026-2035.

15. The Framework is structured around four strategic objectives. Each strategic objective includes separate strategic directions and suggested priorities for their realization.

16. The RCCAF 2026-2035 takes into consideration key recent documents of the UNEP/MAP System:

- The *2020 State of the Environment and Development (SoED) of /Plan Bleu* provides an analysis of the region's climate policy and institutional landscape, noting the varied climate change response needs of different sub-regions and pointing to the importance of

[3] Art 7.2, 2015 Paris Agreement
[4] COP30 expected elements of the final outcome of the UAE-Belém work programme to be agreed include no more than 100 indicators that are globally applicable and can inform analysis of global trends, and constitute a menu of indicators that Parties can choose to report on in light of their national circumstances.
[5] Communication From The Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions, Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. COM(2021) 82 final, 24.2.2021

the integration of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) into climate change adaptation planning.

- *The 2020 Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin, The First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) of MedECC*[6]*,* presents a synthesis of available climate scientific knowledge, covering most climate-sensitive sectors and sub-regions. It supports local and vulnerable communities via resilience policies for climate adaptation which take into account poverty, inequalities, gender imbalances, social inclusion and redistribution.
- The *"2023 Summary for Policy Makers of the Special Report on Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks in the Mediterranean of MedECC",* presents current and future climate scenarios and risks. It also notes that "available knowledge concerning the risks studied by MedECC has significant gaps, often due to limited monitoring systems or scientific research capacity".
- The 2025 Report *"The Mediterranean by 2050: A Foresight by Plan Bleu*"[7] of Plan Bleu is a milestone report in understanding the sustainable development issues in the Mediterranean region that offers future perspectives for the next thirty years.

17. The RCCAF 2026-2035 was updated in parallel with the process of the preparation of the MSSD 2026-2035, and especially its Objective addressing climate change with emphasis to adaptation. Every effort will be made to ensure full complementarity of the implementation of the RCCAF 2026-2035 with the MSSD 2026-2035, to maximize impacts on the ground. Relevant Strategic Directions are specifically referenced in the RCCAF objectives, strategic directions and priorities, as described in the next sections.

Background – The Mediterranean Changing Climate

18. The climate of the Mediterranean region is characterized by mild winters and hot and dry summers. From the west, the Atlantic Ocean regimes have a great intra-seasonal and interannual variability influences in the Mediterranean reaching mainly the northeast part of the Mediterranean land and sea, whilst the eastern and southern climatic regimes provide the characteristics of the southern Mediterranean areas.

19. The Mediterranean coast is one of the region's most endangered areas. Over the past 60 years, coastal population growth has been rapid and sustained, resulting in one-third of the region's population now living along the coast. The Mediterranean hosts approximately one-third of global tourism, with a large share concentrated around coastal zones. High concentrations of population and tourism resulted in intensive coastal build-up, often well above national averages. Minimal tidal variation has historically allowed infrastructure and settlements to be placed very close to the sea. This now heightens the risk of coastal and compound flooding, especially in low-elevation coastal areas. At the same time, wildfire risks are intensifying, making Mediterranean coasts a hotspot for converging climate-related hazards

20. For the marine environment, available data indicates that since the 1980's, documented impacts on marine Mediterranean species and habitats were attributed to climate change. These included frequent and drastic mortalities of sessile benthic species of the infralittoral and circalittoral communities. For the deeper Mediterranean ecosystems, recent scientific articles reported that in the 1990's, Climate change caused an accumulation of organic matter on the deep-sea floor and altered the carbon and nitrogen cycles.[8]

21. Climate change poses significant challenges to the Mediterranean countries and is expected to worsen already acute climatic conditions present in the region. Essential resources like fresh water, clean air, fertile soil, agricultural production and fish provisions are endangered while coastal communities, ecosystems and infrastructure are challenged by increased physical risks. More

[6] The Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) is an open and independent international scientific expert network, providing information to decision-makers and the general public on the basis of available scientific information and on-going research,
[7] https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Rapport-MED-2050-EN.pdf
[8] Mediterranean Quality Status Report 2023

importantly, human lives may become endangered, health risks increased, and even societal stability compromised in a changing climate. A Mediterranean-wide response to these risks reduces the vulnerability and exposure of the region's society, economy and ecosystems to climate-related hazards, and increases the overall resilience of the Mediterranean marine and coastal areas.

The Region's climate has already changed

22. Climate change is one of the most critical challenges that the Mediterranean region is facing. After the Arctic, the Mediterranean is the second fastest-warming region in the world. It is also one of the regions with the greatest ecological deficit (difference between ecological footprint and biocapacity) and is home to 60% of the world's water-poor human populations. Over the two decades up to 2020, the frequency and duration of marine heat waves increased by 40% and 15 percent, respectively. The magnitude and pattern of observed precipitation trends also exhibit pronounced spatial variability dependent on the time period and season.[9]

23. In its Sixth Assessment Report, the IPCC concluded that "during the 21st century, climate change is projected to intensify throughout the region. Air and sea temperature and their extremes (notably heat waves) are likely to continue to increase more than the global average (high confidence)". The report predicted (i) a decrease in precipitation in most areas by 4–22%, depending on the emission scenario, (ii) a further rise in the Mediterranean Sea level during the coming decades and centuries, likely reaching 0.15 to 0.6 m in 2050 and 0.6 to 1.1 m in 2100 (relative to 1995–2014) and the process is irreversible at the scale of centuries to millennia; (iii) coastal flood risks will increase in low-lying areas along 37% of the Mediterranean coastline with an increase in the number of people exposed to sea level rise, especially in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region, and may reach up to 130% compared to present in 2100; (iv) ocean warming and acidification will impact marine ecosystems, with however uncertain consequences on fisheries[10].

24. Climate change affects all of the Mediterranean coastal region's terrestrial and marine costal zones. The near surface air temperature of the Mediterranean region in 2020 was 1.5°C warmer than pre-industrial times (1850–1900), with an increasing trend of 0.01– 0.05°C since the 1980s. Satellite data since the 1980s shows spatially different warming rates of the sea surface between +0.29°C and +0.44°C per decade, and stronger in the eastern basin. Mediterranean coastlines have experienced relative sea level rise at an accelerated rate during the last three decades. Mean sea level rise shows an approximate trend of ~1.4 mm per year during the 20th century, and it has accelerated to 2.8 ± 0.1 mm per year in the three decades up to 2018. The interannual and decadal variability that is superimposed on this trend can temporarily mask it. Coastal flooding in the Mediterranean due to storm surges and wind waves threatens the flood-prone areas in the waterfronts (river mouths and deltas) and low-lying coastal plains in many Mediterranean countries. The estimated decrease of the pH of the Mediterranean Sea surface waters is between 0.055 and 0.156 pH units since the preindustrial period with serious implications for acidification[11].

Projections for the future

25. While the IPCC AR5 had already considered the Mediterranean Region as "*highly vulnerable to climate change*" that "*will suffer multiple stresses and systemic failures due to climate changes*", the Cross-Chapter Paper 4 Mediterranean Region of the IPCC AR6[12] confirms that due to its particular combination of multiple strong climate hazards and high vulnerability, the Mediterranean region is a hotspot for highly interconnected climate risks.

26. In the future, warm temperature extremes will increase, and heat waves will intensify in duration and peak temperatures. For 2°C of global warming above the pre-industrial value, maximum daytime temperatures in the Mediterranean will likely increase by 3.3°C. With 4°C global warming, nearly all nights will be tropical (nighttime temperature for at least five days above a location-

[9] MED 2050, The Mediterranean by 2050, A foresight by Plan Bleu - Summary, Jacques Theys, with contributions from Denis Lacroix and Khadidja Amine, Plan Bleu, 2025, Marseille, 19 pages.
[10] IPCC, Climate Change 2023, Synthesis Report
[11] The Summary for Policy Makers of the MedECC Special Report on Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks in the Mediterranean 2023
[12] https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/ccp4/

depending threshold) and there will be almost no cold days[13].

27. Mean surface air temperature relative to pre-industrial values, is projected to increase by 2.1°C (1.6 to 2.7C) for the 2041–2060 period under the low (GHG) emissions scenario, and by 2.2°C (2.3 to 3.6C) over 2041–2060 under the high emissions scenario. Heat waves will increase both over land and over sea. Mean sea surface temperature is expected to increase by mid-21st century compared to the end of the 20th century, in the range from 0.6°C to 1.3°C under the high GHG emissions scenario. Warming is expected to be stronger in summer than in winter and associated with longer and more intense marine heat waves. The projected increase of dry spell length is larger in the south than in the north Mediterranean. Precipitation will decrease over most of the Mediterranean though heavy rainfalls will increase in some areas of the northern Mediterranean. Global warming will further increase the existing difference in intensity of precipitation and hydrological extremes between the northern and southern Mediterranean areas.

28. Sea levels are expected to continue to rise during the coming decades at a rate dependent on the future emissions of GHGs. The increase of relative sea level will cause more frequent coastal floods covering larger coastal areas. Mean sea level is projected to rise during the coming decades reaching 0.15–0.33 m by mid-21st century under the low GHG emissions scenario, and by 0.63–1.01m under the high emissions scenario. The frequency of an extreme sea level event that occurs once in a100 years is likely to increase by 10-30% by mid-21st century under intermediate, moderate and high emission scenarios.

29. Seawater acidification is projected to continue both off-shore and at the coast with pH levels decreasing between –0.25 and –0.46 units in Mediterranean surface waters by the end of the century under the very high emission scenario. The future evolution of sea surface salinity of the Mediterranean Sea remains largely uncertain with low confidence in its sign of change. Any change will likely be spatially and temporally irregular due to the primary role of the river and near-Atlantic freshwater inputs.

30. Future reduced precipitation, associated with increased evapotranspiration will lead to droughts, with drier soils and a decline of runoff and of coastal freshwater supply, and will become more severe under moderate and high emission scenarios. and strongly enhanced under severe emission scenarios[14].

Overview of expected climate change-related impacts and risks

31. Climate change will apply additional stresses on ecosystems and socioeconomic systems, by adversely increasing land degradation rates, the frequency and intensity of droughts, floods and other extreme climate events, as well as through changes in temperatures, precipitation patterns and the level of sea acidity.

32. *Natural and managed resources and systems*: The Mediterranean region is among the richest in biodiversity of global importance. However, many of its ecosystems have already been weakened by pollution, overexploitation, fragmentation of habitats, and biological invasions. Such stresses are expected to be, and will be further amplified under climate change. The composition of most of the present marine and coastal ecosystems has changed and will further change. There is a greater risk of extinction of species, especially those with a restricted climatic distribution, those that need highly specific habitats and/or those small populations which are naturally more vulnerable to modifications in their habitats.

33. Climate change is expected to amplify biological invasions and proliferation of pathogens and diseases fostered by the rise in temperature of the marine waters[15]. It is expected to alter the distribution of some species as a response to changes in the availability of their preys[16]. At the same time, sea acidification is currently occurring at an unprecedented rate, subjecting some marine

[13] The Summary for Policy Makers of the MedECC Special Report on Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks in the Mediterranean 2023
[14] See the Summary for Policy Makers of the MedECC Special Report on Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks in the Mediterranean 2023.
[15] UNEP/MAP SPA/RAC, 2010. Impact of climate change on marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean Sea.
[16] Mediterranean Quality Status Report 2023

organisms to additional and worsening environmental stress.

34. The region's water resources are subject to various interacting pressures such as rapid population growth, urbanization, tourism, alongside environmental degradation. These stresses are multiplied under climate change because of projected decline in precipitation and runoff, and depletion of groundwater resources. Agriculture in the coastal zones will be affected by increased temperatures, land degradation, and reduced water availability, with significant decreases in some crop yields that could reach alarming levels under high emissions scenarios, threatening food security especially for poor communities.

35. Changes in the geographical distribution of wild fish stocks can lead to ~~possible~~ decreased catch potential of some species. Climate change can also influence geographical distribution of aquaculture, species that could be raised, and the efficiency of production. The coastal zones which face high risks due to sea-level rise, host one third of the world tourism of the Mediterranean countries' coastal areas. The region's coastal systems and low-lying areas are subject to submergence and erosion due to increased sea-level rise and sea flood surges. Coastal aquifers, already overexploited, become increasingly threatened by saltwater intrusion due to rising sea levels and/or over-extraction. Warming and reduced rainfall leads to a decrease in trees and plant growth while annual burned areas due to forest and wild land fires are significantly increasing in many areas bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

36. *Human Settlements, Industry, and Infrastructure:* As coastal populations and assets in coastal areas continue to grow, exposure to climate change-related hazards, especially those associated with sea-level rise, is also increasing. The key impacts of climate change in coastal urban areas include inland flooding; coastal flooding and storm surges in low-lying and unprotected coastal zones; heatwaves exacerbated by the urban heat island effect; wind storms; water shortages and drought; air pollution; and other geo-hydrological hazards such as saltwater intrusion and landslides.

37. The crucial tourism industry faces negative consequences due to loss of beaches, natural attractions, tourism infrastructure and ambient comfort, especially during the summer months because of heat waves, drought and the associated risk of fires. Impacts on the sector will not be uniform across the region and occupancy rates may increase during spring and autumn in some areas. Port infrastructure, as well as coastal roads, railways, and airports, are at risk due to temporary and permanent flooding arising from sea-level rise, high winds and storm surges.

38. Energy transmission infrastructure also is at risk. Changes in water availability will affect hydropower generation and may lead to increased deployment of energy-intensive desalination options. Higher temperatures ~~will~~ increase the overall and peak demand for cooling in the summer months, but at the same time the heating demand during the winter is reduced.

39. The energy transition towards renewable energy sources can both mitigate Green House Gas (GHG) emissions in line with the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement and enhance resilience to climate change impacts, bearing in mind that greater levels of mitigation can reduce the need for additional adaptation efforts. The upscale of renewable Energies can play an important role in climate change adaptation. Examining the intersection of renewable energy and climate adaptation measures presents a critical opportunity for addressing climate impacts and supporting sustainable development. Promoting renewable energy as a strategy for adaptation requires well informed policy-making as well as raising awareness of its benefits.[17] However, further research is needed to establish the risks posed by the implementation of renewable energy projects (wind, solar and wave energies, hybrid systems) to the unique biodiversity of Mediterranean coastal ecosystems.[18]

40. *Human Health, Well-Being, and Security:* The overall health effects of a changing climate are likely to be negative. Extreme air temperatures contribute directly (through heat stress) and indirectly (through raised levels of ozone and other secondary pollutants) to an increase in the number of heat-

[17] IRENA (2025), Renewable energy in climate change adaptation: Metrics and risk assessment framework, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi.
[18] MedEcc, 2024 Climate and environmental coastal risks in the Mediterranean Summary for Policymakers

related illnesses and deaths. Such illnesses include cardiovascular and respiratory diseases particularly among the elderly, but also among children, people with medical conditions, and the poor. Extreme heat also raises pollen and other aeroallergen levels which trigger asthma.

41. Rising sea levels and increasingly extreme weather events may destroy homes, medical facilities and other essential services, therefore increasing risks to public health. Lack of safe water can compromise hygiene and increase the risk of diarrheal diseases, while floods can contaminate freshwater supplies, heighten the risk of water-borne diseases, and create breeding grounds for disease-carrying insects, especially threatening those with already limited access to water and sanitation. Decrease in the production of staple foods will increase the prevalence of malnutrition and undernutrition and food insecurity in general, especially among those with low incomes. Finally, changes in the climate are likely to lengthen the transmission seasons of important vector-borne diseases and to alter their geographic range, while some toxic marine species could expand their distribution range.

42. *A threat Multiplier:* Finally, climate change could act as a threat multiplier in the Mediterranean region, by placing additional pressure on already scarce resources (especially water and land), reinforcing preexisting threats as political instability, poverty, migration flows, unemployment, and overstretching societies' adaptive capacities.

Other Relevant Policy and Institutional Frameworks and Initiatives

43. Alongside the activities ongoing under the auspices of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention in relation to climate change adaptation, there are various other global and regional initiatives and frameworks, with which cooperation is a necessity. It is worth noting that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), during the 20th and 25th Meetings of the UNFCCC Contracting Parties (COP 20 and COP 25), expressed the intention of Parties to cooperate and engage through multilateral, bilateral and regional complementary initiatives that aim to raise awareness and enhance education on climate change and its impacts, opportunities, and co-benefits.

44. Since entering into force in 1994, the UNFCCC has provided the basis for international climate negotiations, including the landmark Paris Agreement of 2015 that provides the overarching framework for the countries who have joined the UNFCCC. Its Article 7 provides the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) for enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to ensuring an adequate adaptation response.

45. In 2023 the UNFCCC COP 28 adopted the Framework for Global Climate Resilience, which positions adaptation as a top priority for all nations. It includes a range of thematic and dimensional targets for climate adaptation and resilience (inter alia water scarcity, food systems, biodiversity and ecosystems) and UAE Belem Work Programme for the development of indicators for measuring progress towards the Framework targets. Parties also committed to enhance cooperation with subnational governments in the planning, financing, implementation, and monitoring of climate strategies.

46. In November 2024, UNFCCC COP 29 reached an agreement on a new climate finance goal calling on all actors to scale up financing to developing countries for climate action from all public and private sources to reach at least USD1.3 trillion per year by 2035 for climate actions in developing countries and the goal to mobilize at least USD300 billion per year by 2035 with the developped countries taking the lead.

47. The European Commission adopted in February 2021 the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. The new strategy sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050. It identifies four principles: to make adaptation smarter, swifter and more systemic, and to step up international action on adaptation to climate change. The new Strategy will support the further development and implementation of adaptation strategies and plans at all levels of governance with three cross-cutting priorities: 1. integrate adaptation into macro-fiscal policy; 2. nature-based solutions for adaptation; 3. local adaptation action. In order to support the development and implementation of climate change adaptation strategies and actions in Europe, the European Climate Adaptation Knowledge Platform

Climate-ADAPT[19] is operational.

48. The Agenda of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) "Towards 2030: Agenda for a Greener Med – Contributing to Achieving the Environmental SDGs in the Mediterranean" (2030GreenerMed) addresses key environmental issues in the Mediterranean that require cooperation across borders and sectors in order to accelerate the transition of the Mediterranean region towards a green, circular and inclusive economy.

49. The 2022-2025 Climate Change Strategy for the Arab Region elaborated by UN-Habitat aims at curbing the impact of climate change on Arab cities and communities through resilience building, reduction of urban vulnerabilities, advancing adaptation and mitigation actions for the development of sustainable cities and mainstreaming climate considerations in urban policies and plans. Linkages have been secured with other relevant LAS strategies such as the Pan Arab Renewable Energy Strategy 2030, the Arab Strategy for housing and sustainable development 2030 and the Arab Water Security Strategy 2010-2030, in order to enhance the respective countries' capacity to take appropriate measures for addressing climate change issues while achieving sustainable development targets and SDGs.

THE FRAMEWORK'S OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES

50. The Framework is structured around four Strategic Objectives, each of them identifying several Strategic Directions with Priorities for Consideration. The Strategic Objectives and Strategic Directions are presented below and are elaborated in the following section:

1. *Appropriate institutional and policy frameworks, increased awareness and stakeholder engagement, and enhanced capacity building and cooperation:*
    - 1.1. *Enhancing awareness and engagement of key stakeholders on climate adaptation*
    - 1.2. *Promoting adequate institutional and policy frameworks*
    - 1.3. *Promoting a regional approach on Disaster Risk Management*
    - 1.4. *Improving implementation and effectiveness of adaptation policies through monitoring and reviewing progress*
    - 1.5. *Integrating climate adaptation into local plans for the protection and management of areas of special interest*

2. *Development of best practices (including low regret measures) for effective and sustainable adaptation to climate change impacts:*
    - 2.1. *Identifying adaptation needs and best practices*
    - 2.2. *Mainstreaming, exchanging and adopting best practices*

3. *Access to existing and emerging finance mechanisms relevant to climate change adaptation, including international and domestic instruments:*
    - 3.1. *Prioritizing public spending relative to climate adaptation and mobilizing national sources of climate finance*
    - 3.2. *Accessing international financing*
    - 3.3. *Building alliances with the banking and insurance sectors*

4. *Better informed decision-making through research and scientific cooperation and availability and use of reliable data, information and tools:*
    - 4.1. *Understanding of the vulnerability of natural and socioeconomic systems and sectors and of possible impacts*
    - 4.2. *Building capacities for and promoting the use of vulnerability and risk assessment at regional to local levels*
    - 4.3. *Strengthening Science-policy interface and accessibility of related knowledge*
    - 4.4. *Developing Regional climate information at a resolution suitable for adaptation planning*

[19] https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en

Strategic Objective 1: Appropriate institutional and policy frameworks, increased awareness and stakeholder engagement, and enhanced capacity building and cooperation

51. Climate change and its impacts are placing Mediterranean stakeholders in a position that requires maximum coordination, harmonization and integration of different national and regional sectoral policies. The water- scarce Countries in the South and East will face the challenge of managing sharp population increases, with the number of inhabitants in the South rising from 200 million to almost 300 million, and in the East from 122 million to 160 million. By 2050, these two regions could account for almost 70% of the Mediterranean population, compared with just over 60% today.[20]

52. In order to reach results, institutional capacities, relationships, policies and practices to assess and manage climate change risks and opportunities and national development goals must be strengthened.

53. Coordination within and between national institutions on climate change adaptation in the coastal and marine areas with Nature-based Solutions at the forefront, is a vital prerequisite to create an enabling environment for the formulation and implementation of efficient solutions for the complex and cross-cutting problems created by climate change.

54. Alongside the coordinated and aligned preparation of national planning dedicated to climate change, e.g. via National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), it is equally important to embed climate change adaptation into national, subnational and sectoral development planning and budgeting processes. This will help sensitize and raise awareness and engagement of all stakeholders including the general public.

Strategic Direction 1.1: Enhancing awareness and engagement of key stakeholders on climate adaptation

55. Public support and engagement are essential for the acceptance and implementation of adaptation activities. This requires an appreciation of the importance of the issues involved costs of inaction as well as the environmental socio-economic benefits of adaptation. Improving awareness of climate change, its impacts, adaptation options and engagement in RCCAF activities is something that must also at the heart of the education, the business sector, local authorities and civil society including women, youth people with disabilities and migrants. Building awareness on the adaptation needs is a slow and complex process which requires immediate, sustained and well-resourced action. Competent civil society actors are valuable partners in this effort.

56. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Enhance High-level national political interest, support and commitment including awareness and capacity building to country negotiators on climate change matters
ii. Integrated awareness-raising campaigns addressing the general public, public bodies and the private sector, communicating consistent and effective messages about climate change risks, vulnerabilities and adaptation measures, including financial technical support to countries.
iii. Targeted awareness campaigns tailored for specific audiences, sectors or circumstances aiming to integrate adaptation measures in a most efficient way.
iv. E-learning and massive open online course (MOOC) programmes on climate change impacts in the Mediterranean.
v. Deepening engagement and Involvement of networks and stakeholder organizations (including local authorities, civil society institutions, farmers, fishermen, tourism managers and coastal and marine protected areas managers, private sector) in order to promote awareness raising, provide salient information and enhance their ability to respond to hazard events and take advantage of potential opportunities created by climate change.

[20] 2025 Report of Plan Bleu/RAC "The Mediterranean by 2050: A Foresight by Plan Bleu" (MED2050 Report)

vi. Involvement of journalists including through the establishment of a central information e-desk for the provision and communication of relevant information.

vii. Use effectively, as appropriate, the role of the UNEP-MAP IMAP Info System and its interoperability of different public country information systems in developing evidence-based information and communication contents.

Strategic Direction 1.2: Promoting adequate institutional and policy frameworks

57. Planning for adaptation to climate change and increased resilience to its impacts should not be considered as a separate policy field, disconnected from other aspects of sustainable development, but should rather be integrated across strategies and plans, including those related to development. Accordingly, the COP23 Decision IG.26/10 on the Conceptual Framework for Implementing Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean, renews the central role of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as the main tool/process for the implementation of ICZM in the marine part of the coastal zone, and by integrating climate action into MSP as a novel approach. In fact, when integrated approaches to adaptation are used, this not only prevents maladaptation, but also contributes to mitigation. UNEP/MAP ICZM Plans routinely mainstream climate change into their design.

58. Adaptation planning via the NAPs and NDCs should be further embedded across national, sectoral and subnational development strategies and plans. Accordingly, this Direction is closely related to the MSSD 2026-2035[21].

59. Vital support is needed to develop countries' capacities to use the available knowledge base in the decision-making processes and access the right tools, also considering that practical adaptations especially for livelihoods take place at the community and household levels, therefore de-centralised processes are particularly important.

60. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Promote Regional policy instruments adopted under MAP Barcelona Convention related to the adaptation to the impacts of climate change, to assist countries to build coastal resilience, and on the future implementation of its protocols and action plans in the light of climate change.

ii. Take into account marine spatial planning, ICZM and related land-sea interactions by prioritizing interaction between national, regional and local institutions for promoting climate change adaptation across development planning and policy processes. These processes should take into account the benefit of the designing of coastal and marine adaptation measures against impacts of climate change.[22]

iii. Identification and addressing of relevant institutional, legal and cultural barriers to adaptation policies, beginning with the transposition of the concepts of "adaptation", "resilience", "vulnerability" and "risk" into legislative procedures.

iv. Support to countries to develop and adopt comprehensive coastal adaptation plans and strategies which integrate socioeconomic considerations into climate analytics, also by utilizing the ICZM adaptation piloting work carried out in some Mediterranean Countries by the UNEP/MAP system with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as a tool to assist countries to build coastal resilience into both climate and development planning.

v. Support and guidance on best practices and fully integrated approaches to mainstream and embed climate change considerations into national and sectoral developmental and environmental plans and strategies.

vi. Coordination between sectoral plans in order to derive synergies and co-benefits and avoid maladaptation.

vii. Integrated approaches for the reduction of non-climate related threats that have a

[21] Strategic Direction 1.4 of the to "Encourage institutional, policy, legal and legislative reforms and initiative for the effective mainstreaming of climate change responses into national and local development frameworks in all sectors".
[22] UNFCCC's Article 4, paragraph 1 (e) invites countries to prepare ICZM Plans. And 2023 United Nations General Assembly Resolution calls for strengthening cooperation for ICZM.

strong influence on risk and undermine the capacities of communities and ecosystems to adapt to climate change (land and water pollution, water extraction, overfishing, sand mining, damming, distortionary subsidies/taxes/incentives).

viii. Strategic Environmental Assessments carried out by national competent authorities, including the assessment of climatic factors and adaptation implications for all major national development and climate plans and strategies.

ix. Environment-Impact Assessments which include climate change, carried out prior to major infrastructure and commercial investments in coastal and marine areas.

Strategic Direction 1.3: Promoting a regional approach on Disaster Risk Management

61. Despite Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and climate change adaptation have traditionally evolved separately, the two approaches need to be closely linked. As climate change and socioeconomic trends boost the number of people exposed to extreme events, such as floods and heatwaves, improved early warning systems, anticipatory actions and greater coordination of disaster management activities will be needed to manage risks and protect lives and property. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Promoting integration of regional climate related data into national and subnational disaster risk assessments and management, incorporating gender and vulnerable group aspects in order to advance a more fair and just society.

ii. Regional and transboundary cooperation and assistance to cope with climate-related extreme events and emergency situations.

iii. Exchange of best practices on disaster risk management in the region, including disaster risk assessments at regional and national levels, and for disaster risk management financing.

iv. Innovative climate services and products to inform Risk Management, tailored to the needs of key public and private stakeholders.

v. National and regional contingency plans to handle crisis situations, incorporating environmental, social and economic aspects.

Strategic Direction 1.4: Improving implementation and effectiveness of adaptation policies through monitoring and reviewing progress

i. Appropriate measurement and reporting of the progress towards achieving the objectives of adaptation policies and plans, at both the national and regional level, is essential for transparency, effectiveness transparency and accountability. It is therefore necessary that adaptation policies are designed through a continuous and flexible process of learning including feedback through monitoring, reviews and evaluation, both in terms of the validity of the underlying scientific assumptions and of the appropriateness and effectiveness of projects and policies. In this context priorities for consideration include: Reporting on the implementation of national climate adaptation policies related to the coastal and the marine environment with results aligned with the relevant Protocols, MSSD and RCCAF processes and linking with IMAP and its knowledge management platform.

ii. Development of a RCCAF monitoring, evaluation and learning framework, taking into account the existing national and international environment monitoring systems and the efforts under UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and which includes objectives, benchmarks, indicators[23] and timescales for reviews and reporting to take place.

iii. Identification of institutions responsible for monitoring and review and evaluation with mechanisms in place at national, sectoral and local levels ensuring the

[23] Incusing the Climate Change indicators developped in the framework of the updated EcAp RoadMap and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme

availability of good quality data.

iv. Dynamic updating and refining of adaptation plans as more data on impacts becomes available and lessons are learned.

Strategic Direction 1.5: Integrating climate adaptation into local plans for the protection and management of areas of special interest

62. Not all marine and coastal areas of the Mediterranean face the same climate-related risks. Some areas may exhibit specific characteristics that render them particularly vulnerable to climate hazards; others may host very significant historical, cultural or socioeconomic assets exposed to climate change impacts; while others have an iconic or special interest status. Early planning and implementation of adaptation measures in such areas should be a regional priority and should take into account that adaptation activity is being activated at local levels.

63. In this context, the Land-Based Sources Protocol, Article 5, is being supportive of local planning where Contracting Parties shall elaborate and implement national and regional action plans and programmes containing measures and timetables for their implementation.

64. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Work with local governments to ensure the integration of urgent adaptation action for:
   a. coastal zones especially urbanised low-elevation coastal zones[24]
   b. coastal infrastructure, settlements and assets
   c. safety for human lives

ii. Identification and preservation of areas of special interest (such as heritage sites, nature reserves, biodiversity and ecosystems, coastal mega-cities, river deltas etc.) as well as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and undertaking their risk assessments against various climate change scenarios, development of methodologies and guidelines for subnational levels for the integration of climate adaptation dimensions into their development and management plans, using Nature-based Solutions and ICZM as priority tools.

Strategic Objective 2: Development of best practices (including low regret measures) for effective and sustainable adaptation to climate change impacts

65. Improved knowledge and understanding are essential for more reliable forecasts of future conditions that will guide policy makers and implementers of adaptation solutions. While global climate uncertainty will remain inherent to adaptation decision making processes and the need for providing further guidance to decision makers will increase, adopting a forward-looking vision over the medium and long term, both assessing risks and vulnerabilities and planning adaptation measures, taking into account various climate scenario is essential

66. Adaptation solutions can be location, time and sector specific. Grey adaptation, as engineering solutions for sea defenses, may be applied across different geo-climatic zones, but livelihood sectors, agriculture, forestry, water management, fisheries, nature conservation, tourism, are dependent on locality-specific conditions.

67. Low-regret measures are existent, such as rainwater harvesting, water efficiency and reuse, drought resistant crops etc., with proven developmental benefits and effectiveness more accurate information related to climate change is awaited.

68. Progress is being made with many of these low-regret measures which produce co-benefits, help address other development goals, and help minimize the scope for maladaptation. This incudes elevating the emerging Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in the design and

[24] The 2023 UNEP/MAP Mediterranean Quality Status Report (QSR) mentions giving priority to low-lying zones in adaptation planning.

implementation of adaptation policies [25]

69. Livelihoods adaptation takes place at the community and household levels and is frequently time and space specific. This process needs guidelines to provide good practice for identification, testing and piloting which should be as decentralized as possible. This is closely aligned with MSSD 2026-2035[26], while the scaling up of the adaptation solution can build on pilot adaptation and resilience work from the GEF supported MedProgramme in Montenegro and Morocco.

Strategic Direction 2.1: Identifying adaptation needs and best practices

70. In the face of identified key climate risks (and opportunities) for a country or a region, decision makers need to focus on the most pressing needs and the best available and most efficient options to manage these risks. The latter includes activities under the MSSD 2026-2035[27].

71. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Identification by countries of their adaptation needs for the coastal and marine environment, and of relevant technology needs and inclusion in their National Adaptation Plans
ii. Identification of criteria and processes to select and prioritize the most effective best and adaptation options practices for the coastal and marine environment[28].
iii. Identification and addressing challenges and constraints for the transfer and adoption of best practices (including low-regret measures) and technologies across the Mediterranean basin.
iv. Testing and piloting adaptation actions including Nature-based Solutions at national and sub-national levels as key enablers for scaling up especially for livelihood adaptations, and by taking account of the experience of the ICZM adaptation piloting work carried out by the UNEP-MAP System with the support of Global Environment Facility (GEF) , including engagement, capacity-building, cooperation and gender-sensitive risk and vulnerability assessments which are especially important for livelihoods.
v. Strengthening national and local capacities on the application of Nature-based Solutions for climate change adaptation, including via pilots in the Southern Mediterranean, North and Ionian/Adriatic sub-regions, and based on the best practiced developped in the framework of the 2020-2024 Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) established the Project for "Enhancing regional climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas". Advancing in existing traditional techniques that could provide effective adaptive solutions, forming an integral part of the Mediterranean tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Strategic Direction 2.2: Mainstreaming, exchanging and adopting best practices

72. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Mainstreaming and implementation of best practices into national adaptation planning processes.
ii. Maximization of synergies with relevant mitigation efforts (e.g. climate smart agriculture and forestry, energy efficiency in buildings, "blue carbon" policies etc.) and minimization of possible conflicts.
iii. Local authorities and communities implement adaptation actions tailored effectively to localized impacts of climate change including application of innovative, grass root responses and applying participatory science to monitor progress.

[25] 2020 MedECC First Mediterranean Assessment Report
[26] Strategic Direction 1.2 to "Accelerate the uptake of climate smart and climate resilient responses".
[27] Strategic Direction 1.6 "Strengthen national and local capacities on the application of nature-based solution for climate change adaptation and mitigation".
[28] Building on the 2020 MedECC First Mediterranean Assessment Report which presents climate adaptation assessments, scenarios, solutions and best practices across a range climate-sensitive sectors.

iv. Consider Nature-based Solutions approaches, the ICZM Protocol and Post 2020 SAP/BIO adaptation practices as priority policy and actions tools for encouraging adaptation efforts.

v. Opportunities for integrating climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures into maritime policies compatible with a 1.5 C trajectory, in line with 2023 IMO Strategy for the reduction of GHG from ships (and in line with IMO Net Zero Framework[29])

vi. Strengthen exchanges of adaptation knowledge and expertise across the Mediterranean Region to draw on adaptation experience from differing geographical climatic and socioeconomic, human and financial resource conditions.

vii. Innovative information sharing tools for the exchange of best practices and stakeholders' engagement at all levels

Strategic Objective 3: Access to existing and emerging finance mechanisms relevant to climate change adaptation, including international and domestic instruments

73. In the face of climate change and related risks, the cost of inaction can be considerable. The measures to increase the resilience of our natural and socioeconomic systems should therefore not be considered as economic costs but rather as investments that are even economically profitable as they reduce risks and expected damages and losses, while at the same time exploiting opportunities towards sustainable development.

74. Even if global GHG emissions are deeply reduced to the level required to meet the goal of the Paris Agreement of limiting the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C, and pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees, according to UNEP the global investment of adaptation for developing countries could exceed USD387 billion per year up to 2030, excluding domestic and private sector flows[30]. In contrast, international public finance flows to developing countries were just USD 27.5 billion per year in 2022 for adaptation compared with USD 46 billion for mitigation. While international public finance flows for adaptation have increased, a considerably large adaptation finance gap exists. Such a finance gap will mean higher loss and damage for developing countries but will also impact adversely on developed countries through international and transboundary spillovers such as population displacement.[31] Such financial resources should not be expected to come from only one or a few sources. For developing countries, international assistance is the primary source of adaptation finance but mobilizing public and private funds domestically is also essential.

75. Historically, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been a major source of environment and climate finance. More recently, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), established under the Cancun Agreement in 2010, with headquarters in the Republic of Korea, is now the main dedicated climate financing vehicle for developing countries, serving as the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. The UNFCCC Adaptation Fund, managed by the World Bank, is another dedicated source of climate finance dealing with smaller scale projects. Both the IMF and the World Bank have their own climate-related funds. The EU provides climate financing which has been used by the region's countries, while bilateral donor sources continue to be important depending on their developmental interests.

76. Most adaptation actions especially those for livelihood areas will be implemented by the private sector. The private sector needs to be drawn into financing its own adaptation through a combination of regulation and/or financial incentives and regulation. When sensitized to risks and the potential benefits of climate change adaptation, the private sector will mobilize resources to integrate technologies into its production and service functions. The MAP system and its Contracting Parties should develop inter-stakeholder cooperation for close working relations between the public and private sectors and civil societies, to construct a platform of trust and synergy through which 'win-win' collaborations can be established.

[29] Formal adoption expected in October 2025
[30] UNEP, Come hell and high water, 2024 Adaptation Gap Report.
[31] UNEP, Come hell and high water, 2024 Adaptation Gap Report.

Strategic Direction 3.1: Prioritizing public spending relative to climate adaptation and mobilizing national sources of climate finance

77. Country-led approaches are essential for a strategic allocation of funds to key areas, especially taking into account that national sources are expected to cover most of the costs of adaptation measures. Beyond public resources, the involvement of the private sector which is essential for the sharing of investments costs, risks, rewards and responsibilities, needs to be fully tapped and engagement strategies developped. Fiscal and other existing and emerging economic instruments can foster adaptation by providing funds as well as incentives for anticipating and reducing impacts. It should be noted that mainstreaming climate-related considerations into sectoral policies would also allow to pursue adaptation objectives to take advantage on already available financial resources.

78. At the country level, NDCs and NAPs together with annual planning and budgeting are the main instruments for mobilizing public finance. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Discussions with financial authorities and review of the national portfolio of climate response options to facilitate more effective and efficient climate-resilient and disaster-responsive funding allocation and decisions, e.g. through a Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Reviews.
ii. Discussing with financial authorities the government subsidies adversely affecting adaptation, and fiscal incentives which could promote adaptation, linked to the MSSD 2026-2035[32]
iii. Economic valuations of the costs of climate change as a foundation for governments to allocate national funding on adaptation.
iv. Avoidance of maladaptive actions and non-efficient "hard" infrastructures and seek for low-regret measures that improve climate resilience.
v. Appropriate share of public spending to climate adaptation as part of an integrated sustainable development agenda, and coordinated with the actions foreseen under the MSSD 2026- 2035[33]
vi. Socially sensitive and transparent public-private partnerships for adaptation action encouraging the involvement of the private sector in related schemes.
vii. Mainstreaming adaptation considerations into the existing financial frameworks and programmes

Strategic Direction 3.2: Accessing international financing

79. The Contracting Parties to the UNFCCC have set up a number of dedicated funding mechanisms for channeling international assistance envisaged in the Convention such as the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund as prominent ones. On July 2015, UNEP was accredited as a partner institution to the Green Climate Fund, thus opening new opportunities and enhancing capacities for adaptation-related activities.

80. Other global funds have also been set up through multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In the Mediterranean context, dedicated international financing for adaptation measures can be available through international banking institutions such as the European Investment Bank (EIB)[34], its Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) which addresses funding gaps in the EU's Southern Neighborhood, the European Bank for Regional Development (EBRD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank , as well as the Blue Mediterranean Partnership to support transition to blue economy in the Southern Mediterranean Region. Bilateral donor sources continue to be important depending on their portfolio interests.

[32] Strategic Direction 5.5 "Promote an integrated financial ecosystem through a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance aiming to foster the channeling of private and public capital into sustainable investments."
33 Strategic Direction 1.3 "Leverage existing and emerging climate finance mechanisms, including international and domestic instruments, and enhance the engagement of the private and finance sectors".
[34] With its seven key adaptation investment areas.

81. Some countries in the region have been unable to take advantage of opportunities offered by existing and emerging financing instruments related to adaptation, mainly due to demanding compliance and review requirements. The GCF reformed *modus operandi* to be more supportive to the massive scale up of global climate finance mobilization needed to meet the targets adopted at COP29, combined with working with UNEP's Climate Change Division, should make international adaptation finance more accessible. Efforts should be made to accommodate countries with political and economic instabilities, in order to leave no one behind.

82. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Developing guidelines to support countries' capacities to prepare bankable adaptation schemes and projects proposals in order to effectively access and manage international and regional funding for climate change adaptation.
ii. Maximization of multilateral and bilateral funding for areas of common interest and concern related to adaptation
iii. Coordination mechanisms between donors and key actors in the Region and beyond in order to agree on an integrated funding strategy and priorities, for avoiding overlapping or duplication of efforts and activities.
iv. Feasibility and potential of a regional approach to adaptation finance and risk transfer mechanisms.
v. Innovative financing mechanisms such as the issuance of Green Bonds, carbon markets, biodiversity offsets, etc.

Strategic Direction 3.3: Building alliances with the banking and insurance sectors

83. Integrating banking and insurance risk management into businesses practices could be best achieved through pricing them into commercial processes. Communicating risks associated with climate change through pricing may raise awareness better than any other communication tool. Therefore, alliances between government, banks and the insurance sector could result with smarter risk management and reduced future climate related costs for the society.

84. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Study of climate risk banking, reinsurance and insurance practices with a focus on the Mediterranean countries.
ii. Development of a Climate Risk Banking and Insurance Strategy for the Mediterranean with linkages with MSSD 2026-2035[35].
iii. Integration of climate risk management into business and management practices.
iv. Cooperation with the insurance (including re-insurance) and banking sectors in the Mediterranean countries.
v. Standardized international metrics related to climate risk and exposure.
vi. Exchange of best practices and provision of targeted information for different coastal stakeholders.

Strategic Objective 4: Better informed decision-making through research and scientific cooperation and availability and use of reliable data, information and tools

85. Decisions on adaptation policies should be informed by scientific research, results from pilot projects and knowledge of the changes in the region's climate system, the impacts of climate change, the vulnerabilities of natural and socio-economic systems to those impacts and the effectiveness of adaptation options, and closely related to the MSSD 2026-2035[36].

[35] Strategic Direction "Promote an integrated financial ecosystem through a Mediterranean Framework for Green and Sustainable Finance aiming to foster the channeling of private and public capital into sustainable investments".
[36] Strategic Direction 1.1: "Increase scientific knowledge, education, raise awareness, and develop technical capacities to deal with climate change and ensure informed decision-making at all levels, recognizing and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems".

Strategic Direction 4.1: Understanding of the vulnerability of natural and socioeconomic systems and sectors and of possible impacts

86. In order to formulate informed, effective and sustainable adaptation strategies and plans, it is vital that knowledge is applied and uncertainties are reduced, especially regarding the understanding of ecosystem-scale interactions and of socioeconomic consequences, including the socio-cultural specificities of the Mediterranean communities. Despite the production of a number of landmark scientific reports in the recent years, the 2023 MedECC Special Report acknowledges that "the available knowledge concerning the risks (and vulnerabilities) studied by MedECC has significant gaps". Knowledge gaps still need to be addressed and socioeconomic trends and scenarios need to be assessed. Approaches and methods to assess vulnerabilities and climate risks need to be constantly updated and upskilled in order to prioritize solutions and actions.

87. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Strengthening climate scientific knowledge, data and information sharing from research and monitoring.
ii. Assess climate change science and knowledge, policy, institutional and capacity gaps across Contracting Parties to provide a baseline for the development of guidelines for regional and national strategies to address the requirements of the RCCAF 2026-2035.
iii. Sensitivity and adaptive capacity of marine species and ecosystem responses to changes and cumulative impacts in oceanic conditions, including the introduction of non-indigenous species and ocean acidification.
iv. Mapping of coastal and marine ecosystems and assessment of the role of services they provide to climate resilience.
v. Assessing the effectiveness of the network of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs), including their environmental and socio-economic vulnerabilities and resilience, as well as their governance
vi. Sea level rise causing coastal subsidence and saltwater intrusion affecting groundwater resources and wetlands; current and wave patterns, and sediment movement affecting shoreline dynamics.
vii. Water resources and the water cycle
viii. Vulnerability and interactions of socioeconomic systems and sectors such as: agriculture and forestry, water resources management, health, tourism, urbanisation, fisheries, energy, transport and trade, and key infrastructure.
ix. Combined effects and interactions of climate change and socioeconomic dimensions, trends and scenarios, taking account of the socio-cultural specificities of the Mediterranean communities, such as migration, demographics, conflict and social stability, gender, and vulnerable groups (children and youth, older people, local communities and people with disabilities).
x. Assessment of potential positive opportunities and consequences for different sectors from a changing climate.

Strategic Direction 4.2: Building capacities for and promoting the use of vulnerability and risk assessment at regional to local levels

88. In order to support policy makers at the national, regional and local levels, capacities and tools need to be developed for a better understanding of climate change risks, of options for adaptation, and of how climate change adaptation links to national development goals. The risks need to be assessed in all dimensions: environmental (biodiversity losses of marine and coastal ecosystems), social (health, mortality) and socioeconomic (potential losses in all sectors). Direct and indirect effects of climate forcing on natural hazards must be explored and disentangled. Special attention should be given to the vulnerabilities and exposure of the Mediterranean component of risk where the level of uncertainties is much higher, such as water supply, flooding, etc.

89. Despite the fact that the Mediterranean is a global climate hotspot, the studies in the region are

still incomplete in terms of comprehensive analyses and assessments.

90. Numerous sub-regional projects and initiatives exist whose results need to be brought together in a consistent way in order to move towards the further development of a complete and integrated Risks and Vulnerability Assessment for the whole Mediterranean, both at national and regional level

91. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Understanding of the drivers, interactions, impacts and responses within the socioeconomic and environmental nexus.
ii. Integrated, multidisciplinary risk and vulnerability models introducing natural and socio-economic systems
iii. Economic valuations of the costs of climate change impacts on vulnerable sectors and hotspots.
iv. Development of easy-to-use risk assessment methods such as index-based methods to be applied at national, regional and local levels, and build capacities to apply those methods.
v. Technical assistance and capacity building for competent local and national institutions and civil society organizations for the monitoring of climate change impacts and assessing the cost of adaptation options.
vi. Georeferencing of the Mediterranean Sea and coasts and their resources and threats.
vii. Auditing of strategically important coastal assets and assessment of their vulnerability.
viii. Integrating climate change, adaptation and mitigation considerations into school and university departments' curricula and modules, including exchange programmes for climate change experts, researchers and students

Strategic Direction 4.3: Strengthening science-policy interface and accessibility of related knowledge

92. The strengthening of adaptive capacities requires an increasing in ~~systematization~~ organization and communication of scientific and traditional adaptation knowledge, as well as their integration into public policies and programmes. However, institutional and cultural barriers between researchers, policy makers and the public that sometimes hinder the transformation of knowledge into plans and actions, still remain a challenge in the Mediterranean. There is a need to contribute to strengthening the science/policy interface, and to recognize the three-way relationship between scientists, policymakers and the public, as well as the leveraging role that civil society plays.

1. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Strategy for communicating scientific and other types of knowledge for sharing and exchanging to policy makers at all levels as well as key stakeholders.
ii. Process for science-policy-business-community-managers dialogues at and between all governance levels, both regionally and nationally.
iii. Development of a Mediterranean Regional Network and Platform under the UNEP-facilitated Global Adaptation Network in order to share lessons, knowledge and information and highlight research and guidance needs and priorities.
iv. Regional Clearinghouse/repository/knowledge platform of best practices and relevant reports and publications.

Strategic Direction 4.4: Developing regional climate information at a resolution suitable for adaptation planning

93. In order for scientists and stakeholders to be able to assess the impacts of climate change and develop situation-specific adaptation plans at a downscaled level, it is essential that they will need to have access to high-resolution information from observation systems that monitor the climate system and detect and attribute climate change. The countries of the Mediterranean have national observation and monitoring systems of varying data quality and availability, with northern countries enjoying more long-term and high-quality climate data than southern ones. Generally, monitoring systems related to marine ecosystems (biotic and abiotic components) in the coastal and open waters are still lacking.

Infrastructure, spatial coverage and data issues at the national level are challenges that need to be addressed. Crucial coordination issues, however, are also essential to be addressed at the regional level. In this context priorities for consideration include:

i. Enhancing the availability and quality of environmental and socioeconomic data required for adaptation, including provisions for improving data collection and predictions to increase the knowledge of hot-spots and needs, as well as methodologies to apply this data for designing adaptation policies and measures.
ii. Supporting the maintenance and modernization and further development of monitoring programmes and networks in the region, including the creation/upgrade and complementarity of early warning systems for the Mediterranean sea and coasts, taking into account as appropriate existing systems, acknowledging that establishing and improving national inventories of climate impacts over time and building accessible, user driven climate services systems, including early warning systems, can strengthen the implementation of adaptation actions[37]
iii. Sharing and standardization of collection, quality and storage, of all data relevant to adaptation planning., following the Word Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Resolution 40[14].
iv. Using efficiently the UNEP/MAP knowledge management platform including the one on best practices on climate change monitoring and research, interconnecting or harvesting information from relevant databases and platforms, and taking account of good practice database examples such as the EU Climate-ADAPT platform.
v. Development of regional climate models integrating socioeconomic trends and threats.
vi. A strategic approach to climate adaptation research in the region involving academic, industry and government bodies and their partnerships.

Monitoring and Evaluation

94. A comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system will be introduced with relevant indicators and targets for the action planning and implementation of the RCCAF. The system design will be complex due to the large number of countries and will need to take account of the experience and challenges of the existing IMAP system and of existing indicators of the MSSD dashboard.

95. The purpose of the MEL system will be to manage and adjust the implementation of the RCCAF Strategic Directions. It will do this by:

- monitoring the level of implementation progress of the actions recommended in the Strategy;
- identifying successes and gaps and their causes in the implementation of directions/actions;
- adjusting implementation planning in response to successes, gaps and challenges.

96. The UNFCCC provides outline guidance for structuring and operating an indicator-based, MEL-type system which can track progress towards achieving adaptation goals[38]. The guidance cites examples of existing tracking adaptation and resilience systems which deliver information on climate, climate risks, impacts and vulnerability, and adaptation response measures. These can be backed up by "dashboard" or "traffic light" approaches to assess the progress made towards the desired adaptation outcomes.

97. The Contracting Parties will need to support the process through the regular and timely

[37] COP 28, Outcome of the 1st Global stock take (para 49)
[38] Approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation technical paper by the Adaptation Committee, 2021. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC_TP_GlobalGoalOnAdaptation.pdf

provision of relevant data. The design of the system will need to take account at the regional level of the MAP data-sharing and information systems such as IMAP. Care and knowledge will be required in order to coordinate with existing national and international climate information systems so as to minimize new reporting obligations. Any reporting obligation created under the MEL system for national, regional and local entities will build on existing tools and data used in each country to avoid duplication or further administrative burden.

98. A Strategic Direction-based performance monitoring matrix setting out the regular monitoring of RCCAF implementation should be approved by the Contracting Parties. It should provide for monitoring the implementation of RCCAF Strategic Directions with sets of country level indicators.

Annex II

Performance Monitoring Matrix of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework

Performance Monitoring Matrix Ensuring the Regular Monitoring of RCCAF Processes and Actions	
Strategic Objectives / Directions	**Indicators** **Country level**
1. Appropriate institutional and policy frameworks, increased awareness and stakeholder engagement, and enhanced capacity building and cooperation	
1.1. Enhancing awareness and engagement of key stakeholders on climate adaptation	Number of countries implementing concrete activities to increase climate change and adaptation awareness and engagement of key stakeholders
1.2. Promoting adequate institutional and policy frameworks	Number of countriesaligning NAP and NDC adaptation provisions with national strategies and plans Number of countries implementing policy processes to embed adaptation in national development planning Number of countries adopting and implementing coastal plans, streamlining climate change adaptation in line with Art. 18 of the ICZM Protocol
1.3. Promoting a regional approach on Disaster Risk Management	Number of countries developing and aligning national climate change adaptation and DRR strategies and policies
1.4. Integrating climate adaptation into local plans for the protection and management of areas of special interest	Number of countries taking national and local actions and targeted measures to support integration of climate change adaptation, including nature-based solution into local plans for the protection and management of areas of special interest
1.5. Improving implementation and effectiveness of adaptation policies through monitoring and reviewing progress	Number of countries developing monitoring, evaluation and learning systems (MELs) for adaptation Number of countries submitting RCCAF monitoring and evaluation reports against the RCCAF indicators and targets.
2. Development of best practices (including low regret measures) for effective and sustainable adaptation to climate change impacts:	
2.1. Identifying adaptation needs and best practices	Number of countries identifying adaptation needs and effective adaptation options in the context of NAPs or similar
2.2. Mainstreaming, exchanging and adopting best practices	Number of countries mainstreaming, exchanging and adopting best adaptation solutions and practices.

3. Access to existing and emerging finance mechanisms relevant to climate change adaptation, including international and domestic instruments:	
3.1. Prioritizing public spending relative to climate adaptation and mobilizing national sources of climate finance	Number of countries increasing domestic climate adaptation funding
3.2. Accessing international financing	Number of countries receiving international funding for adaptation
3.3. Building alliances with the banking and insurance sectors	Number of countries with advisory, policy and regulatory frameworks for engaging the banking and insurance sectors.
4. Better informed decision-making through research and scientific cooperation and availability and use of reliable data, information and tools:	
4.1. Understanding of the vulnerability of natural and socioeconomic systems and sectors and of possible impacts	Number of countries mainstreaming substantial risk and vulnerability analyses into their adaptation planning.
4.2. Building capacities for and promoting the use of vulnerability and risk assessment at regional to local levels	Number of countries improving capacities to use vulnerability and risk assessments to design adaptation policies
4.3. Strengthening Science-policy interface and accessibility of related knowledge	Number of countries benefitting from virtual or F2F interactions with climate scientists Number of countries establishing science-policy interface/s and improving access to climate adaptation knowledge by policy makers
4.4. Developing Regional climate information at a resolution suitable for adaptation planning	Number of countries developing climate projection tools to support adaptation planning

[Draft Decision IG.27/6

Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap 2026-2035 and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP)

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

Welcoming the outcome document of the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (UNOC-3, Nice, France, June 2025) entitled "Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action", reaffirming the strong global commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources and reconfirming the need to strengthen the role of regional seas conventions and action plans,

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

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Referring to the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolutions 6/15 of March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to address climate change, marine biodiversity loss, and pollution, which underscores the need to implement regional seas conventions, protocols, and action plans for the protection and conservation of the marine and coastal environment; 3/10 of December 2017, on addressing water pollution in inland, coastal, and marine ecosystems to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, as well as the related Action Plan for its implementation; 5/8 of March 2021, on establishing a science-policy panel to provide countries with independent, policy-relevant scientific advice on chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention; 5/14 of March 2022, which set the basis for the process on developing an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution,

Recalling the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and the respective provisions for enhancing EcAp Policy and Roadmap implementation,

Recalling further Decisions IG.17/6 of COP 15 (Almeria, Spain, 2008); IG.20/4 of COP 17 (Paris, France, 2012); IG.21/3 of COP 18 (Istanbul, Türkiye, 2013); and IG.25/3 of COP 22 (Antalya, Türkiye, 2021) on EcAp Policy implementation,

Recalling also Decisions IG.22/7 of COP 19 (Athens, Greece, 2016); IG.23/6 of COP 20 (Tirana, Albania, 2017); IG.24/4 of COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2019); IG.25/10 of COP 22 (Antalya, Türkiye, 2021); and IG.26/3 of COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 2023) on IMAP implementation and development of the Mediterranean Quality Status Reports (MED QSR),

Considering the findings and policy recommendation of the 2023 MED QSR including its Executive Summary and Summary for Policy Makers, as well as the work guided by the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs), as well as of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meetings,

Appreciating the work conducted by the Contracting Parties to establish and make operational national IMAP-based monitoring programmes for the IMAP Ecological Objectives and respective Common Indicators, including data generation,

Considering the developments within the European Union (EU) Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), including its assessment as well as of the Programmes of Measures (PoMs), as an important mechanism to support EcAp implementation,

Considering the developments within the Regional Seas Conventions on the monitoring and assessment of marine environment,

1.*Approve* the following Ecological Vision for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast:

"Progress towards a healthy, clean, pollution free sustainable and climate resilient Mediterranean Sea and Coast with productive and biologically diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, where the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its SDGs are achieved through the effective implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the benefit of people and nature.";

2.*Agree to apply* the following EcAp Strategic Goals for the Mediterranean (2026-2035):

a) To protect enhance environmental conditions allowing natural recovery and, where practicable based on national priorities, restore the structure and function of marine and coastal ecosystems thus also protecting biodiversity, in order to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status and allow for their sustainable use;
b) To reduce pollution from different sources in the marine and coastal environment so as to minimize impacts on, and risks to, human and/or ecosystem health and/or uses of the sea and the coasts;
c) To prevent, reduce and manage the vulnerability of the sea and the coasts to risks induced by human activities, including climate change and natural event.

3.*Adopt* the MAP EcAp Policy and Roadmap 2026-2035, presented in Annex I, including its 6 implementation steps, ecological objective, operational objectives, indicators, Good Environmental Status (GES) definitions and targets, timeline, and governance structure for guiding EcAp implementation,

4.*Reaffirms* the EcAp governance structure through Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meeting (EcAp CG), Correspondence Groups on monitoring (CORMONs), Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA) and ad-hoc Online Working Groups (OWG), to this aim *adopts* the Terms of References and flow of interaction as presented in Annex I,

5.*Request* the Contracting Parties to ensure full implementation of EcAp as the primary drive to progress towards a healthy, clean, sustainable and climate resilient Mediterranean Sea and Coast, and to achieve GES, noting that in case of any discrepancy, the terms and contents of this decision override those of all other decisions,

6.*Invite* the Contracting Parties to provide the necessary financial and institutional support for the effective implementation of the National Action Plans/Programmes of Measures (NAPs/PoMs'), as well as for the monitoring and assessment of marine and coastal environment,

7.*Encourage* partners, competent organizations, scientific community, citizens and private sector to fully consider the vision, strategic goals and other elements of EcAp Policy and Roadmap, strengthen their work to ensure continued efforts for its implementation,

8.*Adopt* the third cycle of IMAP based on an 8-year cycle, presented in Annex II, and *approve* the assessment criteria while noting their evolving nature based on quality-assured data availability and progress towards GES,

9.*Request* the Contracting Parties to streamline IMAP implementation, in line with their national specificities,

10.*Promote* Science-Policy Interface to enhance evidenced-based policy making,

11.*Take into account* the differences in the monitoring capacities of the Contracting Parties and the need to further enhance capacity building and technical assistance for implementation; giving particular attention to newly introduced common and candidate indicators on primary basis,

12.*Invite* the Contracting Parties, with the support of the Secretariat, to update their national monitoring programmes in light of the updated elements of IMAP and to report regularly quality-assured data;

13.*Encourage* the Contracting Parties, with the support of the Secretariat, to undertake joint monitoring initiatives, exchange best practices, use harmonized monitoring and assessment methodologies, ensure cost efficiency, and apply the region-wide agreed assessment criteria under IMAP;

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

15.*Urge* the Contracting Parties to implement the NAPs/PoMs and accelerate progress towards achieving GES in the Mediterranean, enhance coherence with other national policies and strategies, and regularly report on their implementation pursuant to Article 13 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution from Land-Based Source (LBS Protocol), while securing enabling conditions for their long-term sustainability within the broader context of global efforts to address the combined threats of the triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution - and the regional commitment to implement the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period 2026-2035, as a strategic regional cooperation framework to upscale sustainable and climate resilient development pathways;

16.*Invite* partners, as well as regional and international organizations to support IMAP and NAPs/PoMs implementation, and use all available means, mechanisms and facilities to contribute to achieving GES in the Mediterranean;

17.*Request* the Secretariat to allocate adequate financial resources in line with the Programme of Work to support the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the updated IMAP-based national monitoring programmes; and

18. *Request* the Secretariat to upgrade the IMAP InfoSystem not only to serve as a data repository but also to generate assessment products, and the Contracting Parties to effectively and timely submit IMAP generated data in line with the monitoring frequency of the respective Common Indicators, as indicated in the respective Indicator Guidance Factsheets.

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Annex I

EcAp Policy and Roadmap (2026 – 2035)

1.Introduction

1. The Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) was agreed in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System in 2008 and since then a number of important Decisions have been adopted by the Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Barcelona Convention to support the roadmap for its implementation:

- 2008 – COP15 | Decision IG.17/6: "Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment".
- 2012 – COP17 | Decision IG.20/4: *"Implementing MAP ecosystem approach roadmap (Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for Implementing the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap"*.
- 2013 – COP18 | Decision IG.21/3: *"Ecosystem Approach including adopting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and Targets"*.
- 2017 – COP20 | Decision IG.23/6: *"2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR)"*.
- 2019 – COP21 | Decision IG.24/4: *"Assessment Studies"* (Annex V: Roadmap and Needs Assessment for the 2023 MED QSR)
- 2021 – COP22 | Decision IG.25/3: *"Governance"* (Annex I: Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean).
- 2021 – COP22 | Decision IG.25/10: *"MAP Data Policy"*.
- 2023 – COP23 | Decision IG.26/3: *"The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean"*.

2. Ecosystem Approach Vision for Achieving Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean Sea (2025–2035)

2. The Mediterranean Sea is one of the most iconic marine environments. It is home to approximately 17,000 marine species, some of which are found nowhere else, and supports the livelihoods of over 480 million people living in its coastal states. However, this vital resource stands at a crossroads with pressures from climate change, pollution, overfishing, invasive species, unsustainable tourism, and habitat degradation are mounting, placing the ecological and socio-economic future of the region at serious risk.

3. Drawing from the main findings deriving from UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) policy implementation, the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) and its Summary for Policy Makers, as well as inputs from the 2025 Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Evaluation and its assessment of Programmes of Measures (PoMs) in the Mediterranean Sea, this roadmap outlines strategic vision for achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) across the Mediterranean basin by 2035.

4. Building on the significant achievements in implementing the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) since its launch in 2008, there is a growing need to place greater emphasis on the use of innovative approaches and tools - such as the Source-to-Sea Management, Marine Spatial Planning, Nature-Based Solutions, Ocean Ecosystem Accounting, Mapping of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems, and the Compendium for Coast and Sea – to enhance the protection, conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems; integrated coastal zone and ocean management; climate mitigation and adaptation; disaster risk reduction. This highlights the urgent need to build the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems and to better inform policy - making, development planning, and conservation efforts, thereby accelerating progress towards achieving GES and contributing to implementation of the ocean related SDGs by 2030. It is also essential to strengthen scientific knowledge on deep sea ecosystems.

5. These efforts contribute to strengthening synergies with the implementation of UNEA and its ocean-related resolutions, relevant IMO conventions, the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Regional Sea Conventions, and relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). By advancing the integrated and ecosystem-based approach, the Mediterranean region has the potential to become a model for sustainable marine management - supporting climate resilience and the restoration of ocean health.

2.1 Current Status and Challenges

Achievements to Date:

6. Over the past decade, significant progress has been made under regional and national initiatives aimed at restoring marine ecosystems and improving the health of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast. The Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) has strengthened surveillance across biodiversity, pollution – marine litter, and ecosystem health indicators. Regional and national programmes of measures, and several actions on the ground, have been adopted and implemented aiming at achieving Good Environmental Status. It should also be noted that the Mediterranean already hosts many inspiring initiatives proving that ecosystem-based management and sustainable marine governance are both feasible and impactful. These experiences offer valuable lessons for scaling up efforts across the region.

Persistent and Emerging Challenges:

7. Despite achievements, challenges persist and are intensifying, and the Mediterranean Sea remains on the way of achieving GES. Some indicators of biodiversity and pollution show positive trends, while others - notably the status of fish stocks, coastal habitats, and non-indigenous species — are deteriorating or showing insufficient progress:

- Biodiversity loss continues to be a pressing issue. MPAs currently cover only around 9% of the Mediterranean — well below the 30% target — and many existing MPAs suffer from inadequate management effectiveness. The populations of endangered species such as the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) remain vulnerable. Invasive species like the lionfish (*Pterois miles*) and blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) have expanded their range, disrupted native ecosystems and caused economic damage to fisheries. The 2023 MED QSR indicates that the number of established non-indigenous species has doubled since 2012, highlighting the accelerating pressure of biological invasions.

- While a complete 2023 MED QSR GES assessment for eutrophication across all sub-regions was not possible, the impacts of eutrophication—primarily driven by agricultural runoff, untreated urban wastewater, and coastal aquaculture— do not appear to be increasing. Instead, they remain mainly confined to areas historically affected by eutrophication. Harmful algal blooms have been recorded with increasing frequency, disrupting fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism.

- Despite progress in pollution prevention at source, pressures on the Mediterranean Sea persist. Using various assessment methodologies - harmonized to the extent possible — several areas were identified as not achieving Good Environmental Status (GES). Nevertheless, the overall condition of the assessed zones across all four sub-regions generally remains moderate to good. The situation is more concerning with regard to acute pollution events (e.g., slicks from oil, oil products, and hazardous substances), which have a significant impact on biota. These events contribute to some sub-divisions showing even poor to bad conditions.

- Marine litter remains pervasive. Hundreds of tonnes of plastic daily entering the Mediterranean Sea, primarily from major urban centres, other densely populated areas, river discharges and fishing activities. Hotspots of plastic accumulation exemplify the growing magnitude of this issue, and according to the 2023 MED QSR densities remain high, while progress in reducing marine litter inputs remains slow.

- The circulation of the Mediterranean Sea is driven by a combination of external forces—such as wind stress and strong topographic constraints—as well as internal dynamic processes. These forces operate across three predominant and interacting spatial scales: basin scale, sub-basin scale, and mesoscale. Compared to the hydrographic alterations caused by new structures, climate change appears to have a significantly greater impact on habitats and marine ecosystems overall.

- Climate change poses a growing existential threat. The Mediterranean Sea is warming at a rate 20% faster than the global average, leading to shifts in species distribution, mass mortality events of

benthic organisms, and the degradation of critical habitats like Posidonia oceanica seagrass beds. Ocean acidification, sea-level rise, and increasing extreme weather events compound these impacts, undermining the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems. The rise in seawater temperature is accelerating the spread of non-indigenous species. Hydrographic changes cause Mediterranean marine habitats to be increasingly endangered, with some at risk of complete extinction. The central and eastern Mediterranean areas are considered more vulnerable to climate change due to increased pressure from invasive species, higher water temperatures and less ocean circulation, which leads to lower levels of dissolved oxygen.

Risks:

a) Enhanced governance faces ongoing challenges, including fragmented cooperation, policy incoherence across sectors (e.g., tourism, agriculture, energy), inconsistencies in monitoring and reporting, and challenging enforcement mechanisms, unequal efforts to achieve GES and the ocean related SDGs targets. Inadequate financial and human resources. Political instability, financial constraints, worsening climate and environmental measures that are perceived as unfair, top-down, or economically harmful, local resistance may also undermine implementation.

Opportunities:

Accelerating progress towards achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) by 2035 is an ambitious endeavour also rich in transformative and major opportunities:

a) Green Transition Funding create financial opportunities to align economic recovery with marine conservation. Technological Innovation - such as a Satellite remote sensing, AI-based marine monitoring, autonomous underwater vehicles, and blockchain-based fisheries certification - offer powerful new complementary tools to enhance conventional monitoring and assessment procedures, while also contributing to improved enforcement and transparency. Youth Engagement and broader public awareness provide a critical social foundation for long-term stewardship and political support. Finally, sustainable aquaculture, renewable marine energy, eco-tourism, and marine biotechnology can drive Blue Economy Growth and sustainable livelihoods if properly managed.
b) Securing financial resources for marine protection presents both a challenge and an opportunity for innovation and regional cooperation. Public funding — particularly from national budgets —remains essential alongside considerable EU funding instruments applicable across the Mediterranean region, and international environmental financing mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund, and Climate Investment Funds (CIF). Additional support through voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties, bilateral donors` funding arrangements, philanthropic foundations, and private sector investments also plays a crucial role. To be effective, Financing must be predictable, sustainable, and readily accessible, particularly for developing Mediterranean countries.
c) Innovative solutions are needed, such as expanding regional trust funds like MedFund, establishing national conservation funds (e.g., Tunisia's Blue Fund), and issuing blue bonds to fund restoration and pollution control. Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes should also be promoted, and private sector engagement must be strengthened through investment pipelines, risk mitigation, and performance standards to drive sustainable marine investments.

8. Successfully navigating these risks while leveraging these opportunities requires adaptive, inclusive, evidence-based, and transparent governance frameworks.

2.2 A Vision for 2035

9. The vision for the Mediterranean by 2035 is clear: a clean, healthy, resilient, and biodiverse marine ecosystem that supports sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic development. Under the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035), this vision is further reinforced.

10. This vision ensures alignment with the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (2026-2035), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. Achieving GES will require a fundamental shift: not merely slowing degradation, but actively restoring marine ecosystems and addressing systemic socio-economic drivers of change. The vision must therefore encompass ecological restoration, climate adaptation, considerable pollution reduction , biodiversity protection, and sustainable use of marine resources.

12. Achieving this vision requires a systemic transformation that integrates scientific evidence, traditional knowledge, community engagement, sustainable investment, and bold political leadership. It demands that all sectors – from fisheries and tourism to energy and transport – transition toward sustainability and resilience, with effective enforcement mechanisms, cross-sectoral integration, and transparent reporting frameworks.

3.The Step Approach for the Implementation of EcAp Policy in the Mediterranean

13. The following six (6) steps are proposed to support the implementation of EcAp Policy and Roadmap in the Mediterranean for the upcoming period 2026 to 2035:

Step I: Definition of an Ecological Vision for the Mediterranean.
Step II: Setting Common Mediterranean Strategic Goals.
Step III: Development of a Set of Ecological Objectives and Common Indicators with GES Definitions and Targets corresponding to the Vision and Strategic Goals.
Step IV: Implementation of National IMAP[1]-based Monitoring Programmes for ongoing Assessment and regular updating of Targets.
Step V: Preparation and Issuance of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR)
Step VI: Development and Review of relevant National Action Plans (NAPs) and/or Programmes of Measures (PoMs)

Step I: Definition of an Ecological Vision for the Mediterranean

14. The following Ecological Vision is proposed, in line with the vision of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027 (Decision IG.25/1):

"Progress towards a healthy, clean, pollution free sustainable and climate resilient Mediterranean Sea and Coast with productive and biologically diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, where the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are achieved through the effective implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the benefit of people and nature."

[1] Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast

Step II: Setting Common Mediterranean Strategic Goals

15. The following Strategic Goals are expected to support and enhance the implementation of EcAp Policy and Roadmap in the Mediterranean for the period 2026 to 2035:

a) To protect, enhance environmental conditions allowing natural recovery and, where practicable based on national priorities, restore the structure and function of marine and coastal ecosystems thus also protecting biodiversity, in order to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status and allow for their sustainable use.
b) To reduce pollution in the marine and coastal environment so as to minimize impacts on and risks to human and/or ecosystem health and/or uses of the sea and the coasts and reduce the pollution from different sources.
c) To prevent, reduce and manage the vulnerability of the sea and the coasts to risks induced by human activities, including climate change and natural events.

Step III: Development of a Set of Ecological Objectives and Common Indicators with GES Definitions and Targets corresponding to the Vision and Strategic Goals.

16. A set of 11 Ecological Objectives (EOs) and related Common and/or Candidate Indicators, including GES Definitions and Targets are in place in the framework of EcAp Policy Implementation and related Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Step IV: Implementation of National IMAP-based Monitoring Programmes for ongoing Assessment and regular updating of Targets.

17. Since 2016 national IMAP-based monitoring programmes have been developed and are operational in line with the regional IMAP and its respective Ecological Objectives and Common Indicators. They are expected to be updated till 2026 to streamline the updated IMAP to be approved by COP 24 (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025).

Step V: Preparation and Issuance of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR)

18. The Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) series builds on a robust conceptual foundation and nationally sourced, quality-assured data submitted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention through IMAP InfoSystem or other reliable sources, to provide an evidence-based reliable assessment of Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and coast, based on a GES /non-GES approach, as defined in the framework of the ecosystem approach and related Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme IMAP.

19. The preparation of the MED QSRs has seen coordinated efforts on data acquisition covering a series of Ecological Objectives and related Common Indicators of IMAP. A noteworthy fact about the MED QSRs is the way they embody the scale-shifting endeavors that is required for effective environmental assessment. The reports blend national data with patterns observed at the regional level. By distilling new knowledge, the report also contributes to other relevant assessment exercises at global, regional and national levels, and the implementation of respective policies and regulatory framework.

20. To date, two (2) different iterations of MED QSR have been issued in 2017 (Decision IG.23/6 of COP 20) and 2023 (Decision IG.26/3 of COP 23), whereas this series of reports is planned to be issued following a six (6) year data generation and assessment cycle followed by a 2-year period for document preparation and review through the respective UNEP/MAP governing bodies.

Step VI: Development and Review of relevant National Action Plans (NAPs) and/or Programmes of Measures (PoMs)

21. National Action Plans (NAPs) and/or Programmes of Measures (PoMs) have been developed since 2016 for all Contacting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Decision IG.22/8 of COP 19) and were updated in 2025.

22. A number of important and targeted legally-binding measures with timelines have been adopted in the Mediterranean since 2013 in the framework of the six (6) legally-binding Regional Plans and of the Post-2020 SAPBIO were adopted for the Mediterranean since 2013, as detailed in Appendix 3:

- Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Decision IG.25/8)Regional Plan on Stormwater Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (LBS Protocol) (Decision IG.26/8)
- Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Decision IG.25/9)
- Regional Plan on Agriculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (Decision IG.26/6)
- Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (Decision IG.26/7)
- Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) (Decision IG.25/11)

3.1 Timeline for Implementing Ecosystem Approach Policy and Roadmap

23. A timeline extended from 2026 to 2035, including projected outputs and key milestones of EcAp Policy and Roadmap implementation is presented in Appendix 2.

3.2 Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean

24. A governance mechanism has been set in place since 2021 to support the implementation of the EcAp in the Mediterranean (Decision IG.25/03).

25. The Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG), consisting of MAP Focal Points, has a key role in providing guidance and supervising EcAp implementation:

a) On the delivery of the EcAp, making sure that all elements for its implementation are taken into account, weighting of priorities and resource implications; and
b) In coordinating Barcelona Convention-UNEP/MAP's facilitation role, in support of Contracting Parties in their implementation of EcAp.

26. Two types of Correspondence Groups are formed in the process of application of EcAp in the Mediterranean and to support EcAp Coordination Group:

a) The Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties and coordinated by Barcelona Convention-UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit and respectively MED POL, SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC (depending on the IMAP cluster), working to ensure efficient coverage and in-depth discussions and analysis regarding integrated monitoring and assessment.
b) The Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA) is composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties and invited experts and coordinated by Barcelona Convention-UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit and PlanBleu/RAC. It develops a socioeconomic analysis of marine ecosystems uses, focusing on priority sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, recreational activities, and oil industry and offshore and address as appropriate the

socioeconomic aspects related to the formulation and implementation of programmes of measures to achieve/maintain Good Environmental Status (GES)

27. Informal Online Working Groups (OWG) are composed of experts and scientists nominated by the Contracting Parties and experts mobilized by the Secretariat and respective MAP Components. The composition should be restricted in number, with well-balanced geographical representation. The agenda of the Informal OWG and the timeline for their operationality is defined by the respective CORMONs. The Informal OWG report to CORMON and do not replace CORMONs.

28. Every effort to be made by the Secretariat to streamline and ensure the technical documents are cleared by the respective CORMON and MAP Component/Thematic Focal Points in line with their mandates, as appropriate, before they are submitted to the decision-making bodies. To this aim, the EcAp CG may decide on terms of references including potential list/type of documents for the technical bodies also addressing the need for the effective interaction among different bodies.

29. For Science-Policy Interface (SPI), effort should be made to promote SPI for IMAP implementation in the Mediterranean.

30. The “Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and Flow of Interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP Governing Bodies” are detailed and presented in Appendices 4 and 5 to the present document.

Appendix 1: List of Ecological Objectives, Common Indicators, GES Definitions and Proposed Targets

Ecological Objective 1 (EO1):		Biological diversity is maintained or enhanced. The quality and occurrence of coastal and marine habitats and the distribution and abundance of coastal and marine species are in line with prevailing physiographic, hydrographic, geographic and climatic conditions	
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
1.1 Key coastal and marine habitats are not being lost (Benthic and Pelagic Habitats[2])	1.1.1 Habitat distributional range (Common Indicator 1)	The habitat is present in all its natural distributional range.	State: • The ratio Natural / observed distributional range tends to 1 Pressure • Decrease in the main human causes of the habitat decline
	1.1.2 Condition of the habitat- defining species and communities (Benthic Habitats) (Common Indicator 2)	The population size and density of the habitat-defining species, and species composition of the community, are within reference conditions ensuring the long-term maintenance of the Habitat	State: • No human induced significant deviation of population abundance and density from reference conditions. • The species composition shows a positive trend towards reference condition over an increasing proportion of the habitat (for recovering habitats)
	1.1.3 Condition of the habitat- defining species and communities (Pelagic Habitats[3]) (Common Indicator 2)	(under development)	(under development)

[2] The habitat type, including its biotic and abiotic structure and its functions, is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures (e.g. typical species composition and their relative abundance, absence of particularly sensitive or fragile species or species providing a key function, size structure of species). Pelagic broad habitat types (variable salinity, coastal, shelf and oceanic/beyond shelf), if present in the region or subregion: 1. other habitat types could be defined by MS for the MSFD; 2. The typology of pelagic habitats represents a general framework that can be adapted and modified by CPs to integrate local ecosystems features and dynamics

[3] Phytoplankton and zooplankton abundance, biomass, communities' composition, functional groups provide good means to identify changes in key groups at the plankton community level. On the other hand, GES and Targets will be discussed during the next WG meetings for a proposal for CORMON Biodiversity and Fisheries. Proposal of indicators was reviewed and endorsed during the COMON Biodiversity and Fisheries meeting held in Athens, Greece (7–8 April 2025), as well as at the 17th Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points (Istanbul, Türkiye, 20–22 May 2025).

1.2 Species distribution is maintained (marine mammals, birds, reptiles)	1.2.1 Distributional range (marine mammals) (Common Indicator 3)	Cetaceans: The species are present in all their natural distributional range. Monk Seal: Monk Seal is present along recorded Mediterranean coasts with suitable habitats for the species.	State: • Cetaceans: The distribution of cetaceans remains stable or expanding and the species that experienced reduced distribution in the past are in favorable status of conservation and can recolonize areas with suitable habitats. • Monk Seal: The distribution of Monk Seal remains stable or expanding and the species is recolonizing areas with suitable habitats. Pressure/Response: • Human activities having the potential to exclude marine mammals from their natural habitat within their range area or to damage their habitat are regulated and controlled. • Conservation measures implemented for the zones of importance for cetaceans. • Fisheries management measures that strongly mitigate the risk of incidental taking of monk seals and cetaceans during fishing operations are implemented.
	1.2.2 Distributional range (birds) (Common Indicator 3)	The species continues to occur in all their Mediterranean natural habitat.	State: • No significant reduction in the population distributional range in the Mediterranean in all indicator species which are listed as least-concerned (LC); No significant reduction[4] in the population distributional range in the Mediterranean in all indicator species which are currently listed with conservation concern. • New colonies are established, and the population is encouraged to spread among several alternative breeding sites, especially for species with conservation concern.
	1.2.3 Distributional range (reptiles) (Common Indicator 3)	The species continues to occur in all its natural range in the Mediterranean, including nesting, mating, feeding and wintering and developmental (where different to those of adults) sites	State: • Turtle distribution is not significantly affected by human activities • Turtles continue to nest in all known nesting sites Pressure/Response: • Protection of known nesting, mating, foraging, wintering and developmental turtle sites. • Human activities having the potential to exclude marine turtles from their

[4] Comment received from Malta during the 11th Meeting of Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG): With regards to indicator 1.2.2 – Malta questions the applicability of 'significant increase' to all species under consideration, particularly to species which might be characterized by localized distribution associated with available habitat types. We would thus recommend keeping the original text 'No significant reduction in the population'.

			range area are regulated and controlled. • The potential impact of climate change is assessed
1.3 Population size of selected species is maintained (marine mammals, birds, reptiles)	1.3.1 Population abundance (marine mammals) (Common Indicator 4)	Cetaceans: The species population has abundance levels allowing to qualify to Least Concern Category of IUCN.	State: • No human-induced mortality is causing a decrease inbreeding population size or density • Populations recover towards natural levels.
		Monk Seal: Number of individuals by colony allows to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status.[5]	State: • Continual recovery of population density
	1.3.2 Population abundance (birds) (Common Indicator 4)	The species population has abundance levels allowing qualifying to Least Concern Category of the IUCN Red List or has abundance levels that are improving and moving away from the more critical IUCN category.	State: • No human induced decrease in population abundance. Population recovers towards natural levels where depleted. • The total number of individuals is sparse enough in different spots.
	1.3.3 Population abundance (reptiles) (Common Indicator 4)	The population size allows to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status taking into account all life stages of the population.	State: • No human induced decrease in population abundance • Population recovers towards natural levels where depleted
1.4 Population condition of selected species is maintained (marine mammals, birds, reptiles)	1.4.1 Population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/ mortality rates) (marine mammals) (Common Indicator 5)	Cetaceans: preliminary assessment of incidental catch, prey depletion and other human induced mortality followed by implementation of appropriate measures to mitigate these threats Monk Seal: decreasing trends in human induced mortality (e.g., direct killings, pupping/resting habitat /disturbance/occupation)	State: • Decreasing trends in human induced mortality Pressure/Response: • Cetaceans: Appropriate measure implemented to mitigate incidental catch, prey depletion and other human induced mortality • Monk Seal: Appropriate measures implemented to mitigate direct killing and incidental catches and to preclude habitat destruction.

	1.4.2 Population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/ mortality rates) (birds) (Common Indicator 5)	Species populations are in good conditions: Natural levels of breeding success & acceptable levels of survival of young and adult birds.	State: • Populations of all taxa, particularly those with IUCN threatened status are maintained in long-term following the indication of population models. Pressure/Response: • Incidental catch mortality and other anthropogenic pressures are at negligible levels, particularly for species of conservation concern
	1.4.3 Population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/mortality rates) (reptiles) (Common Indicator 5)	Low mortality induced by incidental catch. Favorable sex ratio and no decline in hatching rates.	Response: • Measures to mitigate incidental catches in turtles implemented

Ecological Objective 2 (EO2):	Non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystem		
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
2.1 Invasive non-indigenous species introductions are minimized	2.1.1 Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence, and spatial distribution of non-indigenous species (NIS) particularly invasive, non-indigenous species notably in risk areas (EO2, in relation to the main vectors and pathways of spreading of such species) (Common Indicator 6)	Decreasing abundance of introduced NIS in risk areas	State: • Abundance of NIS introduced by human activities reduced to levels giving no detectable impact.

Ecological Objective 3 (EO3)[6]:		Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock	
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
3.1. The Spawning Stock Biomass is at a level at which reproduction capacity is not impaired	3.1. Spawning Stock Biomass (Common Indicator 7)	Achieving or maintaining good environmental status requires that SSB values are equal to or above SSBMSY, the level capable of producing maximum sustainable yield.	State: • B > Bthr
3.2. Total catch of commercial species does not exceed the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and the bycatch is reduced.	3.2. Total landing (Common Indicator 8) -	Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock.	State: • Long-Term High Yields • Catch < MSY Pressure: • Reduction of IUU catch • Minimization of discarding and incidental catch of vulnerable species
3.3. Fishing mortality in the stock does not exceed the level that allows MSY (F≤ FMSY).	3.3 Fishing mortality (Common Indicator 9)	Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock	Pressure: • F_{MSY} • F0.1 a proxy of F_{MSY} (more precautionary)
3.4. Fishing effort should be reduced by means of a multi-annual management plan until there is an evidence for stock recovery	3.4 Fishing effort (Common Indicator 10)	Total effort does not exceed the level of effort allowing the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)	(under development)

[6] Regarding EO3 consultations are ongoing with GFCM and hopefully progress is expected to by the 11th EcAp CG Meeting.

3.5. Stable or positive trend in CPUE Declines in CPUE may mean that the fish population cannot support the level of harvesting. Increases in CPUE may mean that a fish stock is recovering and more fishing effort can be applied.	3.5 Catch per unit effort (CPUE) (Common Indicator 11)	Catch per unit effort (CPUE) is an indirect measure of the abundance of target species. Changes in the catch per unit effort are inferred to signify changes to the target species abundance	(under development)
3.6 Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock	3.6 Bycatch of vulnerable and non-target species (EO1 and EO3) (Common Indicator 12)	The abundance / trends of populations of seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles and sharks key species (selected according to their actual and total dependence on the marine environment, and to their ecological representativeness) is stable or not reducing in a statistically significant way taking into account the natural variability compared to the current situation.	(Work in progress within GFCM) State: Cetaceans: No unsustainable impact at population level. Decreasing trends in human induced mortality. Pressure: Cetaceans: Appropriate measure implemented to mitigate incidental catch, prey depletion and other human induced mortality. Monk seal: Appropriate measures implemented to mitigate direct killing and incidental catches and to preclude habitat destruction.

Ecological Objective 4 (EO4):		Alterations to components of marine food webs caused by resource extraction or human- induced environmental changes do not have long- term adverse effects on food web dynamics and related viability	
Operational Objective	Indicator[7]	GES Definition[8]	GES Targets
4.1 Diversity of ecosystem and dynamics across all trophic groups can ensure long-term biomass-abundance of the species	4.1.1-Biomass or abundance of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups[9] (Candidate Common Indicator 29)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.1.2 Average of Mean Trophic Level of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups from biomass and/or catches (Candidate Common Indicator 30)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.1.3 Biodiversity indices (Candidate Common Indicator 31)	(under development)	(under development)
4.2 Proportion of selected group of species is balanced as in healthy food webs	4.2.1 Pelagic/Demersal ratio (Candidate Common Indicator 32)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.2.2 NIS/Demersal ratio	(under development)	(under development)

[7] Biomass (i.e. Kg/km2), abundance (i.e. Number of individuals/km2) and size (i.e. total length of body) of species can be obtained for example for many demersal species from MEDITS data and GFCM stock assessment reporting datasets. B) commercial catches of target species and production of fisheries can be obtained for example by using FAO data (FishstatJ). C) Trophic level of species can be obtained from large dataset such as Fishbase and Lifebase. Indicators belonging to objective 4.1 are useful for a first evaluation of potential anthropogenic impact on the structure of food webs as a whole system by specifically looking at simple data such as biomass or abundance of species groups (indicator 4.1.1), trophodynamics (indicator 4.1.2) and diversity such as alpha and beta indices (indicator 4.1.3). Indicators belonging to operational objective 4.2 focus on some food web compartments to have more specific evidence of potential anthropogenic impacts such as detrimental effect of bottom fisheries and/or eutrophication (indicator 4.2.1), increase of non-indigenous species (indicator 4.2.2), changes in net primary production affecting the base of food webs (indicator 4.2.3 and 4.2.4), depletion of large megafaunal organisms (indicator 4.2.5)

[8] GES and targets will be discussed at the next meetings of the Biodiversity Online Working Group / CORMONs as soon as other progress from EU experience (MSFD, OSPAR, HELCOM) or other pilot assessments allow a proposal to be made.

	(Candidate Common Indicator 33)		
	4.2.3 Zooplankton/ phytoplankton ratio (Candidate Common Indicator 34)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.2.4 Size distribution of trophic groups (Candidate Common Indicator 35)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.2.5 Production of Megafauna (*Megafauna variables from EO1) (Candidate Common Indicator 36)	(under development)	(under development)

Ecological Objective 5 (EO5):		Human-induced eutrophication is prevented, especially adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters	
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
5.1 Human introduction of nutrients in the marine environment is not conducive to eutrophication	5.1.1 Concentration of key nutrients in the water column (Common Indicator 13)	Concentrations of nutrients in the euphotic layer are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climate conditions	State: • Reference nutrients concentrations according to the local hydrological, chemical, and morphological characteristics of the un- impacted marine region. • Decreasing trend of nutrients concentrations in water column of human impacted areas statistically defined, considering the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales. Pressure: • Reduction of BOD emissions from land-based sources. • Reduction of nutrients emissions from land-based sources.
5.2 Direct and indirect effects of nutrient over-enrichment are prevented	5.2.1 Chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column (Common Indicator 14)	Natural levels of algal biomass, water transparency and oxygen concentrations in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic, and weather conditions	State[10]: • Chlorophyll a concentration in high-risk areas below the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales. • Decreasing trend in Chl-a concentrations in high-risk areas affected by human activities. • Index of turbidity below the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales to be set upon defining the turbidity assessment criteria[11]. • Increasing trend of transparency in areas impacted by human activities[12]. • Dissolved oxygen concentrations in high-risk areas below the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales to be set upon defining the oxygen concentrations assessment criteria [13]. • Increasing trend in dissolved oxygen concentrations in areas impacted by human activities[14].

[10] Future work should focus on defining high-risk areas, as well as setting reference and boundary values, including GES/non-GES boundary limits, with possible contributions from Online Working Group that may be established for this purpose.
[11] Transferred from Indicator 5.2.2, Decision IG. 21/3, Annex I
[12] ibidem
[13] Transferred from Indicator 5.3.1, Decision IG. 21/3, Annex I. The current revision includes the reinstatement of targets for turbidity, water transparency and dissolved oxygen concentrations, in order to align with the established GES definition for Common Indicator 14 on Chlorophyll-a, as agreed upon in the 2017 MED QSR: "Natural levels of algal biomass, water transparency, and oxygen concentrations in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic, and weather conditions. As originally defined in Decision IG.21/3, the present document reconsiders the original GES definitions which identified turbidity, water transparency and dissolved oxygen as supporting parameters in the assessment of GES based on chlorophyll-a concentrations.
[14] ibidem

Ecological Objective 6 (EO6):	Sea-floor integrity is maintained, especially in priority benthic habitats		
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
6.1 All benthic broad habitat types maintain their natural extent, with limited loss due to anthropogenic pressures	6.1.1 Extent of physical loss of natural habitat (Common Indicator 37)	The extent of loss of each habitat type, resulting from anthropogenic pressures, does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of the habitat type in the assessment area.	Extent of physical loss per habitat type does not exceed [X%] of each habitat's natural extent.
6.2 All benthic broad habitat types maintain their natural structure, functions and biodiversity	6.2.1 Extent of adverse effects on benthic habitat[15] (Common Indicator 38)	The extent of adverse effects from anthropogenic pressures on the condition of each habitat type, including alteration to its biotic and abiotic structure and its functions (e.g., its typical species composition, absence of particularly sensitive or fragile species or species providing a key function, size structure of species; carbon sequestration capacity), does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of the habitat type in the assessment area.	Extent of adverse effects from anthropogenic pressures[16] per habitat type does not exceed [Y%] of each habitat's natural extent.

[15] This may comprise several indicators which address specific pressures
[16] Value Y% for adverse effects includes value X% for physical habitat loss. Value Y% encompasses any loss of biogenic habitat and changes to habitats at EUNIS level 2 that are defined as habitat loss under MSFD (MSFD GD19, 2022, version 12-12-2023) because such losses can be more much extensive than losses due to physical structures.

Ecological Objective 7 (EO7):	Alteration of hydrographic conditions does not adversely affect coastal and marine ecosystems.		
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
7.1 Impacts to the marine and coastal ecosystem induced by climate variability and/or climate change are minimized	7.1.1 Large scale changes in circulation patterns, temperature, pH, and salinity distribution (Common Indicator 15bis) 7.1.2 Long term changes in sea level (Common Indicator 15ter)	Ecosystems are resilient enough to adapt to climate change.	• Anthropogenic impacts which may alter ecosystems' adaptive capacity are reduced.
7.2 Alterations due to permanent constructions on the coast and watersheds, marine installations and seafloor anchored structures are minimized	7.2.2 Location and extent of the habitats potentially impacted by hydrographic alterations[17] (Common Indicator 15)	Negative impacts due to new structure are minimal with no influence on the larger scale coastal and marine system	• Planning of new structures takes into account all possible mitigation measures in order to minimize the impact on coastal and marine ecosystem and its services integrity and cultural/historic assets. Where possible, promote ecosystem health.

[17] Current Common Indicator 15 of IMAP.

Ecological Objective 8 (EO8):	The natural dynamics of coastal areas are maintained and coastal ecosystems and landscapes are preserved		
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
8.1 The natural dynamics nature of coastal areas are maintained, and coastal ecosystems and landscapes are preserved	8.1.4 Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of humanmade structures.[18] (Common Indicator 16)	Physical disturbance to coastal areas induced by human activities should be minimized.	• Negative impacts of human activities on coastal areas are minimized through appropriate management measures
8.2 Integrity and diversity of coastal ecosystems, landscapes and their geomorphology are preserved	8.2.1 Land cover change[19] (Common Indicator 25)	Linear coastal development and low-lying terrain coastal development minimized, with perpendicular development being in balance with integrity and diversity of coastal ecosystems and landscapes. Mixed land-use structure achieved in predominantly man- made coastal landscapes.	Proposed targets should be considered as general recommendations to be adapted to regional/local specificities and knowledge: • No further construction within the setback zone and avoid further construction in low-lying coastal terrain • Change of coastal land use structure, dominance of urban land use reversed • Keep, and increase landscape diversity

[18] Current Common Indicator 16 of IMAP.
[19] Current Candidate Common Indicator 25 of IMAP, which is recommended to become a common indicator in the Revised Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (UNEP/MED WG. 595/Inf.4)

Ecological Objective 9 (EO9):	Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health		
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
9.1 Concentration of priority contaminants is kept within acceptable limits and does not increase	9.1.1 Concentration of key harmful contaminants measured in the relevant matrix (Common Indicator 17)	Level of pollution is below a determined threshold defined for the area and species.	State: • Concentrations of specific contaminants below either the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales or below reference concentrations (from other sources). • No increasing trends in contaminants concentrations in sediment and biota from human impacted areas, statistically defined. Pressure: • Reduction of contaminants emissions from land-based sources.
9.2 Effects of released contaminants are minimized	9.2.1 Level of pollution effects of key contaminants where a cause-and-effect relationship has been established (Common Indicator 18)	Concentrations of contaminants are not giving rise to negative effects on health status of marine biota	State: • Contaminants effects below thresholds. Pressure: • Decreasing trend in the operational releases of oil and other contaminants from coastal, maritime and offshore activities
9.3 Acute pollution events are prevented, and their impacts are minimized	9.3.1 Occurrence, origin (where possible), and extent of acute pollution events (e.g. slicks from oil, oil products and hazardous substances) and their impact on biota affected by this pollution (Common Indicator 19)	Occurrence of acute pollution events are reduced to the minimum.	Pressure: • Decreasing trend in the occurrences of acute pollution events. Achieve the elimination of intentional pollution of the marine environment by oil and other harmful and noxious substances (HNS) and the minimization of accidental discharge of such substances.
9.4 Levels of known harmful contaminants in major types of seafood do not exceed established standards.	9.4.1 Actual levels of contaminants that have been detected and number of contaminants which have exceeded maximum regulatory levels in commonly consumed seafood (Common Indicator 20)	Concentrations of contaminants are within the regulatory limits for consumption by humans.	State: • Concentrations of contaminants in foodstuffs are below the UNEP/MAP Environmental Assessment Criteria approved for the protection of human health, . • Decreasing trend in the frequency of cases of seafood samples above the approved UNEP/MAP Environmental Assessment Criteria

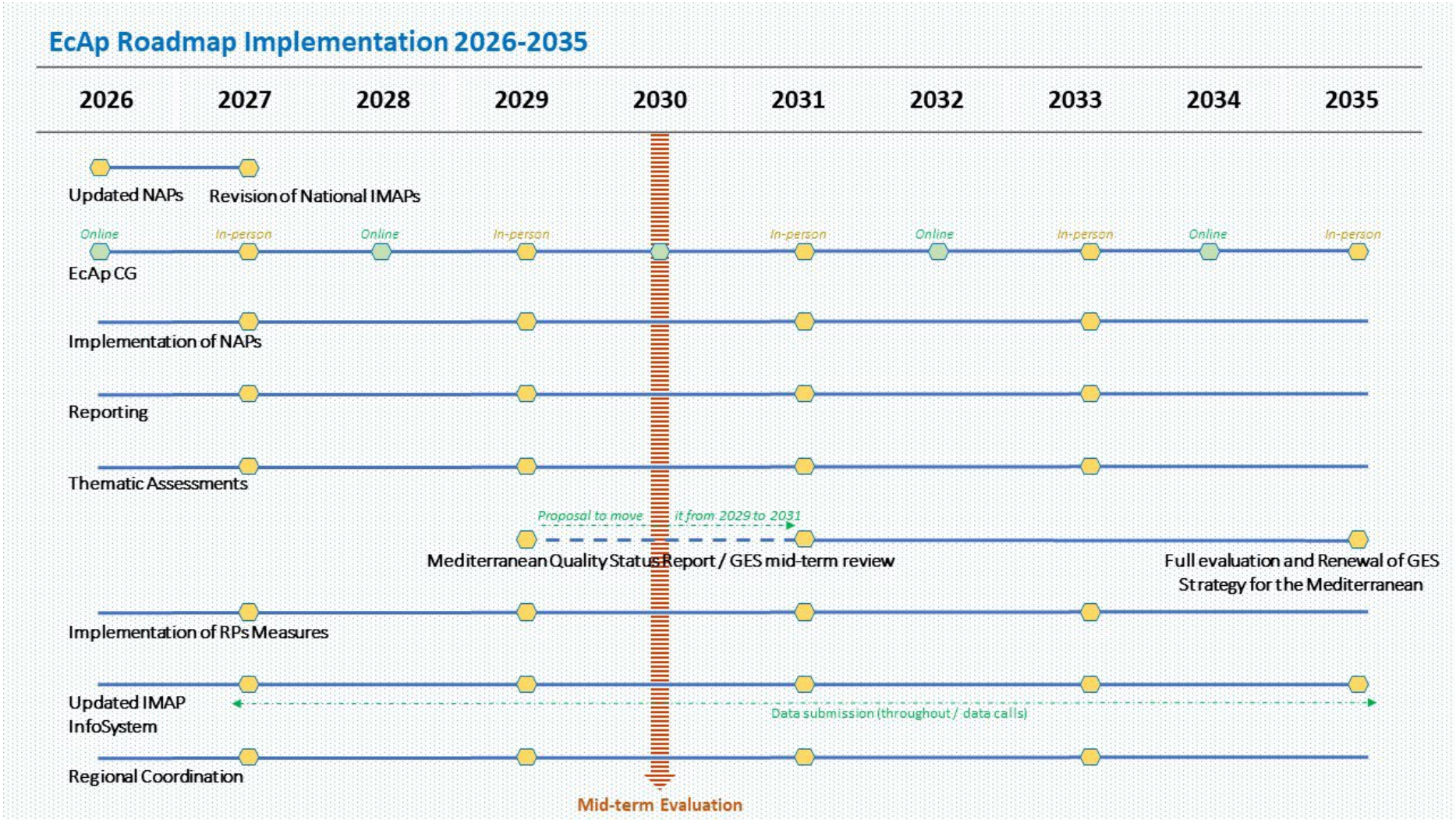
9.5 Water quality in bathing waters and other recreational areas does not undermine human health	9.5.1 Percentage of intestinal enterococci concentration measurements within established standards (Common Indicator 21)	Concentrations of intestinal enterococci are within established standards	• Increasing trend in the percentage of intestinal enterococci concentration measurements that fall in the approved GES categories as established in Decision IG.20/9 and the EU 2006/7 Directive.

Ecological Objective 10 (EO10):	Marine and coastal litter do not adversely affect coastal and marine environment		
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
10.1 The impacts related to properties and quantities of marine litter in the marine and coastal environment are minimized	10.1.1 Trends in the amount of litter washed ashore and/or deposited on coastlines (including analysis of its composition, spatial distribution and, where possible, source) (Common Indicator 22)	Number/amount of marine litter items on the coastline do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life and ecosystem services	Decreasing trend in the number of/amount of marine litter (items) deposited on the coast
	10.1.2 Trends in amounts of litter in the water column, including micro-plastics, and on the seafloor (Common Indicator 23)	Number/amount of marine litter items in the water surface and the seafloor do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life, ecosystem services and do not create risk to navigation	Decreasing trend in the number/amount of marine litter items in the water surface and the seafloor
	10.1.3 Trends in the amount of litter coming from riverine sources (Common Indicator 28)	Number/amount of litter items on riverbanks and water surface in estuaries do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life, ecosystem services and do not create risk to navigation	Decreasing trend in the number/amount of litter items deposited on riverbanks and in water surface in estuaries
10.2 Impacts of litter on marine life are controlled to the maximum extent practicable	10.2.1 Trends in the amount of litter ingested by marine organisms and in the number of individuals entangled in marine litter (Common Indicator 24)	• Amount (g) of marine litter ingested by marine organisms do not alter populations of sentinel organisms • Number of individuals entangled in marine litter do not alter populations of sentinel organisms	• Decreasing trend in the stomach content of the sentinel species. • Decreasing frequency of occurrence of sea turtles entangled in marine litter.

Ecological Objective 11 (EO 11):	Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems		
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
11.1 Energy inputs into the marine, environment, especially noise from, human activities, are minimized[20]	11.1.1. Proportion of days and geographical distribution where loud, low, and mid-frequency impulsive sounds exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animal ([] Common Indicator 26)[21]	Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems	State: • The extent (%) of habitat of noise-sensitive species within the assessment area that is impacted by impulsive noise events, for a limited amount of time, is below thresholds.
11.2. Energy inputs into the marine, environment, especially noise from, human activities, are minimized	11.2.1. Levels of continuous low frequency sounds with the use of models as appropriate ([] Common Indicator 27)[22]	Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems	State: • The extent (%) of the assessment area which is above levels causing disturbance to sensitive marine animal is below limits, or such limits are exceeded for a limited amount of time.

[20] Decision IG.20/4, Annex II
[21] Decision IG.20/4, Annex II; IG.22/7
[22] ibidem

Appendix 2: Timeline for EcAp Roadmap and Policy Implementation (2026 – 2035)



Appendix 3: Main Scope of Actions Referring to the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy (2026-2035)

1. ***Protect and Restore Marine Biodiversity*:** Expanding Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as well as establishing Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) with the aim to protect at least 30% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2030 is a cornerstone goal, as reinforced by the 2023 MED QSR. However, beyond spatial targets, effective management must be prioritized. Management plans, surveillance, and enforcement capacity for MPAs requires significant improvement, including their integration into national policies. Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) will continue to guide conservation action. Restoration of degraded habitats, especially seagrass meadows, in particular the Posidonia seagrass meadows *inter alia*, coralligenous reefs, and coastal lagoons, will enhance biodiversity and bolster climate resilience. The dissemination of best practices should be ensured to effectively prevent, control, and manage non-indigenous species. Priority must be given to reversing habitat degradation trends identified by the 2023 MED QSR, particularly in coastal and estuarine environments. These efforts will contribute to Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework through the implementation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO for the marine and coastal environment, adopted at the COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention. Decisive and coordinated actions are also needed to promote sustainable fisheries and intensify efforts against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which continues to undermine the sustainable use of marine resources in the Mediterranean.

2. ***Prevent and Reduce Pollution***: Emphasis must be placed on addressing pollution at its sources, particular through the implementation of the 2026–2035 National Action Plans (NAPs) and Programmes of Measures (PoMs), serving as key operational policy tools for the effective enforcement on the LBS Protocol-based suite of Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management, Marine Litter Management, Agriculture Management, Aquaculture Management, and Urban Stormwater Management. Their implementation is essential for achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea. It is also crucial to ensure coherence between the NAPs and other relevant national policies and strategies. Continued emphasis must be placed on identifying and addressing the environmental impacts stemming from key sectors—agriculture, industry, aquaculture, tourism, infrastructure, energy production, ports, maritime works and structures, and maritime activities—alongside the growing impacts of climate change. These combined pressures continue to hinder progress toward achieving GES of the Mediterranean marine environment.

3. Priority should be given to assessing the impacts of pollution pressures, by ensuring regular monitoring of the IMAP list of mandatory organic and inorganic contaminants, biological effects, microplastics, pharmaceutical residues, and contaminants of emerging concern. This should be complemented by identifying legacy pollutants and encouraging pollution prevention rather relying solely on environmental remediation. Upgrading and further developing assessment criteria for contaminants and biomarkers, including through the integration of toxicity consideration into future Good Environmental Status (GES) assessments, and combining chemical and biological effects monitoring and evaluation—alongside improving data availability and quality—remain key priorities to accelerate the achievement of GES, as highlighted by the 2023 MED QSR and the revised IMAP.

4. Nutrient pollution reduction must be addressed by promoting sustainable agricultural, aquaculture, industry, tourism**,** upgrading wastewater treatment facilities, limiting fertilizers use, and enforcing stricter pollution controls Establishing assessment criteria for GES regarding nutrients across all Mediterranean sub-regions, defining water typologies, and ensuring the application of statistical tools for data validation and calculation of assessment criteria are essential. Additionally, incorporating satellite-derived chlorophyll-a data as a supplementary parameter alongside in situ measurements remains a priority to support accelerated progress toward GES related to nutrients, as identified in the 2023 MED QSR and the revised IMAP.

5. The 2023 MED QSR also recommends integrating nature-based solutions, such as restoring wetlands, into pollution control strategies. Following the anticipated adoption of an international legally

binding instrument on plastic pollution—which adopts a comprehensive approach addressing the entire lifecycle of plastics—a zero-tolerance approach toward marine litter must be enforced. To achieve this, the implementation ofcircular economy principles, extended producer responsibility schemes, and robust wastewater and waste management infrastructures is essential. This includes recycling and material recovery facilities, as well as best practices for plastic waste management.

6. Effective implementation of the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) in the North Western Mediterranean Sea—a vital measure for protecting marine mammals from collision risks—requires collective effort. Equally important is the strict enforcement of the Sulfur Emission Control Area (SECA) regulations, alongside exploring the feasibility of establishing a Nitrogen Oxide Emission Control Area (NECA). Together, these actions are essential to minimizing the impacts of maritime transport on human health and the marine environment.

7. ***Prevent and Reduce Adverse Effects on the Coastline and Habitats***: All countries should continue to invest substantial efforts in monitoring and assessing changes in hydrographical conditions, as well as the adverse impacts of man-made structures on coastal ecosystems and landscapes. Priority should be given to the restoration of threatened coastal ecosystems and habitats, the definition of country-specific, sub-regional, and regional GES conditions, and the development of climate change-related indicators, as well as those measuring coastline changes. Efforts should also include the creation of a Digital Spatial Database and the standardization and harmonization of mapping methods across countries.

8. ***Develop and implement new indicators*****:** Achieving GES for Hydrography and Noise Pollution will need comprehensive digital spatial database, simplified reporting methods, consistent monitoring, data quality, management measures, and apply noise reduction technologies for maritime traffic and seismic surveys.

9. ***Enhance Climate Resilience*****:** Climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures need to be mainstreamed into all policies, including maritime and coastal planning policies, compatible with a trajectory to limit the temperature increase to 1,5°C above pre-industrial level. The 2023 MED QSR stresses the need to protect blue carbon ecosystems, such as seagrass meadows, salt marshes, and mangroves, as key climate mitigation assets. Their protection not only sequesters carbon but also strengthens coastal resilience against erosion and storm surges. Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) must integrate climate vulnerability assessments to future-proof infrastructure and socio-economic activities. Adaptation strategies must be community-led, ecosystem-based, and inclusive of vulnerable groups such as small-scale fishers and coastal communities.

10. ***Strengthen Governance and Regional Cooperation under the Mediterranean Action Plan – Barcelona Convention***: Institutional capacities must be enhanced at both national and regional levels. The 2023 MED QSR highlights the need for improved cross-sectoral coordination, integration of marine and coastal policies. It emphasizes the importance of strengthening synergies between the Mediterranean Action Plan – Barcelona Convention, EU MSFD implementation, , the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, Regional Seas Conventions, RAMOGE, PELAGOS, and other frameworks. Effective implementation of concrete initiatives and actions—such as those within the “A Mediterranean: A Model Sea by 2030” Plan of Action (PAMEx), the BlueMed Partnership, the MedFund, and the WestMED initiative—is critical. Compliance and enforcement mechanisms must be improved to ensure that marine conservation commitments are translated into real-world outcomes. Special attention should be given to youth engagement in environmental issues, including through the modernization of education programs focused on sustainable development and global citizenship, in both formal and informal settings. Transparency, public access to information, public participation - including that of civil society, -and stakeholder co-management approaches need to be mainstreamed into governance systems. All actors—local authorities, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector, including industry—should embody a spirit of solidarity and strengthened regional collaboration to secure a clean, healthy, and sustainable marine environment.

11. ***Strengthening the Science-Policy Interface****:* Efforts will continue to focus on advancing integrated monitoring and assessment of the coastal and marine environment in a cost-effective manner, aligned with the EcAp Ecological Objectives and IMAP Common Indicators. These efforts aim to further enhance a comprehensive and integrated understanding of ecosystem conditions and the impacts of various pressures, including physical loss and disturbance, non-indigenous species, nutrient enrichment, species removal, and others.

12. It is therefore essential to continue embedding the science-policy interface as a cornerstone of EcAp policy implementation. To this end, the continued development and application of science-based management practices remain crucial. In particular, this should be achieved through the promotion and implementation of tools such as Source-to-Sea Management, Marine Spatial Planning, Nature-Based Solutions, Ocean Ecosystem Accounting, Mapping of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems, and the Compendium for Coast and Sea. These tools have considerable potential to enhance the protection, conservation, and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems; support integrated coastal and ocean management; contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and strengthen disaster risk reduction.

13. ***Enable a Sustainable Blue Economy*****:** Economic growth in the Mediterranean must be decoupled from environmental degradation**,** including through streamlining EcAp into the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), coast resilience and source-to-sea approach. Sustainable, low-carbon maritime transport, responsible coastal tourism, offshore renewable energy, and marine biotechnology sectors must be scaled up with clear environmental safeguards. A stronger sustainability criteria for emerging blue economy sectors, such as offshore aquaculture and renewable energy, ensuring that new economic activities do not undermine GES objectives.

14. The above scope of actions is currently addressed thought the measures defined in the framework of the legally-binding Regional Plans and Post-2020 SAPBIO, adopted in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System (Table 1).

Table 1: Specific measures and timeline for their implementation in the framework of the legally-binding Regional Plans and Post-2020 SAPBIO, adopted in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System.

Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Decision IG.25/8)	
Urban Wastewater Treatment	
Art. V (6): All agglomerations are provided with collecting systems for urban wastewater for those with a population equivalent (p.e.) of more than 15,000	2025
Art. V (6): All agglomerations are provided with collecting systems for urban wastewater for those with a population equivalent (p.e.) between 2000 and 15,000	2030
Art. V (7): Adopt emission limit values as provided for in Appendix I of the Regional Plan for: (i) discharge of effluents from urban wastewater treatment plants to the environment; (ii) reuse of reclaimed wastewater for agriculture irrigation; and (iii) discharge of industrial wastewater into collecting systems and urban wastewater treatment plants	2025
Art. V (9): All discharges from agglomerations over than 15,000 p.e. are subject to the extent possible to tertiary treatment provided that the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the recipient environment is maintained	2030
Art. V (9): All discharges from agglomerations of size of between 2000 and 15,000 p.e. are subject to the extent possible to secondary treatment provided that the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the recipient environment is maintained	2030
Art. V (15): Competent authority or appropriate body adopt emission limit values appropriate to the nature of industry discharging industrial effluents to collecting systems connected to urban WWTPs	2025
Art. V (16): Industrial wastewater discharged into collecting systems and urban WWTPs shall meet, as a minimum, the emission limit values	2035
Other Measures[23]:	
Art. V (10): Promote nature-based solutions to the extent possible for small agglomerations of less than 2000 p.e.	n/a
Art. V (11): Ensure that urban wastewater treatment plants, built to comply with the requirements of Articles 7 and 8, are designed, constructed, operated and maintained to ensure sufficient performance under normal local climatic conditions	n/a
Art. V (12): Ensure that WWTPs are designed to account for seasonal variations of loads; volume and characteristics of the local municipal wastewater; and limitation of pollution of receiving water.	n/a
Art. V (13.i): Implement measures for segregating collecting systems for storm water and municipal wastewater, if technically and economically feasible;	n/a
Art. V (13.ii): Prevent or if not possible minimize sewage and wastewater treatment plants' overflow due to rainwater penetration and flooding;	n/a
Art. V (13.iii): Address impacts of points of discharge of treated wastewater;	n/a
Art. V (13.iv): Adopt tools for conservation of surface water runoff in built environment;	n/a
Art. V (13.v): Reduce pollutant loads and litter in storm water runoff from municipal and industrial sources.	n/a
Art. V (14.i): Promote the reuse of reclaimed wastewater.	n/a
Art. V (14.ii): Implement wastewater reuse systems	n/a
Art. V (17): Take measures to ensure regular monitoring of discharged effluent wastewater, receiving water, reclaimed wastewater and industrial effluents	n/a
Art. VI (18): Collaborate to implement, exchange and share best practices directly or with the support of the Secretariat	n/a
Art. VIII (18): Report on implementation of measures stipulated in this Regional Plan in line with the reporting requirement and timelines provided in Article 26 of the Convention and Article 13, paragraph 2(d) of the LBS Protocol	n/a
Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management	
Art. V (7): Contracting Parties shall adopt Class A biosolids suitable for use as fertilizer for agricultural crops having met the pathogen reduction requirements set in Table 1 by treatment processes	2025
Art. V (8): Contacting Parties shall adopt limit values for heavy metals to ensure that use would not affect human health and the environment as provided for in Table 2 (heavy metals in biosolids) and Table 3 (heavy metals in soil)	2025
Art. V (12): Contracting Parties shall establish the required infrastructure for the implementation of the requirements of the applicable measures of this Regional Plan with regards to the use for agricultural land applications and/or for energy/nutrient recovery	2025

[23] Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally commit to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines

Other Measures[24]:	
Art. V (7): Set classes for sludge with limit values for pathogen contents for biosolids to ensure that use would not affect human health and the environment	n/a
Art. V (7): Consider adopting Class B biosolids suitable for use as fertilizer for non-food crops having met the pathogen reduction requirements set in Table 1 by treatment processes	n/a
Art. V (9): Specify the conditions for use of sludge in its different states (stabilized, treated, untreated) taking into consideration the proximity of sludge application to various types of human activities and civil structure facilities/natural features	n/a
Art. V (10): In the event that limit values set in Tables 1 to 3 (pathogens and heavy metals in biosolids and soil) cannot be met, the Contracting Parties shall apply alternative means to agricultural use including incineration and regulated landfilling	n/a
Art. V (11): Apply adequate treatment processes to reduce volatile organic compounds and diminish possible odor emissions in the different stages of sludge treatment, transport and application in agriculture and other suitable uses	n/a
Art. V (13): Reduce energy costs and increase water savings during treatment by using BAT and applying BEP	n/a
Art. V (14): Implement technologies targeting energy efficient treatment of sludge such as pretreatment of sludge, solar drying, bio-drying, composting, etc.	n/a
Art. V (15): Promote implementation of adaptation measures for climate change protection	n/a
Art. V (16): Take measures to ensure monitoring of the quality of sewage sludge in the WWTP or after treatment outside the WWTP	n/a
Art. VI (17): Exchange and share best practices directly or with the support of the Secretariat including BAT, BEP, sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, resource efficiency, WEFE Nexus in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the urban wastewater treatment plants	n/a
Art. VIII (19): Report on implementation of measures stipulated in this Regional Plan in line with the reporting requirement and timelines provided in Article 26 of the Convention and Article 13, paragraph 2(d) of the LBS Protocol	n/a

Regional Plan on Stormwater Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (LBS Protocol) (Decision IG.26/8)	
Art. V (6a): Establish a regulatory framework to develop stormwater management plans that include nonstructural and structural stormwater control measures	2028
Art. V (6b): Establish a regulatory framework to ensure that stormwater and other wastewater discharge plans, (in case of combined stormwater and sewage collection systems), are based on drainage boundaries instead of administrative boundaries	2028
Art. V (6c): Establish a regulatory framework to regulate future land use development aiming to maintain as much of its natural hydrology in order to minimize stormwater runoff, increase its infiltration, and harvest where possible rainwater for domestic or industrial or any other uses	2028
Art. V (6d): Establish a regulatory framework to identify the sources that contribute pollutants through stormwater and select the measures for pollution reduction	2028
Art. V (6e): Establish a regulatory framework to establish monitoring programmes for recipient water (e.g. lakes, water streams, groundwater, etc.), as appropriate in order to undertake the proper mitigation measures	2028
Art. V (7a): Implement the approved stormwater management plans by considering the implementation of Green Infrastructure (GI) that complements the piped networks in existing urban areas serviced with separate collection systems and Best Management Practices (BMP) in newly developed areas	2030
Art. V (7b): Implement the approved stormwater management plans by considering the construction of separate systems for municipal wastewaters (blackwater from toilets, greywater and industrial wastewater) and urban runoff in newly developed residential, commercial and industrial areas	2030
Art. V (7c): Implement the approved stormwater management plans by reducing the adverse impacts of untreated wastewater overflows discharging from existing combined collection systems of rainwater or snow melt, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe	2030
Art. V (8a): Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by maintaining an updated inventory list on storm water infrastructure and sources of pollution as well as sewage storage capacity structures	2028
Art. V (8b): Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by planning and implementing regular road maintenance, street sweeping, storm-drain maintenance, stormwater hotline response, and landscape and park maintenance	2028
Art. V (8c): Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by performing regular monitoring of quantity and quality stormwater at key urban stormwater structures	2028

[24] Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally commit to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines

Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Decision IG.25/9)	
Art. 8 (12): Take adequate regulatory measures to integrate the informal sector into regulated waste collection and recycling schemes	2028
Art. 8 (13): Establish, as appropriate, a regulatory framework for compostable plastics to be integrated into national waste management policies	2025
Art. 9 (15.2): Apply prevention measures aiming to achieve, to the extent possible, a circular economy for plastics (Regulate the use of primary microplastics, Implement Sustainable Procurement Policies, Establish voluntary agreements, Establish procedures and manufacturing methodologies, Identify single-use plastic products, Set targets to phase out production and use, increase the reuse and recycling, Phase-out chemical additives used in plastic products, Promote the use of recycled plastics, substitute plastics, Implement standards for product labelling, Establish dedicated collection and recycling schemes, minimize the amount of marine litter associated with fishing/aquaculture, Scale-up and replicate sustainable models)	2025
Art. 9 (15.3.a): Base urban solid waste management on reduction at source, applying the following waste hierarchy as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation and policy: prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, other recovery, e.g. energy recovery and environmentally sound disposal	2025
Art. 9 (15.3.b): Implement adequate waste reducing/reusing/recycling measures in order to reduce the fraction of plastic packaging waste that goes to landfill or incineration without energy recovery	2019
Art. 9 (15.3.c): Take the necessary measures to close to the extent possible the existing illegal dump sites on land in the area of the application of this Regional Plan	2020
Art. 9 (15.3.d): Identify and, to the extent possible, restore and contain, the coastal landfills that are a source of marine litter	2027
Art. 9 (15.3.f): Identify and assess impacts of marine litter accumulations in upstream regions of rivers and their tributaries, and apply measures to prevent or reduce their leakage into the Mediterranean	2025
Art. 9 (15.4.h): Explore and implement, to the extent possible, ways and means to charge reasonable cost for the use of port reception facilities or when applicable, apply No-Special-Fee system	2017
Art. 9 (15.4.i): Implement targeted measures aiming at preventing and reducing marine litter impact in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)	2025
Art. 9 (15.4.j): Explore and implement to the extent possible “Gear marking to indicate ownership” concept and “reduced fishing catches through the use of environmental neutral upon degradation of nets, pots and traps concept	2017
Art. 9 (15.4.k): Apply cost-effective measures to prevent any marine littering from dredging activities	2020
Art. 10 (16.a): Explore and implement to the extent possible the identification in collaboration with relevant stakeholders’ accumulations / hotspots of marine litter and implementation of national programmes on their regular removal and sound disposal	2019
Art. 10 (16.b): Implement National Marine Litter Cleanup Campaigns on a regular basis and evaluate their effectiveness	2030
Art. 10 (16.c): Implement Marine Litter Cleanup Campaigns on a regular basis driven by beach; concessionaries/ managers/ local authorities, including outside the touristic season	2030
Art. 10 (16.d): Participate in International Coastal Cleanup Campaigns and Programmes	2019
Art. 10 (16.e): Apply as appropriate ‘Adopt-a-Beach’ or similar practices and enhance public participation role with regard to marine litter management	2019
Art. 10 (16.f): Apply Fishing for Litter in an environmentally sound manner, based on agreed guidelines and best practice, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations and in partnership with fishermen and ensure adequate collection, sorting, recycling and/or environmentally sound disposal of the fished litter	2019
Art. 10 (16.g): Charge reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable apply No-Special-Fee system, in consultation with competent international and regional organizations, when using port reception facilities for implementing the measures	2019
Art. 10 (17): Explore and implement to the extent possible the “Fishing for Litter” environmentally sound practices, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations, to facilitate cleanup of the floating litter and the seabed from marine litter caught incidentally and/or generated by fishing vessels in their regular activities including derelict fishing gears	2017
Art. 10 (18): Explore and implement targeted activities for the localization and retrieval, and where possible, reuse or recycling of derelict fishing gear including through new environmentally sustainable technologies	2025
Art. 11 (19 to 21): Assessment of marine litter in the Mediterranean	2029
Art. 12 (22.b): Establish the Regional Data Base on Marine Litter which should be compatible with other regional or overarching databases	2016

Art. 12 (22.c): Establish Expert Group on Regional Marine Litter Monitoring Programme	2014
Art. 12 (23) : Design National Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter	2017
Art. 12 (25): Prepare the Guidelines for the preparation of the National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes	2014
Art. 19 (35) : Prepare regional report on the implementation of the Regional Plan	2029
Other Measures[25]:	
Art. 7 (9): Consider updating periodically the LBS NAPs to integrate marine litter in accordance with the provisions of this Regional Plan and other means to perform their obligations	n/a
Art. 8 (11.a): Ensure institutional coordination, where necessary, among the relevant national policy bodies and relevant regional organizations and programmes, in order to promote integration	n/a
Art. 8 (11.b): Ensure close coordination and collaboration between national, regional and local authorities in the field of marine litter management	n/a
Art. 9 (15.1) Apply to the extent possible instruments needed to regulate and prevent marine litter pollution including plastic waste from land-based and sea-based sources, in particular the implementation of economic instruments, bans and design requirements, EPR, safe/formal markets for recycled plastics, fiscal and economic incentives, innovative business practices, best practices to create incentives)	n/a
Art. 9 (15.3.e): Apply enforcement measures to combat dumping, littering on the beach, illegal sewage disposal from land sources in the sea, the coastal zone and rivers	n/a
Art. 9 (15.3.g): Apply enforcement measures to prevent, reduce and sanction illegal dumping and illegal littering in accordance with national and regional legislation, in particular on coastal zones and rivers	n/a
Art. 9 (15.4.l): Take the necessary measures to ensure that cruise ships flying their flag or entering their ports implement the procedures for minimizing, collecting, storing, processing and disposing of garbage	n/a
Art. 9 (15.4.m): Take the necessary measures to promote best practices to prevent plastic waste and particularly single use plastic products in tourism and leisure activities including cruise shipping, including through regional cooperation	n/a
Art. 9 (15.4.n): Implement measures on prevention, response and remediation regarding litter from maritime accidents, including containers lost at sea	n/a
Art. 12 (24): Design National Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter to include: (a) harmonization and consistency with the integrated regional monitoring programme based on EcAp; (b) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs); and (c) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs)	n/a
Art. 14 (27): Prepare specific guidelines, taking into account where appropriate existing guidelines, to support and facilitate the implementation of measures provided for in articles 9 and 10 of the Regional Plan	n/a
Art. 16 (29): Enhance public awareness and education	n/a
Art. 17 (31): Encourage appropriate involvement of, and partnerships with, various stakeholders	n/a
Art. 18 (33): Cooperate directly or with the assistance of the Secretariat or the competent international and regional organizations to address transboundary marine litter cases	n/a

Regional Plan on Agriculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (Decision IG.26/6)	
Art. V (6a): Establish a regulatory framework with the objective to reduce and further prevent pollution caused or induced by nutrients discharged from agricultural activities	2028
Art. V (6b): Establish a regulatory framework with the objective to reduce and further prevent pollution caused or induced by irrigation water runoff and percolation	2028
Art. V (6c): Establish a regulatory framework for Integrated Pest Management as one of the tools that contribute to low-pesticide-input which keeps the use of pesticides only to levels that are economically and ecologically justified	2028
Art. V (6d): Establish a regulatory framework for Good management practices that contribute to reducing plastic waste generation from agricultural activities in the context of sustainable consumption and production and circular economy	2028
Art. V (7): Establish extension/advisory services, training programmes and awareness raising campaigns for farmers in order to promote implementation of the appropriate measures on the basis of the regulatory framework established as per Paragraph (6)	2030
Art. V (8): Enact support mechanisms to enable farmers to implement, as applicable, the appropriate measures for reducing inputs of pollutants and other wastes from agricultural activities on the basis of the regulatory framework established as per Paragraph (6)	2030

[25] Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally commit to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines

Art. V (9): Designate “vulnerable zones” as all known areas of agricultural land which drain into, and contribute to eutrophication of, coastal waters	2030
Art. V (10): Implement measures based on Good Agricultural Practices that contribute to the preservation of the health of the natural systems; further to application of smart strategies to enhance the water, energy and food Nexus; while considering the opportunities and synergies of all systems	2030

Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (Decision IG.26/7)	
Art. V (6): Establish a regulatory framework that sets the operational requirements to be met by aquaculture facilities as a precondition to operate	2027
Art. V (7a): Establish institutional structures and take measures to enforce, as appropriate, the adopted operational requirements addressing the pollution control aspects	2028
Art. V (7b): Establish institutional structures and take measures to provide the framework conditions to encourage aquaculture facilities to adapt their operations further to BAT in aquaculture operations	2028
Art. V (8a): Take measures to verify that aquaculture facilities have established operational processes in order to control and reduce the release of potentially detrimental substances to the marine environment	2030
Art. V (8b): Take measures to verify that aquaculture facilities have established operational processes in order to implement measures to minimize pollution originating from aquaculture activities in the water column and sediments	2030
Art. V (9): Adopt regulations for measures that promote the sustainability of aquaculture in terms of fostering responsible, economically viable, environmentally sustainable aquaculture	2027
Art. V (10): Implement measures promoting responsible, economically viable, environmentally sustainable aquaculture as per the regulated aspects	2030
Art. V (11): Regulate key aspects contributing to the generation of plastic waste from aquaculture activities in the context of sustainable production, as well as processing along the value chain and circular economy	2028

Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) (Decision IG.25/11)	
1. SPECIES AND HABITATS PLANS Update Mediterranean action plans for selected species and habitats listed under the SPA/BD Protocol.	2030
2.SPECIES RECOVERY Develop recovery plans and implement emergency actions for endangered and threatened species whose continued survival depends on such actions, including their habitats.	2030
3.MARITIME TRAFFIC Reduce the impact of maritime traffic (noise & collision) on sensitive marine species (Cetaceans, Turtles, others).	2030
4.NIS/IAS COMMITMENT Ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ballast Water and Sediments from Ships (BWM Convention), and adoption of the Regional strategy addressing ship’s ballast water management and invasive species (2022-2027).	2030
5. NIS/IAS CAPACITY Strengthen the capacity of the Mediterranean countries to deal with alien marine species.	2030
6. NIS/IAS CONTROL Take the necessary field actions to mitigate the impact from NIS/IAS.	2030
7. LITTER Prevent leakage and remove marine litter to mitigate its impact on the ecosystem.	2030
8. EIA/SEA Implement environmental assessments, considering cumulative impacts on the coastal zones and their carrying capacity.	2030
9. WIND ENERGY Advocate that wind farms, are regulated in MCPAs, and cannot be developed elsewhere before their effects on the marine environment, biodiversity and human activities have been sufficiently researched, the risks are understood and alternatives assessed.	2030
10. MINERALS In line with the precautionary principle, the exploitation of minerals should not be authorized until the effect on the marine environment, biodiversity and related human activities have been sufficiently researched and the risks are understood, and alternatives assessed.	2030
11. SPATIAL PLANNING Support countries for the development of systematic conservation planning taking into account ICZM, land use/ marine use planning and management aspects in the context of MSP.	2030

12. RESTORATION Support restoration of ecosystems providing key services, those degraded and expected to become increasingly critical in a changing climate, such as wetlands and shallow seashore habitats among others.	2030
13. CLIMATE CHANGE Increase climate change impacts monitoring and contributions to mitigation and adaptation, particularly to warming, acidification, and to disaster risk reduction, through nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches.	2030
14. GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS Promote actions, including scientific research, with the view of achieving GES for all biodiversity-related ecological objectives within the Ecosystem Approach EcAp/ IMAP.	2030
15. MCPAs and OECMs Assist countries in the implementation of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs.	2030
16. BIODIVERSITY PLATFORM Establish an open access Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform.	2027
17. INVERTEBRATES Survey distribution and abundance, and assess status and main anthropogenic pressures, over priority invertebrate species with focus on C. rubrum, P. nobilis, and vermetid platforms.	2030
18.VERTEBRATES Establish the distribution, status, and the main anthropogenic pressures of species listed under Annex II to the SPA/ BD Protocol.	2030
19. HABITATS In coastal and offshore waters, inventory and cartography key Mediterranean habitats, and assess their status and main anthropogenic pressures.	2030
20. NIS/IAS Database Develop the shared georeferenced database (MAMIAS), user-friendly platform, to continuously monitor the status and pathways of non-indigenous species and support early warning.	2030
21. OVERFISHING and IUU Implement science-based management plans to effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including phasing out harmful fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.	2030
22. BY-CATCH Develop a national mechanism and implement agreed and scientifically tested by-catch mitigation measures, to eliminate all intentional or accidental killing of threatened or endangered species and/or in bad conservation status.	2030
23. SMALL SCALE FISHERIES Promote the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small Scale Fisheries (VGSSF) and co-management practices in professional small-scale fisheries, advised by traditional ecological knowledge and the best available science.	2030
24. AQUACULTURE Support developing the Post-2020 GFCM Aquaculture and Fisheries strategy - transforming the aquaculture industry through science-based solutions and marine spatial planning (MSP) tools.	2030
25. TOURISM Develop a framework of specific indicators for assessing the impact of marine and coastal tourism on destinations and for promoting ecotourism.	2030
26. INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY Integrate biodiversity values into national and local development planning processes, into the strategies and planning processes of marine-related economic sectors, into national accounting as appropriate, reporting systems, and into the assessment of environmental impacts.	2030
27. STREAMLINE Post-2020 SAPBIO Streamline the Post- 2020 SAPBIO and Regional strategies and action plans, developed in the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol, into national strategies, action plans and legal frameworks.	2030
28. POLITICAL WILL AND COORDINATION Ensure political will and recognition at the highest levels of Government or State, to develop appropriate governance schemes, in particular cross-sectorial and multi-level institutional coordination.	2030
29. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION Facilitate stakeholder engagement to address conflict between users, build capacity to contribute to the SAPBIO enforcement, particularly in MPA planning and management, through proper participation of all stakeholders in a transparent decision-making process.	2030
30. TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP SCALING OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS Scale down international commitments into national plans and to local level, streamlining the approach, targets and actions of the Post-2020 into national strategies and into local planning processes, while facilitating the bottom-up feeding of local proposals into future planning processes at the national and Mediterranean levels.	2030

31. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT Enable the compliance of the provisions of the SPA/BD and the ICZM Protocols and related Action Plans at national level by strengthening capacities and cooperation between judiciary and administrative bodies.	2030
32. IMAP REFINEMENT Identification of the gaps that hinder the good environmental status evaluation, and in case needed, support countries to fill them out.	2030
33. IMAP IMPLEMENTATION Update national monitoring programmes in light of the new elements of IMAP and achieve regular reporting.	2030
34. Post- 2020 SAPBIO MONITORING Allow the Contracting Parties to periodically review and report, harmonized with IMAP and UNEP/MAP monitoring frameworks, on the status of implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO.	2030
35. SUPPORT TO RUN THE SAPBIO Provide sufficient human and financial resources to the MAP system in order to efficiently run the implementation, follow-up and assessment mechanisms for the Post-2020 SAPBIO.	2030
36. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE Post-2020 SAPBIO AT NATIONAL LEVEL Enhance the national capacities to implement the Post- 2020 SAPBIO, to manage MPAs and vulnerable marine and coastal habitats and species within and across national jurisdictions, with particular attention to less developed countries, and towards reducing the gender and the digital divide.	2030
37. NETWORKING Support existing regional, subregional and/or transboundary networks, or develop new ones as needed, to enhance capacities, knowledge, experience and opportunity sharing, inter alia, on topics as NIS/IAS, migratory species, MPA management, habitat restoration, reduced by-catch, harmonized monitoring, compliance with law and regulations, and other subjects relevant to the Post- 2020 SAPBIO.	2030
38. AWARENESS Increase awareness, understanding and appreciating of the values and threats to the marine environment, stimulating improved behaviour, and of the responses and good practices, by targeting decision-makers and the general public, through reinforced and renewed mechanisms, including mass communications.	2030
39. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION Promote the integration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems conservation concerns into school, higher education, professional training, and citizen science, so that best practices and innovative technologies to protect marine and coastal ecosystems are more accessible and replicable.	2030
40. EMPLOYMENT Adequately increase the employment, notably public employment in direct relation to marine biodiversity conservation (and eventually include redirecting existing one) as basic component for future blue economy wise development.	2030
41. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING Develop sustainable funding strategies with, as appropriate, innovative approaches to mobilize alternative financial sources, covering fiscal incomes that could be redistributed, and relevant actions to fund, including The MedFund and other types of national or local financing mechanisms.	2030
42. COOPERATION Increase cooperation both north/ south, south /south, and between governmental and non-governmental actors at different levels, to support the Post-2020 SAPBIO, particularly in the less developed countries.	2030

Appendix 4: Products and Interaction between EcAp Governance Bodies

CORMONs	Component/ Thematic Focal Points (FP)	EcAp Coordination Group (CG)	MAP Focal Points (FP) / COP
1.Monitoring guidelines/ protocols			
Products of a complex scientific and technical nature that may have financial implications for implementation of IMAP.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in the programme of Work (POW).	Coordinating Unit (CU) reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget.
2. IMAP indicator guidance factsheets			
Products of a complex scientific and technical nature that may have policy and financial implications.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Recommended by CORMONs for no objection procedure.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Based on current practice, endorsement by EcAp CG.	Approval of the respective provisions in the POW & budget, as appropriate.
3. Data dictionaries and data standards (DDs and DSs)			
Products of a technical nature.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Recommended by CORMONs for no objection for their submission to EcAp CG meeting and approval of the related provisions in the POW.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Based on current practice, endorsement by EcAp CG, for MAP FP.	Approval of the respective provisions in the POW & budget, as appropriate.
4. Assessment criteria			
Products of a complex scientific and technical nature that may have policy implications, including allocation of financial resources for implementation of IMAP.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and endorsement for submission to EcAp CG meeting.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and endorsement for submission to MAP FP.	Review and approval for submission to COP. COP Decision

5. Assessment methods & products, QSR structure, contents & conclusions			
Scientific products with recommendations for COP consideration.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. No objection from the scientific point of view; endorsement of recommendations. Recommendation for transmission to EcAp CG meeting.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Endorsement of key findings and recommendations for submission to MAP Focal Points.	General review of main findings and recommendations and approval for submission to COP. In depth review of the related draft Decision body for submission to the COP. COP Decision.
6. Thematic assessments			
Thematic assessments prepared and approved.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Overall discussion and feedback on assessment recommendations. Endorsement for publication.	CU report on the progress; review of recommendations as appropriate. Endorsement of key findings and recommendations for submission to MAP Focal Points as appropriate.	Review of potential activities included in the POW. Review and endorse as appropriate of the key findings and recommendations.
7. IMAP development and update			
Scientific and policy products.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and approval for transmission to EcAp CG meeting.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components Review and endorsement for submission to MAP FP	Responsible for approving all updates of IMAP implementation and approving the financial resources to address the needs as proposed by the respective CORMON and Component FPs. Review and approval for submission to COP, COP Decision

8. Implementation of National IMAPs			
National IMAPs are of a technical nature with the implications for financial and policy aspects. The respective CORMON should be responsible for providing the recommendations in relation to: (i) the effectiveness of implementation of the National IMAPs related to the relevant IMAP Cluster; (ii) the gaps identified in the process of the National IMAPs implementation; (iii) the needs to be addressed, including technical, human resources, governance and financial aspects; (iv) harmonization of National IMAPs implementation; and (v) mechanisms/sources/means that could provide solutions and be used to improve implementation of National IMAPs.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Report on the progress, POW provisions as appropriate.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget as appropriate.
9. Proficiency Testing			
Proficiency Testing (PT) is of a technical nature, based on the complex scientifically related procedures; however, with certain implications for policy decision-makers.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW Review of the outcome of Proficiency testing and delivery of recommendations to Focal Points; consideration of their outcome in the design of the POW as appropriate.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget as appropriate.
10. Capacity Building Activities			
Products of a technical character.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities by CORMONs for their inclusion in POW.	CU Report on the progress.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget.
11. Data management/QA/QC			
Products of a technical nature.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW as appropriate.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget as appropriate.

COR ESA	Component/ Thematic Focal Points	EcAp Coordination Group	MAP Focal Points / COP
Review of relevant assessments/studies			
COR ESA is responsible for reviewing analyses and assessments carried out for EcAp that are of relevance for social and economic considerations. In particular:	Report on the progress	Report on the progress	Report on the progress
Socio-economic assessments.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Endorsement of assessment by the EcAp CG. Possible recommendations to MAP FP meeting.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget. Approval of assessment.
Socio-economic chapter of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (QSR).	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. No objection from the scientific point of view.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and Endorsement of the chapter.	Overall endorsement of the chapter as part of the relevant 2023 MED QSR endorsement COP Decision.
Analyses of the socio-economic aspects of national programmes of measures.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Endorsement of analyses, possible recommendations to MAP FP.	Report on the progress. Submission of COR ESA recommendations by the EcAp CG to MAP Focal Points/COP as relevant.
Provide guidelines to support Contracting Parties to undertake socio-economic analyses at the national level.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and Endorsement and recommend submission to EcAp CG.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and endorsement.	Report on the progress.
Methodological tools with regard to socio-economic assessments	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and Endorsement and recommend submission to EcAp CG	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and endorsement.	Report on the progress

Appendix 5: Terms of reference (TORs) for Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs), Economic and social analysis (COR ESA) and Online Working Groups (OWGs)

1. Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs)

1.1 Composition

1. The Correspondence Groups on monitoring (CORMONs) are established for each thematic cluster – Biodiversity and Fisheries; Pollution and Marine Litter; and Coast and Hydrography.

2. CORMONs are composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties possessing the necessary expertise and experience in line with the mandates of respective CORMON for IMAP implementation. They can be designated by the MAP Focal Points/EcAp CG members or by the thematic/MAP Components' Focal Points, preferably in consultation with each other.

1.2 Operation

3. The CORMONs' work is supported by the respective MAP Component: MED POL for Pollution and Marine Litter; PAP/RAC for Coast and Hydrography; and SPA/RAC for Biodiversity and Fisheries. Technical and scientifically related tasks may be supported by external experts, during preparation of the documents for consideration of respective CORMONs. The overall coordination of the work of CORMONs remains with the Coordinating Unit and is carried out in accordance with MAP Programme of Work (POW) priorities and implementation of the EcAp Roadmap and Policy.

4. CORMONs may meet physically or by teleconference, depending on the agenda, the volume of work and documents to be considered. Provisions for CORMON meetings numbers, main deliverables and modality are made in the MAP POW.

1.3 CORMON Mandate

5. CORMONs have the primary role to guide and deliver the implementation of technical and scientific aspects of IMAP and delivery of QSR with support from the Secretariat and MAP Components and foster regional and sub-regional collaboration and exchange of best practices and know-how with regards to monitoring and assessment of marine and coastal environment.

6. The operation of the CORMONs should recognize that the implementation of the ecosystem approach is comprehensive in terms of the multidisciplinary and scientific context of the documents that need to be discussed, and therefore iterative in terms of coordination of the results of work within the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system and at Contracting Party level.

7. Generally, CORMONs are assigned with the preparation and negotiation of the following main types of IMAP products:

- Monitoring guidelines and protocols on, sampling; sample processing analysis/determination; quality assurance (QA); and reporting
- IMAP indicator guidance factsheets
- Areas/scales of assessment, assessment criteria, and guidance for their application
- Assessment methodologies, assessment products and QSR (structure/contents, conclusions)
- Data standards (DS) and data dictionaries (DD)
- Data management QA and QC
- Updates of IMAP & progress reporting on IMAP implementation
- Implementation of national IMAPs
- Proficiency testing
- Capacity building activities
- IMAP related Project outcomes

8. CORMON IMAP products are of a technical and scientific nature, they may impose

policy and financial impacts on IMAP implementation. A detailed elaboration of the different levels of responsibilities for consideration and approval of different types of IMAP products is provided in Annex I.

9. Informal Online Working Groups (OWG) may be established by CORMONs in order to provide specific scientific inputs: OWGs are composed of a restricted number of experts and scientists nominated by the Contracting Parties. In their delivery OWGs may be supported by experts mobilized by the Secretariat and MAP Components in accordance with provisions of the approved MAP POW and budget or related projects as appropriate. The tasks and outcome of the work of OWG are defined by the CORMONs. OWGs report to CORMONs. To this aim the chair of the OWG in consultation with the Secretariat/MAP Components presents the outcome of the OWG to CORMON.

10. The informal OWG do not replace the formal Correspondence Groups.

11. Every effort should be made to maintain geographical balance in the composition of the OWG and mobilize high level expertise.

12. No language interpretation is provided by the Secretariat at the OWG, nor are official meeting documents formally disseminated. Members of the OWG are strongly encouraged to provide scientific and technical inputs and support to the Secretariat/MAP Component work with regards to IMAP implementation and delivery of its products.

2. Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA)

2.1 Composition

13. The Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA) is composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties and invited experts and coordinated by Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP Coordinating Unit and Plan Bleu/RAC. The Group also includes representatives of the other UNEP/MAP Components as well as international experts selected by the Contracting Parties through Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points and/or by the Secretariat for their experience in similar initiatives or for their scientific expertise.

2.2 Operation

14. The work of COR ESA is supported by Plan Bleu RAC under the overall coordination of the Coordinating Unit.

2.3 Mandate

15. The COR ESA is responsible for the following:

- Preparing and guiding the socio-economic assessments
- Preparing the socio-economic chapter of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (QSR)
- Undertaking analyses of the socio-economic aspects of national programmes of measures
- Supporting Contracting Parties to undertake socio-economic analyses at the national level
- Developing methodological tools with regard to socio-economic assessments

3. Effective interaction among different MAP bodies

16. The level of interaction between the bodies of the EcAp governance structure and MAP decision making bodies i.e., MAP Components/Thematic Focal Points, MAP Focal Points and COP depends on the nature of the products as detailed in Annex 1, in line with their respective mandates. Annex also provides information on the type of documents to be reviewed by each body.

Annex II

Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) (Third Cycle).

1. Introduction

1. Monitoring and assessment, based on scientific knowledge, of the sea and coast is the indispensable basis for the management of human activities, in view of promoting sustainable use of the seas and coasts and conserving marine ecosystems and their sustainable development. The Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) adopted in 2016 (Decision IG.22/7 – COP19) describes the strategy, themes, and products that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are aiming to deliver, through collaborative efforts, over the first (2008 – 2015) and second cycle (2016 – 2024) of the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Process, and the third cycle (2026 – 2035) which is underway, in order to assess the status of the Mediterranean sea and coast, as a basis for further and/or strengthened measures.

Background:

2. IMAP builds on the monitoring and assessment related provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, previous Decisions of the Contracting Parties related to monitoring and assessment, and a number of Decisions related to the preparation of the 2017 and 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Reports and the implementation of EcAp Roadmap.

3. In addition, the development of IMAP has duly taken into account the implementation of the Contracting Parties' monitoring and assessment programmes, as well as practices of other Regional Sea Conventions and other Regional bodies.

Timeline:

4. Significant progress was made in achieving IMAP's objectives and targets during its second phase (2016-2021). This implies in practice that the existing national monitoring and assessment programmes were reviewed and revised as appropriate so that national implementation of IMAP and regional and sub-regional assessments can be fulfilled in an effective manner, including updated GES definitions and targets, further refinement and establishment of assessment criteria, development and implementation of the GES and alternative environmental assessment alongside the assessment scales, harmonization and standardization of monitoring practices, advancement of data management and data Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC).

5. Furthermore, the 2017 and 2023[26] Mediterranean Quality Status Reports (MED QSR) as well as the 2019 State of Environment and Development Report (SoED) were built based on the structure, objectives and data reported under IMAP. The validity of the IMAP should be reviewed once at the end of every EcAp cycle, and in addition it should be updated and revised as necessary on a mid-term basis, based on lessons learnt of the implementation of the IMAP and on new scientific and policy developments.

2. IMAP Common Principles and Structure

2.1 Overarching Principles[27] and the Overall IMAP Structure

6. The key elements addressed through IMAP, in line with Decision IG.22/7 of COP19, are the Common Indicators, monitoring and assessment methodologies for all IMAP clusters (i.e., Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species, Pollution and Marine Litter, Coast and Hydrography), as well as assessment criteria. On the other hand, the objectives, indicators, GES definitions and targets are also part of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Roadmap implementation.

[26] https://medqsr2023.info-rac.org/
[27] Clarification about the IMAP principles are provided in the Integrated Monitoring Guidance Document and respective Indicators' Guidance Factsheets.

7. The overarching principles guiding the development, implementation and revision of the IMAP include**:** (i) adequacy; (ii) coordination and coherence; (iii) data architecture and interoperability based on common parameters; (iv) concept of adaptive monitoring; (v) risk-based approach to monitoring and assessment; and (v) the precautionary principle in addition to the overall aim of integration. In line with the above overarching principles, data and information is gathered through integrated monitoring activities on the national level and shared in a manner that creates a compatible, shared regional pool of data, usable by each Contracting Party.

8. The IMAP information system (Info System) ensures the establishment of a regional data repository which will allow the production of common indicator assessment reports in an integrated and harmonized manner, following the monitoring procedures and standards and data provided, thus ensuring comparability across the Mediterranean region.

9. In line with the above, integration is achieved through IMAP implementation at regional and national levels, through the standardized and harmonized monitoring systems, following common principles undertaken in a coordinated manner, with the overall aim to assess the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the marine and coastal environment.

2.2 IMAP Monitoring

10. The IMAP monitoring requirements focus on, based on agreed Common Indicators and related parameters, the prevailing anthropogenic pressures and their impacts, and the progress towards the GES (Ecological Objectives and Targets). The monitoring is carried out in such a way that an assessment with adequate confidence and precision is achieved.

11. IMAP sets out the basis on how the Contracting Parties should design and carry out their national IMAP-based integrated monitoring programmes and work together in the framework of the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention to produce quality-assured data of optimal quality across all common indicator to ensure reliable and up-to-date regional assessments on the status of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.

12. Since 2016-2017, the Contracting Parties updated their existing monitoring programmes in order to enhance monitoring and assessment in line with the Indicator Guidance Factsheets developed under IMAP. It has to be noted that the Mediterranean has gone through a number of important advancement pertinent to IMAP implementation:

- Development of IMAP-based national monitoring programmes;
- Data reporting and submission through the IMAP Info System based on their existing national monitoring programmes;
- Establishment of region and four sub-regions wide assessment criteria;
- Setting a basis for the aggregation and integration of assessments across specific IMAP Common Indicators and Ecological Objectives, towards an integrated Good Environmental Status (GES);
- Establishment of the initial the assessment scales within the IMAP nested framework based on monitoring scales defined in national IMAP Pollution monitoring programme;
- Development and implementation of GES and alternative environmental assessment methodologies, alongside the assessment scales, assessment criteria, and the DPSIR approach;
- Development and implementation of standardized and harmonized monitoring procedures and standards;
- The 2017 and 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Reports (MED QSRs).

13. During national implementation, the Contracting Parties have been encouraged to coordinate within and between each other in order to use resources in an efficient way.

Shared monitoring stations and activities, information, and data could be steps towards this direction.

14. The IMAP assessment products, produced by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat, such as the MED QSRs and the 2019 State of Environment and Development Report in the Mediterranean (SoED), should be mainly based on the common indicators and monitoring data provided and verified by the Contracting Parties, and/or complemented by satellite-derived data and reliable scientific literature as available for individual CP/groups or CPs.

15. In areas of scientific and/or data gaps, the assessment products can also build on relevant scientific projects, pilot outcomes, and comparable data of other regional organizations and in case these are not available, on scientific literature. In addition, they will analyze trends, drivers and will build on available socio-economic data. Without existing data or scientific work, expert consultation will be used to validate the final assessment.

16. The common indicator Guidance Factsheets provide information on the status of the environment and information needed to evaluate the severity of environmental problems and distance from GES targets of the ecological objectives.

17. The Indicator Guidance Factsheets are linked to specific indicators and together they set methodologies and statistical elaborations to assess whether the GES targets are met or not. Following the EO level assessment, the integrated assessment should take place on the state of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.

18. The recent 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report was based on and structured along the respective Ecological Objectives and Common Indicators, by building on the guidance set in the established and approved common indicator Guidance Factsheets.

19. During the development of the above, an integrated approach for assessing GES was used, considering the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance Factsheets, describing state-based common indicators and relating them to the pressure-based indicators.

20. Some studies have been undertaken by UNEP/MAP to provide with practical solutions to structure, strengthen and sustain a "science-policy-interface" to support IMAP implementation, both for monitoring and assessment. These solutions touch upon evidence (science), outreach (policy) & engagement (human and financial means) and are valid for the 3 clusters of IMAP (Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous-Species, Pollution – Marine Litter, Coast and Hydrography).

21. As part of the EcAp governance structure, COR ESA meetings allow to work on the socio-economic characteristics of the Mediterranean Sea with information on demography, economy & employment and qualitative description of the links between human activities and the coastal and marine environment. To deeply assess the level of environmental and social sustainability of human activities that impact the coastal and marine environment, UNEP/MAP is measuring the sustainable blue economy based on a sustainability framework and associated core set of indicators.

2.3 UNEP/MAP Strategy Towards an Integrated Data and Information System

22. Assessments arising from monitoring data are critically dependent upon practical mechanisms for handling data from different activities that ensure that documents, data, and products are managed consistently and are easily available to users. This supports integrated assessments, for example from integrated biological and chemical programmes, or linking the observed changes in spatial distribution and temporal trends in substances or their effects to inputs into the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention maritime area.

23. Data storage and handling processes are therefore central, and it is important that the role of the various components in this is clear and continuously developed and strengthened.

24. IMAP thus requires an updated and integrated data and information system for UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention with clear set roles for data handling and assessment for the various components and with a user-friendly reporting platform for Contracting Parties (IMAP Info System), based on the following strategic points:

- The UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention data and information are collected according to the official MAP data policy approved at COP22 (Decision IG.25/10);
- The UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention data and information system aims to support a reliable, quantitative assessment of the GES of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast;
- The UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention data and information facilitate access and knowledge of the general public to environmental information.

25. Core elements of the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention integrated data and information system include:

- Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) monitoring reporting formats based on IMAP Common Indicator factsheets and tools for data exchange;
- Relevant quality control for both data reporting by national IMAP users and data validation procedures within the IMAP Info System, as well as ensure assessment products are available in an integrated manner, on a common platform.

26. Data and information available using harmonized standards and practices, following the UNEP access-to-information policy (UNEP/EA. 1/INF/23).

27. IMAP Info System, developed during the second IMAP cycle, is fully operational and allows Contracting Parties to report data for 18 IMAP Common Indicators (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) through 30 Information Standards.

28. IMAP Info System is accessible to the general public (http://imapinfosystem.info-rac.org/app/#/) and login is required only to access reserved sections. An IMAP Info System Technical Guide is available to help users in browsing the web site.

29. The structure of IMAP Info System is user-friendly and allows easy navigation with three main section:

- Reporting (Standards, Conformity check, Upload);
- Explore (Published data, Geographical data, Dashboard, Utility tools);
- Info (Documents, Guidelines and tutorials, Info and contact).

2.4 Cooperation with Relevant Regional Bodies in the Context of IMAP Implementation

30. The current IMAP covers with agreed common indicators the Ecological Objectives (EOs) related to Biodiversity (EO1), Non-Indigenous Species (EO2), Harvest of Commercially Exploited Fish and Shellfish (EO3), Marine Food Webs (EO4), Eutrophication (EO5), Sea-Floor Integrity (EO6), Hydrographic alterations (EO7), Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes (EO8), Contaminants (EO9), Marine Litter (EO10), and Energy including Underwater Noise (EO11).

31. In addition, common indicators are included under EO11 (Energy including Underwater Noise), further to new scientific knowledge availability and projects' results supporting monitoring activities.

32. While some of the elements of fisheries (EO3) and marine food webs (EO4) are partly covered by the monitoring and assessment of EO1 and EO2 the Contracting Parties have agreed on the GFCM developed list of common indicators. In this regard, the monitoring and assessment specifics of EO3 are being developed by the GFCM, in close cooperation with UNEP/MAP.

33. In light of the above, UNEP/MAP has strengthened its cooperation with the relevant regional bodies, especially in relation to:

- EO1: with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) for commercial species of fish and shellfish, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS), Noting that the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative II will provide important inputs, including: monitoring cetaceans and other marine species by tracking the distribution, abundance, and trends of cetaceans, sea turtles, seabirds, elasmobranchs, and pelagic fish; assessing human pressures such as pollution, underwater noise, fisheries interactions, ship strikes, and other anthropogenic threats; as well as enabling the early detection of environmental changes, including population declines, shifts in species distribution, and emerging threats related to climate change.
- EO3: with the GFCM, noting that EO3 Common Indicators are based on GFCM methodologies and assessed through its biennial SoMFi reports, which inform IMAP integrated assessments.
- EO5: with EMODnet, COPERNICUS and HELCOM to utilize alternative data sources, aiming to compensate for gaps in the *in-situ* data reporting within the IMAP Info System, and to support the development of assessment methodologies;
- EO9: with EMODNET, EEA, and MSFD Technical Bodies to enhance the use of alternative data sources to compensate for gaps in the *in-situ* data reporting within the IMAP Info System, and to support the development of robust assessment methodologies;
- EO10: with ACCOBAMS, in particular for floating marine litter (i.e., links with ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI[28]);
- EO11: with ACCOBAMS, noting that new scientific knowledge and project results supporting monitoring activities have led to the establishment of threshold values aimed at maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES) for both short-term and long-term exposure to impulsive noise events, and development of Initial GES Assessment Methodologies for impulsive and continuous noise. These advancements laid the foundation for elevating noise candidate indicators to full common indicators.

34. In addition, cooperation with other regional and international bodies will be key for

[28] https://accobams.org/main-activites/accobams-survey-initiative-2/accobams-survey-initiative/

the successful implementation of IMAP, to ensure that no double obligation is created for those Contracting Parties, which are Parties to various Regional Seas Conventions and/or members of the European Union and undertake monitoring activities under other specific frames.

35. Cooperation with other regional and international bodies can also strengthen the cost- efficiency and scientific adequacy of IMAP. Exchange of best practices and information is encouraged during the IMAP implementation, both in between Contracting Parties participating in various monitoring programmes and in between UNEP/MAP and other relevant regional, international bodies.

3.Key Elements of IMAP

3.1 Common Indicators

36. The common indicators are the backbone of IMAP.

37. In the context of the Barcelona Convention, a common indicator is an indicator that summarizes data into a simple, standardized, and communicable figure and is ideally applicable in the whole Mediterranean basin, or at least on the level of sub-regions, and is monitored by all Contracting Parties. A common indicator is able to give an indication of the degree of threat or change in the marine ecosystem and can deliver valuable information to decision makers.

38. Candidate indicators are indicators which still have many outstanding issues regarding their monitoring and assessment and therefore are recommended to be monitored in the initial phase of IMAP on a pilot and voluntary basis.

39. The Common and candidate indicators currently agreed, which are at the core of IMAP, include:

1) Habitat distributional range (EO1) to also consider habitat extent as a relevant attribute;
2) Condition of the habitat's typical species and communities (EO1 related to benthic and pelagic habitats);
3) Species distributional range (EO1 related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles);
4) Population abundance of selected species (EO1, related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles);
5) Population demographic characteristics (EO1, e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/mortality rates related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles);
6) Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence, and spatial distribution of non-indigenous species, particularly invasive, non-indigenous species, notably in risk areas (EO2, in relation to the main vectors and pathways of spreading of such species);
7) Spawning stock Biomass (EO3);
8) Total landings (EO3);
9) Fishing Mortality (EO3);
10) Fishing effort (EO3);
11) Catch per unit of effort (CPUE) or Landing per unit of effort (LPUE) as a proxy (EO3);
12) Bycatch of vulnerable and non-target species (EO1 and EO3)
13) Concentration of key nutrients in water column (EO5);
14) Chlorophyll-a concentration in water column (EO5);

15) Location and extent of the habitats potentially impacted by hydrographic

alterations (EO7)[29];
16) Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human[30]-made structures (EO8);
17) Concentration of key harmful contaminants measured in the relevant matrix (EO9, related to biota, sediment, seawater);
18) Level of pollution effects of key contaminants where a cause-and-effect relationship has been established (EO9);
19) Occurrence, origin (where possible), and extent of acute pollution events (e.g. slicks from oil, oil products and hazardous substances) and their impact on biota affected by this pollution (EO9);
20) Actual levels of contaminants that have been detected and number of contaminants which have exceeded maximum regulatory levels in commonly consumed seafood (EO9);
21) Percentage of intestinal enterococci concentration measurements within established standards (EO9);
22) Trends in the amount of litter washed ashore and/or deposited on coastlines (including analysis of its composition, spatial distribution and, where possible, source.) (EO10);
23) Trends in the amount of litter in the water column including microplastics and on the seafloor (EO10);
24) Trends in the amount of litter ingested by marine organisms and in the number of individuals entangled in marine litter (EO10);
25) Land cover change (EO8)[31];
26) Proportion of days and geographical distribution where loud, low, and mid-frequency impulsive sounds exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animals (EO11,);
27) Levels of continuous low frequency sounds with the use of models as appropriate (EO11,);
28) Trends in the amount of litter coming from riverine sources (EO10);
29) Biomass or abundance of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups (EO4, Candidate Indicator);
30) Average of Mean Trophic Level of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups from biomass and/or catches (EO4, Candidate Indicator);
31) Biodiversity indices (EO4, Candidate Indicator);
32) Pelagic/Demersal ratio (EO4, Candidate Indicator);
33) NIS/Demersal ratio (EO4, Candidate Indicator);
34) Zooplankton/ phytoplankton ratio (EO4, Candidate Indicator)[32];
35) Size distribution of trophic groups (EO4, Candidate Indicator);
36) Production of Megafauna (*Megafauna variables from EO1) (EO4, Candidate Indicator);
37) Extent of physical loss of natural habitat (EO6);
38) Extent of adverse effects on benthic habitat (EO6).

40. During the implementation of IMAP since 2016, the CORMONs have played an instrumental role in further developing the respective common and candidate indicators

[29] Several CORMON meetings agreed to simplify the original Guidance Factsheet in order to allow for monitoring of this indicator due to its complexity, requirements for historic data, significant human and financial resources required and alike. Some simplification has been already proposed however further steps are needed and agreed (for the last time at CORMON meeting in Marseille 28-29 March 2023). Title to be changed accordingly.
[30] Change of the term “man-made” to “human-made” in the title of the indicator due to gender equality reasons, further to the proposal that has been requested by the EU and several CPs.
[31] The CORMON Coast and Hydrography (Marseille, 28-29 March 2023) agreed to put this indicator to the list of Common indicators. The title should be “Land cover change”. Testing has been done with several projects (SIDA, EcAp MED II and III, GEF MedProgramme) and results for the Adriatic sub-region were included in the 2023 MED QSR, training sessions have been completed or are in progress for all GEF MedProgramme countries. The COP23 Decision on 2023 QSR proposes some technical elements for the Guiding Factsheet that have been inserted to the method.
[32] Data derived from EO1 (Pelagic Habitats Indicators)

towards common indicators as well as to further refine their specifics**,** including a number of technical elements, for the agreed common indicators, in particular on the assessment scales, in light of the ongoing implementation experience of IMAP.

Note on Geographic Reporting Scales:

41. A scale of reporting units' has been defined in the framework of IMAP taking into account both ecological considerations and management purposes, following a nested approach.

42. The nested approach aims to accommodate the needs of the above by taking into account 4 main assessment scales:

a) Whole region (i.e. Mediterranean Sea and Coastal Regions as defined by the Convention and its Protocols);
b) Mediterranean sub-regions the Western Mediterranean Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Central Mediterranean, and the Aegean and Levantine Seas in the Eastern Mediterranean part, as presented in the Initial Assessment of the Mediterranean Sea (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/Inf.8), 2017 and 2023 MED QSRs;
c) Coastal waters and offshore marine waters; and
d) Subdivisions of coastal waters provided by Contracting Parties.

43. The work was undertaken by further developing the assessment scales of the nested approach.

3.2 Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species related Common Indicators

Biodiversity (EO1):

44. Biological diversity is the "variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems".

45. The common indicators to be monitored and assessed in relation to biodiversity are as following:

Common Indicator 1:	Habitat distributional range (EO1) to also consider habitat extent as a relevant attribute;
Common Indicator 2:	Condition of the habitat's typical species and communities (EO1);
Common Indicator 3:	Species distributional range (EO1 related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles);
Common Indicator 4:	Population abundance of selected species (EO1, related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles);
Common indicator 5:	Population demographic characteristics (EO1, e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/mortality rates related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles).

46. Climate change represents a major long-term threat to Mediterranean biodiversity. To address this, future work should clarify the Guidance Factsheets and GES definitions, and integrate climate change impacts into indicators and methodologies, including the determination of baselines and thresholds. This may include not only the determination of

baselines and thresholds but also consideration of shifting baselines and the adoption of a dynamic approach to biological community assessments.

47. As it is not possible or even necessary to monitor all attributes and components of biological diversity throughout the region, IMAP monitoring is focusing, in line with the risk-based approach, on the most representative sites and species, which can showcase the relationship between environmental pressures and their main impacts on the marine environment. In light of the above, an updated reference list of species and habitats with a good representativity of Mediterranean marine biodiversity to be monitored is presented in Annex I, noting that those Contracting Parties who have the necessary means and are willing to do so can go beyond the monitoring requirements of this reference list.

48. The Contracting Parties while updating their national monitoring programmes, for the new six-year cycle, need to take into consideration the results of the MED QSR and to include at least the monitoring of the updated reference list species and habitats with, at least, two monitoring areas, one in a low-pressure area (e.g. marine protected area/ Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI) and one in a high-pressure area from human activity).

49. To achieve a comprehensive assessment of the state of the Mediterranean Sea, it is essential to expand the monitoring protocols for EO1 CI1 and CI2, to include pelagic habitats. Currently, The Contracting Parties focus on Benthic habitats and specific types such as well illuminated infralittoral rock, algal-dominated infralittoral rock, *Posidonia oceanica* meadows, coralligenous, and circalittoral rhodolith beds provides valuable information about the benthic zone. However, to gain a full understanding of the ecosystem, it is crucial to also consider both benthic and pelagic zones, taking into account the anthropogenic pressures.

50. Two common indicators have been proposed for assessing the pelagic habitat of the Mediterranean Sea under the IMAP framework: CI1 and CI2. Contracting Parties are encouraged to use the agreed common reference list of pelagic habitat types, as well as operational objectives and indicators based on phytoplankton and zooplankton, to ensure coherent and coordinated monitoring across the region. The typology of pelagic habitats represents a general framework that can be adopted and modified by the Contracting Parties to integrate local ecosystems, features and dynamics.

51. Pelagic habitats are closely linked to several Ecological Objectives of the EcAp, particularly EO4 (Marine Food Webs) and EO5 (Eutrophication). Strengthening the connections between these objectives requires improved data collection and sharing, as well as enhanced data harmonization and interoperability.

52. For EO1 CI1 and CI2, given the importance and vulnerability of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in the context of climate change, the Contracting Parties shall make every effort to monitor the selected parameters of *Posidonia* meadow to ensure better protection of this essential habitat, which fulfills a functional role for many species, limits coastal erosion, and contributes to climate change mitigation. Additionally, parameters that could provide insights into their resilience to climate change impacts should also be studied and monitored.

53. The Mediterranean Sea harbours 11 cetaceans' species, which are subject to various human pressures, which reflect on their conservation status. The few species of cetaceans regularly present in the Mediterranean Sea should all be considered when updating the national monitoring programmes for the new six-year cycle. The Contracting Parties shall make every effort to identify a minimum of two species to be included in their national monitoring programme, based on the specificity of their marine environment and biodiversity, and taking into account that these species should belong to, at least, two different functional groups, where possible (Baleen whales / Deep-diving cetacean / other toothed species). As far as possible, the choice of monitored species should be coordinated at sub regional scale to ensure coherence with cetacean population distribution in the Mediterranean Sea, as proposed in the Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment

Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to marine mammals.

54. Seabirds *sensu lato* form a crucial component of the region's marine biodiversity and ecosystem, with many of the relevant taxa being endemic or near-endemic to the Mediterranean. A list of priority species, which includes 11 representative species from a range of functional groups that can showcase the relationship between environmental pressures and their main impacts on the marine environment, was selected from Annex II of the Barcelona Convention. This list will be utilized for the assessment of the three relevant IMAP Common Indicators (CIs) related to seabirds according to the Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds, and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4, and 5 related to seabirds. As far as possible, the Contracting Parties should implement coordinated monitoring efforts within subdivisions or subregions to improve the representativeness of monitoring samples.

55. Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds, and Baseline Values are available to the Contracting Parties for Common Indicators 1,2, related to three habitat types (Posidonia, coralligenous, and rhodoliths), as well as for Indicators 3,4 and 5 for related to seabirds, Marine Mammals, Marine Turtles (Annex I to the present document). The Contracting Parties are encouraged to use those elements while developing national assessments

56. The methodologies, quality control and quality assurance measures are available for Contracting Parties and have been considered in their IMAP-based national monitoring programmes, in line with the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance as well as the numerous technical guidelines prepared by SPA/RAC.

57. Regarding the assessment of biodiversity, it has to be noted that the quantitative definition of GES is difficult, considering the variety of assessment elements and the effects of climate change. The conceptual approach for a quantitative GES setting can be framed in a way that the resilience of the ecosystem is suited to accommodate the quantified biodiversity, or, in other words, it will be accounted in the determination of the GES boundaries as the "acceptable deviation from a reference state which reflects conditions largely free from anthropogenic pressures.

58. The scale of monitoring is of specific importance for biodiversity, due to the nature of the biodiversity related common indicators.

59. Furthermore, Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) are available for the OE1 common Indicators (i.e., coralligenous, Rhodolith and *Posidonia oceanica* meadow's habitat, Marine Mammals, Marine Turtles and Marine Birds).

Non-Indigenous Species (EO2):

60. Non-indigenous species (NIS; synonyms: alien, exotic, non-native, allochthonous) are species, subspecies, or lower taxa introduced outside of their natural range (past or present) and outside of their natural dispersal potential.

61. Invasive alien species (IAS) are a subset of established NIS which have spread, are spreading, or have demonstrated their potential to spread elsewhere, and which have an effect on biological diversity and ecosystem functioning (by competing with and on some occasions replacing native species), socio-economic values, and/or human health in invaded regions.

62. The common indicator in relation to NIS is:

Common Indicator 6:	Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence, and spatial distribution of non- indigenous species, particularly invasive, non-indigenous species, notably in risk areas (EO2, in relation to the main vectors and pathways of spreading of such species in the water column and seabed, as appropriate);

63. Non-indigenous species monitoring in the Mediterranean is a trend monitoring, where it is key to establish reliable, standardized monitoring and long-term data-sets as a first step of monitoring.

64. In addition, monitoring of non-indigenous species (NIS), following the risk-based approach, needs to be focused on the invasive alien species (IAS) in IAS introduction "hot spots" (e.g. ports and their surrounding areas, docks, marinas, aquaculture installations, heated power plant effluents sites, offshore structures). In addition, areas of special interest such as marine protected areas or lagoons may be selected on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate, depending on the proximity to alien species introduction hot spots.

65. With the application of the risk-based approach as stated above, it is possible to obtain an overview of the non-indigenous species present at a large spatial scope while only monitoring a relatively small number of locations.

66. Based on existing regional databases, such as the Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species database, (MAMIAS), the "Andromeda" invasive species database for the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN), as well as subregional and regional Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) inventories, each Contracting Party should update the list of IAS to be monitored in its national monitoring programme at the start of each new phase of IMAP and start collecting data regarding these species.

67. Key next steps for GES assessment of NIS involve elaborating on CI6 aspects related to impacts by developing criteria and targets for vulnerable species and habitats. This should be coordinated with EO1 CI1 and CI2 and EO6 on sea-floor integrity. It is also crucial to assess the impact of Invasive Alien Species on habitat condition within EO1-CI2 and to include NIS impacts on seabed habitats in EO6, which is currently missing from IMAP.

68. The methodologies and quality control and quality assurance measures are available for Contracting Parties and have been considered in their IMAP-based national monitoring programmes, in line with the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance as well as the numerous technical guidelines prepared by SPA/RAC.

69. As the most effective monitoring method a Rapid Assessment Survey (RAS) will be carried out, at least yearly, by the Contracting Parties in hot-spot areas (e.g. ports and their surrounding areas, docks, marinas, aquaculture installations, heated power plant effluents sites, offshore structures). Contracting Parties with the necessary resources are encouraged to use Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys.

70. In addition, UNEP/MAP will develop during the next phase of IMAP citizen survey guidance for NIS, to enable Contracting Parties to use this additional cost-efficient methodology, which also strengthens public awareness and participation.

71. Guidance on monitoring non-indigenous species, monitoring and assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds, and Baseline Values are available and wide agreed for the Mediterranean with regards to Common Indicators 6. The Contracting Parties are encouraged to use those elements while developing national assessments, following the assessment criteria set out in the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance.

Harvest of Commercially Exploited Fish and Shellfish (EO 3):

72. The GES for EO3 is "Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock".

73. The current IMAP framework for EO3 is based on the set of Common Indicators and operational objectives developed by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and adopted under the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process. No

revisions to the operational objectives, Common Indicators, GES definitions, or proposed targets are introduced in this document. The elements presented here remain aligned with the guidance factsheets agreed upon at the 6th Meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group and continue to serve as the technical basis for implementation under IMAP.

74. The Common Indicators under EO3 are the following:

Common Indicator 7: Spawning stock Biomass ;

Common Indicator 8: Total landings ;

Common Indicator 9: Fishing Mortality ;

Common Indicator 10: Fishing effort;

Common Indicator 11: Catch per unit of effort (CPUE) or Landing per unit of effort (LPUE) as a proxy ;

Common Indicator 12: Bycatch of vulnerable and non-target species (also relevant to EO1).

75. The GES definitions and assessment criteria for CI7, CI8, and CI9 follow GFCM's stock units, geographical sub-areas, and regional stock assessment methodology as outlined in the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). These indicators are monitored according to GFCM sub-regional and species-specific guidance and remain valid unless formally revised by GFCM. They are assessed through the GFCM regional stock assessment process, with overall status and trends reported biennially in the State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SoMFi) report.

76. The status of EO3 in the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR), is provided by GFCM based on the most recently published SoMFi.

77. CI10, CI11, and CI12 are pending further methodological updates to incorporate recent advances. Their use in regular monitoring may be considered when standardized methodologies are finalized by GFCM.

Marine Food Webs (EO4):

78. Alterations to components of marine food webs caused by resource extraction or human-induced environmental changes do not have long-term adverse effects on food web dynamics and related viability.

79. The following are the Candidate Common Indicators related to Marine Food Webs:

Candidate Common Indicator 29: Biomass or abundance of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups

Candidate Common Indicator 30: Average of Mean Trophic Level of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups from biomass and/or catches

Candidate Common Indicator 31:Biodiversity indices

Candidate Common Indicator 32:Pelagic/Demersal ratio

Candidate Common Indicator 33:NIS/Demersal ratio

Candidate Common Indicator 34:Zooplankton/phytoplankton ratio

Candidate Common Indicator 35:Size distribution of trophic groups

Candidate Common Indicator 36:Production of Megafauna

80. Given the complexity of monitoring Ecological Objective 4 (EO4), it is recommended to adopt a step-by-step approach, starting with simple methods and indicators and gradually moving to more advanced ones. Key variables such as biomass, abundance, diet, and trophic levels of marine species, as well as commercial catches and fishing activities, can be useful starting points for estimating common indicators. These variables are generally available to all Contracting Parties through open-access platforms such as GFCM-DCRF, FishBase, FishStatJ, and Global Fishing Watch.

81. The assessment of EO4 is particularly challenging due to the complexity of food webs and the interactivity of the multiple pressures on ecosystems. In addition, there are still significant gaps in data availability, which makes it difficult to develop reliable indicators and link indicator changes to pressures, and consequently to set thresholds. Addressing these gaps is a prerequisite for setting common regional targets and ensuring harmonized monitoring across the Mediterranean.

82. The next phase should concentrate on establishing a robust knowledge base through coordinated data collection and the refinement of indicators relevant to food web dynamics. Once this foundation is established, it will be possible to define threshold values and align monitoring methodologies, in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance.

Sea-Floor Integrity EO 6:

83. Sea-floor integrity is maintained, especially in priority benthic habitats.

84. The Sea-floor integrity Common Indicators are the following:

Common Indicator 37:	Extent of physical loss of natural habitat
Common Indicator 38:	Extent of adverse effects on benthic habitat (this may comprise several indicators which address specific pressures or particular aspects of habitat condition)

85. Contracting Parties shall implement EO 6 in close association with other state-based EOs (EO1, EO3, EO8), by making use of their Common Indicators, data and assessment results, where appropriate.

86. Monitoring and assessment efforts under Ecological Objective 6 should focus on collating data on the distribution and intensity of anthropogenic activities and pressures affecting the sea-floor, as a means to priorities monitoring of seabed state. This should also be conducted in coordination with the pressure-based Ecological Objectives (EO2, EO5, EO7), making use of their respective Common Indicators, data and assessment findings, as appropriate. Providing such information disaggregated by seabed habitat type in each assessment area is strongly recommended to facilitate its relevance and applicability within the context of EO6 assessments.

87. Ecological Objective 6 is intended to have a broad scope, encompassing all seabed habitats across the Mediterranean, from the littoral zone to the deep-sea floor. With regard to assessment scales and areas, Contracting Parties should use the agreed subdivisions of the Mediterranean region which are based primarily on biogeographic criteria, to ensure ecological coherence and comparability of results.

88. During the next phase, Contracting Parties are invited to define GES for EO6 habitats by setting quality thresholds for habitat condition, as well as acceptable limits for habitat loss and the extent of adverse effects and apply these to each habitat in an assessment area. In order to achieve GES for EO6, actions and measures should be prioritized towards those habitats and areas which are most affected by pressures (below threshold values and above acceptable limits) within each assessment area, in line with the

EO6 focus on ‘priority benthic habitats’.

3.3 Monitoring and Assessment of Pollution and Marine Litter related Common Indicators

Eutrophication (EO5):

89. Eutrophication is a process driven by enrichment of water by nutrients, especially compounds of nitrogen and/or phosphorus, leading to increased growth, primary production and biomass of algae; changes in the balance of nutrients causing changes to the balance of organisms; and water quality degradation.

90. Eutrophication related Common Indicators:

Common Indicator 13: Concentration of key nutrients in water column (EO5);

Common Indicator 14: Chlorophyll-a concentration in water column (EO5).

91. The monitoring of eutrophication under IMAP builds on the monitoring system of UNEP/MAP MED POL Monitoring programme. The Contracting Parties have IMAP-based monitoring programmes in place for eutrophication all over the Mediterranean basin.

92. The Contracting Parties, building on their national monitoring programmes, the lessons learned during the initial phase of implementing the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme and previous MED POL experience with eutrophication, update their IMAP-based national monitoring programmes. The overall aim is to enhance harmony and coherence among the national monitoring programmes and to establish coherent datasets at the entire regional sea level.

93. The methodologies, monitoring protocols and quality control and quality assurance measures are available for the Contracting Parties in line with the Indicators’ Guidance Factsheets.

94. The geographical scale of monitoring for the assessment of GES for eutrophication depends on the hydrological and morphological conditions of an area, particularly the freshwater inputs from rivers, salinity, general circulation, upwelling, and stratification.

95. The spatial distribution of the monitoring stations should thus, prior to the establishment of the eutrophication status of the marine sub-region/area, be risk-based and proportionate to the anticipated extent of eutrophication in the sub-region under consideration, as well as its hydrographic characteristics aiming for the determination of spatially homogeneous areas. Consequently, each Contracting Party determines the optimal spatial distribution of monitoring stations.

96. The Contracting Parties should use reference conditions and boundary values for chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) and nutrients, as outlined in Annex I, developed and region-wide approved for major coastal water types in the Mediterranean, including their application in the GES/non-GES /environmental classifications. To this aim, further work is required to expand and upgrade the reference conditions and boundary values for the four Mediterranean sub-regions, ensuring optimal GES assessment.

97. The Contracting Parties should use the-assessment methodologies as described in the Indicators’ Guidance Factsheets for eutrophication.

98. Work should be undertaken to upgrade GES reference conditions and boundary values for Chl-a, nutrients, transparency, and oxygen, using an adequate geographical scale, as well as to harmonize existing assessment tools.

99. Work should continue to further develope the assessment scales based on the monitoring scales, aiming for optimal integration of monitoring and assessment areas among the Ecological Objectives of IMAP.

100. The Contracting Parties should ensure that adequate interlaboratory quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) procedures are established for IMAP-competent laboratories concerning Common Indicators 13 and 14, and to this aim intercalibration testing should be conducted, and the IMAP Info System should integrate data quality control categories. These efforts should be supported through greater harmonization of diverse data management systems at the international level.

101. The Contracting Parties should exchange experiences and strengthen their capacities in monitoring and conducting GES assessments at the national level, while also contributing to sub-regional and regional efforts for Common Indicators 13 and 14, based on the approved monitoring standards, assessment tools, and criteria within the framework of IMAP implementation.

Contaminants (EO9):

102. The monitoring of chemical contaminants in water, sediments and biota under IMAP builds on the monitoring system with a long-standing history in the Mediterranean, under the auspices of the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention, its Land-Based Protocol, and UNEP/MAP MED POL monitoring programme.

103. Contaminants related Common Indicators:

Common Indicator 17:	Concentration of key harmful contaminants measured in the relevant matrix (EO9, related to biota, sediment, seawater);
Common Indicator 18:	Level of pollution effects of key contaminants where a cause-and-effect relationship has been established (EO9);
Common Indicator 19:	Occurrence, origin (where possible), extent of acute pollution events (e.g. slicks from oil, oil products and hazardous substances), and their impact on biota affected by this pollution (EO9);
Common Indicator 20:	Actual levels of contaminants that have been detected and number of contaminants which have exceeded maximum regulatory levels in commonly consumed seafood (EO9);
Common Indicator 21:	Percentage of intestinal enterococci concentration measurements within established standards (EO9).

104. All Mediterranean countries, building on their national monitoring programmes, the lessons learned during the initial phase of implementing the IMAP and previous MED POL experience with contaminants, update their IMAP-based national monitoring programmes for contaminants. The overall aim is to enhance harmony and coherence among the national monitoring programmes and to establish coherent datasets at the entire regional sea level.

105. Biological effects monitoring has been progressively integrated in the IMAP-based national monitoring programmes. It is essential to further expand and develop the use of biological effects methods, including the integration of chemical and biological effects monitoring and assessment, to cover properly the EO9.

106. In addition, it is important to further harmonize monitoring of contaminants in different matrices in order to optimize assessments at regional, sub-regional, and national levels, as well as to enhance assessment criteria and apply integrated chemical and

biological assessment methods.

107. While monitoring stations are well defined in the IMAP-based national monitoring programmes, there is also a need for the Contracting Parties to strengthen monitoring in offshore areas.

108. The methodologies, monitoring protocols and, quality control and quality assurance measures, are available for the Contracting Parties in line with the Indicators' Guidance Factsheets.

109. Regarding acute pollution events, while the Contracting Parties already have existing monitoring obligations under Article 9 of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, the efforts of which need to be strengthened, it is also foreseen that further analysis of the links between acute pollution events and effect on biota should be enhanced.

110. IMAP-based monitoring of contaminants in biota used for human consumption also builds on previous monitoring requirements and measures contaminants in foodstuffs for which the maximum regulatory limits have been set as outlined in Annex I.

111. Regarding the percentage of intestinal enterococci, threshold values are developed and region-wide-agreed for the Mediterranean through Decision IG.20/9 on "Criteria and Standards for bathing waters quality in the framework of the implementation of Article 7 of the LBS Protocol" (COP 17, 2012)-to ensure GES assessment of bathing water quality.

112. The Contracting Parties should use the Background Criteria (BC), Background Assessment Criteria (BAC) and Environmental Assessment Criteria (EAC) values, as outlined in Annex I, developed and region-wide approved for IMAP Common Indicators 17, 18 and 20 in the Mediterranean, including their application in the GES/non-GES /environmental classifications. To this aim, further work is required to regularly upgrade BC and BAC values, and to develop or upgrade the EAC values for IMAP Common Indicators 17, 18, and 20 by using data relevant to the specific ecological characteristics of the four Mediterranean sub-regions, ensuring optimal GES assessment.

113. The Contracting Parties should use the assessment methodologies as described in the Indicators' Guidance Factsheets for Ecological Objective 9.

114. Work should continue in developing the assessment scales based on the monitoring scales, aiming for optimal integration of monitoring and assessment areas among the Ecological Objectives of IMAP.

115. The Contracting Parties should ensure that adequate interlaboratory quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) procedures are enhanced for IMAP-competent laboratories concerning Common Indicators 17, 18 and 20, and to this aim intercalibration testing should be conducted, and the IMAP Info System should integrate data quality control categories.

116. The Contracting Parties should exchange experiences and strengthen their capacities in monitoring and conducting GES assessments at the national level, while also contributing to sub-regional and regional efforts for Common Indicators 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21, based on the approved monitoring standards, assessment tools and criteria within the framework of IMAP implementation.

Marine litter (EO10):

117. Marine litter monitoring builds on the monitoring requirements of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (Decision IG. 25/9, COP 22), on the UNEP Guidelines for Comprehensive Beach Litter Assessment and on the Guidance on

Monitoring of Marine Litter in Seas surrounding Europe and on the following agreed common indicators:

Common Indicator 22:	Trends in the amount of litter washed ashore and/or deposited on coastlines (EO10);
Common Indicator 23:	Trends in the amount of litter in the water column including microplastics and on the seafloor (EO10);
Common Indicator 24:	Trends in the amount of litter ingested by marine organisms and in the number of individuals entangled in marine litter (EO10).
Common Indicator 28:	Trends in the amount of litter coming from riverine sources (EO10).

118. All Contracting Parties have established since 2016 national IMAP-based monitoring programmes in relation to Common Indicators 22 and 23 (in particular on beach macro-litter, seafloor macro-litter, and floating microplastics). The Contracting Parties should include in their monitoring programmes Common Indicator 24 related to ingestion and entanglement of marine litter from sea turtles and to undertake pilot monitoring activities on the latter.

119. The methodologies, monitoring protocols and quality control and quality assurance measures are available for the Contracting Parties in line with the Indicators' Guidance Factsheets.

120. The Contracting Parties should use the agreed Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV[33]) for Common Indicators 22, 23 and 24 of IMAP EO10 as presented in Annex II – Part II. GES/nonGES assessment classification scales build on the Threshold Values.

121. The Contracting Parties should encourage citizens, communities (NGOs, civil society initiatives), and environmental protection associations and institutes across the Mediterranean to take part in activities related to marine litter monitoring.

122. Regarding beach macro-litter (Common Indicator 22), cost-efficient and easy to follow monitoring and sampling methodologies and techniques are well established, as described in the Indicator Guidance Factsheets, with at least two surveys per year in spring and autumn recommended and ideally 4 surveys per year in spring, summer, autumn and winter.

123. The Contracting Parties should establish their national monitoring programs for IMAP EO10 based on a master list of litter categories and items is as presented in the respective Integrated Monitoring-Indicator Guidance Factsheets. Further work is needed to update within IMAP EO10 for beach macro-litter, the minimum size of recorded marine litter items which need to be considered as of 2.5 cm.

124. Regarding monitoring of marine litter at the sea (Common Indicator 23), due to the low occurrence of litter in midwater, the common indicator focuses on surface floating and seafloor litter, including microplastics. Due to the observation methodology (observation from ships), the type of marine macro-litter objects can only be noted during very short visual observation. Therefore, in contrast to beach litter, only rough litter categories can be determined, even though monitoring size categories should also include relevant small items, in line with the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance.

125. The Contracting Parties are encouraged to apply the approved regional Guidelines detailing the monitoring of floating microplastics.

126. Monitoring of seafloor macro-litter (Common Indicator 23), focuses on

[33] Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP EO10 (Marine Litter) are subject to update for the third iteration of the MED QSR.

opportunistic monitoring which is a cost-efficient method, being jointly implemented with national/regional fish-stock assessment survey programmes (e.g., the Mediterranean International Bottom Trawl Surveys (MEDITS), including the use of scuba divers and compatible professional trawling operations. Upcoming technologies based on observation/imaging (e.g., ROVs, diver-based recording etc.) may be considered and conducted also as part of other surveys (e.g., within the programmes on biodiversity, with methodologies and technical requirements prescribed in the Indicator Guidance Factsheets.

127. Riverine litter is considered as part of IMAP EO10. The Contracting Parties should/are encouraged to apply the approved region-wide Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine inputs of Marine Litter.

128. It is important to note that while micro-litter and in particular microplastics are considered in IMAP-EO10, further work is still necessary at regional level, recognizing that the understanding of the potential impact on organisms and in the environment is still under development. Contracting Parties are encouraged to undertake pilots monitoring, further research and work in this area (e.g., microplastics and mesoplastic on beaches, microplastics on sediment, pellets on beaches etc.).

129. The Contracting Parties should monitor the ingestion and entanglement of marine litter from biota, in particular from sea turtles (Common Indicator 24) considering that the most representative species are identified; in line with the approved and available region-wide monitoring protocols addressing ingestion and entanglement; They are encouraged to consider taking into account the Regional Operational Strategy and apply the approved Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) (Annex II – Part II).

130. In designing, upgrading their national monitoring programme, and undertaking the respective assessment for EO10, the Contracting parties are encouraged to use the Indicators' Guidance Factsheets that detail technical specifications on assessment methodologies and scales.

Energy including Underwater Noise (EO11)[34]:

131. EO 11 is introduced in IMAP with the support of experts of the Joint ACCOBAMS/ ASCOBANS/ CMS Working Group on Noise.

132. The two Common Indicators related to energy including underwater noise are:

Common Indicator 26:	Proportion of days and geographical distribution where loud, low, and mid-frequency impulsive sounds exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animals;
Common Indicator 27:	Levels of continuous low frequency sounds with the use of models as appropriate.

133. Common Indicators 26 and 27 are more closely related to the acoustic biology of key marine mammal species of the Mediterranean which are known to be sensitive to noise, i.e., the fin whale, the sperm whale and the Cuvier's beaked whale. The monitoring strategy of these two candidate indicators, is set in the Indicators' Guidance Factsheets, ensuring an effective and widely agreed monitoring of underwater noise at a regional scale.

134. In line with the above, the Contracting Parties should consider including progressively these two Common Indicators in their IMAP-based national monitoring programmes, taking into account national specificities.

135. Work should continue by developing monitoring and assessment methodologies along with Threshold Values and GES/non-GES boundary values applied for continuous and impulsive noise.

136. For GES assessment related to EO11, the Contracting Parties should use the approved threshold levels and applied to the percentage of habitat occupied by noise-sensitive species affected by impulsive noise events concerning Common Indicator 26, following a risk-based approach, and a single Threshold Value developed and applied to the percentage of habitat of noise-sensitive species affected by continuous noise concerning Common Indicator 27.

137. Work should continue to improve the quality and availability of underwater noise data, as well as monioring and assessment practices.

[34] Study reservation by Egypt

3.4 Monitoring and Assessment of Coast and Hydrography related Common Indicators

Hydrography (EO7)[35]:

138. Monitoring under this ecological objective aims to address new developments of permanent alterations (constructions lasting for more than 10 years) that can potentially impact marine habitats. It is therefore closely related to CI 1 (EO1).

Common Indicator 15: Location and extent of the habitats potentially impacted by hydrographic alterations

139. Taking into considerations the difficulty in monitoring this indicator; due to its complexity, requirements for historic data, significant human and financial resources required and alike, several CORMON meetings agreed to simplify the original Guidance Factsheet in order to allow its implementation. Simplification has been already proposed and agreed by the Meetings of the CORMON on Coast and Hydrography in 2023 and 2025.

140. In line with the above, the monitoring under EO7 focuses on:

a) Mapping of the area where human activities cause permanent loss of the seafloor by the construction of the structure itself (i.e. the footprint of the structure);
b) Mapping of the surrounding area around the structure of potential changes to habitats; and
c) Intersection of the spatial map of the areas of these hydrographical changes (defined under (a) and (b)) with spatial maps of habitats (deriving from EO1) to determine the areas of individual habitat types that are impacted by hydrographical changes. Until the habitat map from EO1 is available the Contracting Parties will use their own habitat maps.

Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes (EO8)[36]:

141. One particularity of the IMAP (compared to other regional/RSC monitoring and assessment programmes) is the inclusion of an Ecological Objective focusing on the terrestrial part of the coastal zone. This reflects that the Barcelona Convention also covers coastal areas in its work, in line with the ICZM Protocol.

142. The coast related common indicator and candidate common indicator are as follows:

Common Indicator 16: Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the

[35] Considering the momentum with regard to Climate-Change and the agreement in principle of the Meeting, that should consider Climate-Change, and the ongoing work of PAP/RAC on Coastal Degradation (EO7 and EO8), The Meeting agreed to recommend to the MAP Focal Points the possibility to receive a proposal from the respective CORMON by end of September 2025, to address the following: (a) the possibility to re-activate 7.1.1 (CI 15bis) and 7.1.2 (CI 15ter) already proposed under WG.630/3 (Appendix 1), and the possibility for the proposal of 1 to 3 Climate-Change related Common Indicator under EO8 (Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes) considering that these indicators are measurable and that the methodology is clear. On this basis the Secretariat will include the proposal of the CORMON for the consideration of COP24.

[36] Considering the momentum with regard to Climate-Change and the agreement in principle of the Meeting, that should consider Climate-Change, and the ongoing work of PAP/RAC on Coastal Degradation (EO7 and EO8), The Meeting agreed to recommend to the MAP Focal Points the possibility to receive a proposal from the respective CORMON by end of September 2025, to address the following: (a) the possibility to re-activate 7.1.1 (CI 15bis) and 7.1.2 (CI 15ter) already proposed under WG.630/3 (Appendix 1), and the possibility for the proposal of 1 to 3 Climate-Change related Common Indicator under EO8 (Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes) considering that these indicators are measurable and that the methodology is clear. On this basis the Secretariat will include the proposal of the CORMON for the consideration of COP24.

influence of human-made structures

143. Based on the findings and recommendations of the 2023 MED QSR and experience from the first monitoring cycle (2018 – 2022), the Meetings of the CORMON on Coast and Hydrography in 2023 proposed minor technical improvements in the Guiding Factsheet including the inclusion of "archeological remains" and "other" structures (e.g. parking lots, quarries, pilings if not part of ports and marinas, etc.), as well as to consider off shore breakwaters as structures to be taken into account as artificial.

144. During the development of the national integrated monitoring programmes' coastal component, the Contracting Parties, in line with the above, first need to assess the length of coastline affected by human-made structures in the current state, in line with the Indicator Guidance Factsheet, noting that the length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human-made structures is an impact indicator, which assumes that the coastlines occupied by human-made structures are potentially impacted areas.

145. For assessment of indicator on length of coastline influenced by human-made structures (CI16), definition of thresholds as % and / or m, to be developed, during the initial phase of IMAP, should be based on expert assisted procedure to take into account the typology of the coast including its ecosystem goods and services related to social and economic benefits. The assessment should also include disturbance that comes from such structures. The Guidance document "Assessment criteria and the Guiding document for application of assessment criteria for the IMAP Common Indicator 16" was endorsed by the Meeting of the CORMON on Coast and Hydrography in 2023, tested in Morocco and applied in Montenegro and Türkiye, should be used to define GES in other countries, as well as to define assessment requirements. This is also mandated by Decision IG.26/3 on "The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean" (COP 23).

146. In line with the above, the monitoring under this Ecological Objective is meant to address human activities causing coastal artificialization by sealing the coast with the implementation of coastal structures and therefore impacting the coastal ecosystems and landscapes.

147. The term 'human-made structures' typically refers to different types of coastal defenses (such as seawalls, breakwaters, dykes etc.), ports/marinas, as well as to landward structures built on land, and intersect with the coastline.

Common Indicator 25: Land cover change

148. Based on the agreement by Contracting Parties representatives in the Meeting of the CORMON on Coast and Hydrography in 2023 and 2024, there is a sufficient ground for this candidate common indicator to become a common indicator, with the title "Land cover change". Testing of this indicator has been carried out within several projects (SIDA, EcAp MED II and III, GEF MedProgramme); results for the Adriatic sub-region were included in the 2023 MED QSR; training sessions have been completed or are in progress for all GEF MedProgramme countries.

149. In relation to Common Indicator on land cover change (CI25), Contracting Parties are encouraged to develop monitoring programmes and undertake monitoring activities in line with the pilot monitoring undertaken since 2016, undertaken in the Adriatic and presented in the 2023 MED QSR, as well as the training /capacity building activities and pilot projects implemented in GEF MedProgramme eligible countries. This indicator is very important for the analysis of processes, including land-sea interaction and climate change impact in coastal areas and allows countries to propose adequate measures to achieve GES and mitigate Climate Change impacts. It will bring more objectivity into reporting on the state and evolution of their coastal zones and implementation of the ecosystem approach in coastal zones

Appendix 1

Updated Reference List of Species and Habitats, Assessment Criteria and Scales, Threshold and Baseline Values for Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species

Appendix 1: Updated Reference List of Species and Habitats, Assessment Criteria and Scales, Thresholds, Baseline Values for Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species

PART I: Reference List of Habitats and Species

1. Reference List of Habitats

Marine Benthic Habitat Types:

a. B1 Coralligenous
   i. MB1.55 Coralligenous (enclave of circalittoral)
   ii. MC1.51 Coralligenous cliffs (with 17 sub-types)
   iii. MC1.52a Coralligenous outcrops (with 9 sub-types)
   iv. MC1.52b Coralligenous outcrops covered by sediment (see MC1.52a for examples of facies)
   v. MC1.52c Deep banks (with 3 sub-types)
   vi. MC2.51 Coralligenous platforms (with 12 sub-types)
b. B2 Maërl
   i. MB3.511 Association with maërl or rhodoliths[37]
   ii. MB3.521 Association with maërl or rhodoliths
   iii. MC3.52 Coastal detritic bottoms with rhodoliths (with 9 sub-types)
c. B3 *Posidonia*
   i. *Posidonia oceanica* meadow (MB2.54 with 7 sub-types[38])

Pelagic Habitat Types

Table 1: Reference list of pelagic Habitat Types for the epipelagic layer (0-200m) (Annex VII of Decision IG.26/5)

	Pelagic Habitat Types	**Water mass**	**Comments***
A.1.	Reduced salinity water	coastal lagoons	WFD correspondence [39]
A.2.	Variable salinity water – high surface or subsurface CHL (>3 mg/m3)	estuaries, river plumes	Transitional waters with WFD correspondence 40 (Values should be revised)
A.3.	Marine water: neritic - medium surface or subsurface CHL (0.5-3 mg/m3)	upwellings, re-suspension in shallow waters and outskirts of river plumes, winter mixing areas	WFD water type II, type III
A.4.a	Marine water: oceanic - medium surface or subsurface CHL (0.5-3 mg/m3)	Upwellings, and winter mixing areas	WFD water type III
A.4.b	Marine water: oceanic - low to medium surface CHL (~0.1-1.0 mg/m3)	Hydrological features (fronts and gyres)	WFD water type III
A.5.a.	Marine water: oceanic - very low surface CHL (<0.1 mg/m3) with deep CHL maximum	euphotic depth > mixed layer depth	WFD water type III
A.5.b.	Marine water: oceanic - very low surface CHL (<0.2 mg/m3) without deep CHL maximum	euphotic depth < mixed layer depth	WFD water type III

* Each country should specify the range of Chl-a, Salinity, depth and if annual/seasonal values are used. The typology of pelagic habitats represents a general framework that can be adapted and modified by the Contracting Parties to integrate local ecosystems, features and dynamics.

[37] MB3.511 and MB3.521 have the same habitat names but are listed under separate higher types (MB3.51 Infralittoral coarse sediment mixed by wave and MB3.52 Infralittoral coarse sediment under the influence of bottom currents).
[38] Sub-types for a) *Posidonia* on artificial substrata and b) *Posidonia* association with *Zostera noltii* are not specifically defined in BC or EUNIS habitat classifications.
[39] European Commission Decision 2018/229/EU establishing, pursuant to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, the values of the Member State monitoring system classifications as a result of the intercalibration exercise, and repealing Commission Decision 2013/480/EU (notified under document C (2018) 696) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018D0229&from=PL
[40] WFD Annex 2 part 1.2.3. defines Transitional waters. see also Guidance document n.o 5 , Transitional and Coastal Waters, Typology, Reference Conditions and Classification Systems and Water Framework Directive Intercalibration Technical Report - Part 3: Coastal and Transitional Waters

2. Reference List of Species:

Marine Sea Birds:

Coastal top predators:*Pandion haliaetus*
Intertidal benthic-feeders:*Charadrius alexandrinus*
Inshore benthic feeders:*Gulosus aristotelis desmarestii*
Offshore surface-feeders:*Ichthyaetus audouinii*
Inshore surface feeders:*Croicocephalus genei, Thalasseus bengalensis emigrates, Thalasseus sandvicensis*
Offshore (surface or pelagic) feeders: *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis, Calonectris diomedea, Puffinus yelkouan, Puffinus mauretanicus*

Marine Mammals

Cetaceans:

a) Baleen whales: fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*).
b) Deep-diving cetaceans: sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*), long-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala melas*) and Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*).
c) Other toothed species: short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*).

Recommended rare species of cetaceans:

a) Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)
b) Rough-toothed dolphin (*Steno bredanensis*)
c) False killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*)
d) Killer whale (*Orcinus orca*).

Monk Seal:

- The Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*)

Marine Turtles:

a) Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta*; IUCN (regionally) Least Concern).
b) Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*; IUCN (globally) Endangered).

PART II: Assessment Criteria and Thresholds for Biodiversity Common Indicators 1 and 2

Table 2: Proposed parameters, metrics and indices for assessing CI1 and CI2 for the three habitat types at monitoring sites.

Habitat/CI	Minimum protocol	Optimal protocol
B1 Coralligenous **CI1**	Habitat extent (km^2) Habitat loss (m^2) Extent (km^2) and proportion (%) of habitat loss across all monitored sites	Extent of habitat loss at assessment area/national level
B1 Coralligenous **CI2**	For MACS (Enrichetti et al., 2019): Extent of hard bottom (% rock and biogenic) Species richness of conspicuous megabenthic sessile and sedentary species Structuring species: count, height (cm) and density (no. of colonies/individuals m^{-2}) % sediment cover % of colonies with epibiosis, necrosis and entangled in lost fishing gears for all structuring anthozoans Marine litter (density m^{-2})	For EBQI[41] and other indices (Di Camillo et al., 2023): Typical species composition Condition of key species/groups: • Filter- and suspension feeders (cover and diversity) • Detritivores abundance • Related fish assemblage biomass (distinguishing piscivores, carnivores of invertebrates, planktivores) Sensitivity level
B2 Maërl **CI1**	Analysis of existing knowledge (scientific and grey literature) on the presence of maërl/rhodolith beds Habitat extent (km^2)[42] Habitat loss (m^2) Extent (km2) and proportion (%) of habitat loss across all monitored sites	Extent of habitat loss at assessment area/national level
B2 Maërl **CI2**	Index to be defined. Rhodolith/maërl (% cover live and dead) Rhodolith/maërl density	Index to be defined. Species composition: abundance and diversity (filter-feeders, carnivores, detritivores, etc.) including echinoderms Particulate organic matter cover Detritic litter cover Rhodolith size and shape
B3 *Posidonia* **CI1**	Habitat extent (km^2) Habitat loss (m^2) Upper and lower depth limit of meadow (to nearest 0.1m) at monitored sites Extent (km2) and proportion (%) of habitat loss across all monitored sites Change in vertical distribution of habitat (+ or – m) at monitored sites	Extent of habitat loss at assessment area/national level
B3 *Posidonia* **CI2**	For PREI (Gobert et al., 2009): Leaf surface Leaf biomass Shoot density Lower limit depth and type Leaf epiphytes biomass For BiPO (Lopez y Royo et al., 2010) (same parameters as PREI but without sampling living material): Leaf surface Shoot density Lower limit depth and type For functional assessment: Sea urchin density	For EBQI (Personnic et al., 2014): Growth rate of vertical rhizomes Meadow cover Biomass density and species diversity in all compartments: • Filter- and suspension feeder density • Sea urchin *Paracentrotus lividus* density • Related fish assemblage biomass (distinguishing piscivores, carnivores of invertebrates, planktivores) • *Pinna* spp. density (not only *Pinna nobilis* now that *P. rudis* occurrence is increasing)
All sites	Parameters related to water quality (sea temperature, salinity, turbidity, transparency)	

[41] FR: From Ruitton et al. 2014 updated by Astruch et al. (under review). See also: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325607434_Guide_methodologique_pour_l%27evaluation_ecosystemique_des_habitats_marins.

[42] ES: To estimate this parameter for RMBs, firstly it will be necessary to have the maps of the benthic biocenoses throughout the entire continental shelf. Currently, these maps are only available for certain (few) areas.

Table 3: Overview of the main aspects of monitoring and assessment elements for CI1 and CI2 for the three habitat types Posidonia, coralligenous and maërl

Element	CI1 & CI2
Habitat types	Define more clearly each of the habitat types, including specification of which EUNIS/BC subtypes are to be considered, and the most important pressures they face
Monitoring scale: number of sites	A minimum of five sites per habitat type per assessment area (28 subdivisions of Mediterranean region) Sites to be distributed across countries within each assessment area, and represent a gradient of conditions from impacted to non-impacted locations Assess state of habitats (extent and condition) at monitoring sites as a proxy for their state across the wider assessment areas and region (to make monitoring and assessment process feasible for all Contracting Parties)
Monitoring methods: parameters	Refer to Table 2 for minimum and optimal set of parameters per habitat type.
State/impact monitoring in context of pressures	Sites selected for detailed monitoring should include a range of pressures or intensities of pressures, as well as sites which are 'unimpacted'. Pressures (and related activities) should be reported at monitoring sites and across each country (linked to EO6), assigning data to a standardised grid system.
Assessment scale	Use same set of assessment areas (28 subdivisions of the 4 Mediterranean subregions) as proposed for EO6.
Assessment methods	Use several indicators to represent differing aspects of habitat distribution and extent (CI1) and structure and function (CI2), as given in Table 2. The indicators need testing with data from multiple CPs to help define suitable thresholds and ensure comparability of results across the region.
Data standards	Simplify data standards to facilitate data submission and aggregation for analyses.
Baselines	Use unimpacted sites to establish the current extent and state of each habitat type in reference state (under prevailing physiographic, geographic, climatic and environmental conditions).
Quality threshold	Re-evaluate threshold once sufficient data are available to set fully meaningful threshold for the assessment area/subregion and habitat type. Ensure equivalent level of quality across assessment areas, habitats, indicators and pressures.
Extent thresholds	Set thresholds for the maximum extent of habitat loss (for CI1) and habitat which is adversely affected (for CI2) that is permitted per habitat in each assessment area.
Progress with monitoring and assessment processes	Contracting Parties should update their monitoring programmes, if necessary, based on general agreements for monitoring and assessment elements. SPA/RAC should evaluate progress in implementation of the monitoring programmes, say at a mid-point in the 6-year data collection phase. This evaluation should include the state of data submissions to the IMAP Info System and undertaking a trial region-wide assessment. Outcomes should guide further implementation of the programmes in the lead up to the next MED QSR assessment.

PART III: Assessment Criteria and Thresholds for Biodiversity Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Marine Mammals

Table 4: Biodiversity common indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Marine Mammals (Ecological Objectives, GES Definitions and Targets, Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Threshold and Baseline Values) (Extracted from UNEP/MED WG.514/Inf.11[43])

Common Indicator 3 (CI3)[44]					
Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		Developing scales of assessment (if different from those of monitoring) and assessment criteria		Develop threshold and baseline values	
Species/functional group	*Proposed changes* Key: WM=Western Mediterranean; I&CM=Ionian and Central Mediterranean; A=Adriatic; A&LS=Aegean and Levantine seas.	*Existing context*	*Proposed changes*	*Existing context*	*Proposals*
Fin whale / Mysticetes	Primary monitoring • *Geographic scale*: Regional. • *Method*: standard & synchronised between all countries (i.e. ASI-like). • *Frequency*: at least once per reporting period. Secondary monitoring • *Geographic scale*: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP): in WM and I&CM key habitats for this species (i.e. feeding, corridor). ○ Low priority sub-regions (LP) in A and A&LS. • Method: ○ in HP: systematic regular monitoring (including photo-id). ○ in LP complement systematic monitoring with other adequate and standard method (UNEP MAP 2019). • Frequency: ○ in HP sub-regions the minimum requirement is at least three times (better annually in selected places); ○ in LP at least one time over the reporting period.	New proposal in UNEP/MED WG.450/3: • Regional: large cetaceans	• Primary assessment/ MRU: Regional. • Frequency: once every reporting period.	None	Reference values distributional range: • *Mediterranean cetaceans* (all species): map to be created based on Mannocci et al. 2018, Canadas et al. 2018 (*Ziphius*) • *Adriatic cetaceans*: Fortuna et al. 2018 (*Tusiops, Stenella*) • *Monk seals*: map to be created based all existing data. Thresholds for distributional range: • The extent of the distribution of each species remains stable or expanding compared to a reference map (see above). In particular, the Extent of occurrence (EOO) shows: 1) no decline (in all sub-regions where the species was regularly found since last assessment, 2) no decline of number of locations or local putative populations for the species within its distributional range. Given the difficulty to assess the distribution of cetacean species at a finer scale, both reference values and thresholds for this CI should be revised at each assessment cycle.
Sperm whale / Odontocete (deep feeder)	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Regional. • Method: As in previous cell. • Frequency: As in previous cell. Secondary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority (HP) in WM, I&CM and A&LS key habitats for this species (i.e. breeding, corridor). ○ Low priority (LP) in A • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.			None	
Cuvier's beaked whale (deep feeder)	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Regional. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell. Secondary monitoring Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority (HP) in WM, I&CM and A&LS key habitats for this species (i.e. feeding). ○ Low priority (LP) in A • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.			None	

Key: MS=Monitoring Scale, AS=Assessment Scale, MRU=Marine Reporting Units

[43] 8th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG), Videoconference, 9 September 2021.
[44] https://www.medqsr.org/common-indicator-3-species-distributional-range-marine-mammals

Common Indicator 3 (CI3)					
Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		Developing scales of assessment and assessment criteria		Develop threshold and baseline values	
Species/ functional group	*Proposed changes* Key: WM=Western Mediterranean; I&CM=Ionian and Central Mediterranean; A=Adriatic; A&LS=Aegean and Levantine seas.	*Existing context*	*Proposed changes*	*Existing context*	*Proposals*
Long finned pilot whale (epipelagic feeder)	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Regional. • Method: standard & synchronised between all countries (i.e. ASI-like). • Frequency: at least once per reporting period. Secondary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP) in WM key habitats for this species (i.e. feeding, corridor). ○ Low priority (LP) in I&CM. • Method: ○ in HP: systematic regular monitoring; ○ in LP complement systematic monitoring with other adequate and standard method (UNEP MAP 2019). • Frequency: ○ in HP sub-regions the minimum requirement is biannual; ○ in LP at least one time over the reporting period.	New proposal in UNEP/MED WG.450/3: • Sub-regional: small cetaceans	• Primary assessment/MRU: Regional. • Frequency: once every reporting period.	None	*See previous page.*
Risso's dolphin (epipelagic feeder)	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Regional. • Method: As in previous cell. • Frequency: As in previous cell. Secondary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP) in WM & A key habitats for this species (i.e. feeding, corridor). ○ Low priority (LP) in I&CM and A&LS. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.			None	
Bottlenose dolphin (epipelagic feeder)	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Regional. • Method: As in previous cell. • Frequency: As in previous cell. Secondary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP) in key habitats for this species in all sub- regions (i.e. feeding, corridor). ○ Low priority (LP) in offshore areas. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.			None	
Common dolphin (epipelagic feeder)	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Regional. • Method: As in previous cell. • Frequency: As in previous cell. Secondary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP) in WM, A&LS key habitats for this species (i.e. feeding, corridor). ○ Low priority (LP) in A, I&CM. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.			None	
Striped dolphin (epipelagic feeder)	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Regional. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell (except for photo-id). • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.			None	

Common Indicator 3 (CI3)					
Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		Developing scales of assessment and assessment criteria		Develop threshold and baseline values	
Species/ functional group	*Proposed changes* Key: WM=Western Mediterranean; I&CM=Ionian and Central Mediterranean; A=Adriatic; A&LS=Aegean and Levantine seas.	*Existing context*	*Proposed changes*	*Existing context*	*Proposals*
Monk Seal	Primary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-regional o In Group A countries: o Specifically, monitor populations in sites consistent with the Regional Strategy for the conservation of Monk seal in the Mediterranean (RSMS). o In Group B and C countries: area with suitable habitat and/ historical presence. • Method: o In Group A countries: ▪ Registry on opportunistic ▪ sightings / citizen science Photo traps in selected caves o In Group B & C countries: ▪ Registry on opportunistic sightings ▪ (minimum requirement) Photo traps in selected caves of selected locations identified by the revised RSMS. • Frequency: Annual (minimum requirement) or all known locations in each Group A country covered at least three times (biannually) per reporting period.	None	• Primary assessment/MRU: Regional. • Frequency: once every reporting period.	None	Reference values distributional range: • *Monk seals*: map to be created based all existing data.

Key: MS=Monitoring Scale, AS=Assessment Scale, MRU=Marine Reporting Units

Common Indicator 4 (CI4)					
Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		Developing scales of assessment and assessment criteria		Develop threshold and baseline values	
Species/functional group	*Proposed changes* Key: WM=Western Mediterranean; I&CM=Ionian and Central Mediterranean; A=Adriatic; A&LS=Aegean and Levantine seas.	*Existing context*	*Proposals*	*Existing context*	*Proposals*
Fin whale	Primary monitoring • *Geographic scale*: Regional. • *Method*: standard & synchronised between all countries (i.e. ASI-like). • *Frequency*: at least once per reporting period. Secondary monitoring • *Geographic scale*: Sub-Regional / National. ○ *High Priority sub-regions* (HP): in WM and I&. ○ *Low priority* (LP):in A and A&LS. • Method: ○ in HP: systematic regular monitoring (including photo-id); ○ in LP complement systematic monitoring with other adequate and standard method (UNEP MAP 2019). • Frequency: ○ in HP sub-regions the minimum requirement is biennial. ○ in LP at least one time over the reporting period.	*IMAP Monitoring Protocols 2019*	• Assessment / MRU: Regional. • Frequency: once every reporting period.	None	• Check IUCN Mediterranean Red Listing and if EN, CR, VU then maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • When listed as LC, no decrease of ≥20% over 3 generations (1.5% within a 6-year reporting period). • Regional reference value: ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details).
Sperm whale	Primary monitoring: As in "Fin whale" cell. Secondary monitoring: • *Geographic scale*: Sub-Regional / National. ○ HP: in WM, I&CM and A&LS. ○ LP: in A. • *Method*: As in "Fin whale" cell. • *Frequency*: As in "Fin whale" cell.	None.		None.	• Check IUCN Mediterranean Red Listing and if EN, CR, VU then maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • When listed as LC, no decrease of ≥20% over 3 generations (1.3% within a 6-year reporting period). • Regional reference value: ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details).
Cuvier's beaked whale	Primary monitoring: As in "Fin whale" cell. Secondary monitoring • *Geographic scale*: Sub-Regional / National. ○ HP in WM, I&CM and A&. ○ LP in A. • *Method*: As in "Fin whale" cell. • *Frequency*: As in "Fin whale" cell.	None.		None.	• Check IUCN Mediterranean Red Listing and if EN, CR, VU then maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • When listed as LC, no decrease of ≥ 1.5% within a 6-year reporting period. • Regional reference value: Canadas *et al.* 2018 & ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details).
Long finned pilot whale	Primary monitoring: As in "Fin whale" cell. Secondary monitoring • *Geographic scale*: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP) in WM. ○ Low priority (LP) in I&CM. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. ○ Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.	None.		None.	• Check IUCN Mediterranean Red Listing and if EN, CR, VU then maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • When listed as LC, no decrease of ≥20% over 3 generations (1.7% within a reporting period). • Regional reference value: ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details).

Risso's dolphin	<u>Primary monitoring</u>: As in "Fin whale" cell. <u>Secondary monitoring</u> • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP) in WM & A. ○ Low priority (LP) in I&CM and A&LS. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.	None.		None.	• Check IUCN Mediterranean Red Listing and if EN, CR, VU then maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • When listed as LC, no decrease of ≥20% over 3 generations (2.0% within a reporting period). • Regional reference value: ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details).

Key: MS=Monitoring Scale, AS=Assessment Scale, MRU=Marine Reporting Units

Common Indicator 4 (CI4)					
STEP 1 Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		STEP 2 Developing scales of assessment and assessment criteria		STEP 3 Develop threshold and baseline values	
Species/functional group	*Proposed changes* Key: WM=Western Mediterranean; I&CM=Ionian and Central Mediterranean; A=Adriatic; A&LS=Aegean and Levantine seas.	*Existing context*	*Proposals*	*Existing context*	*Proposals*
Bottlenose dolphin	Primary monitoring: As in "Fin whale" cell. Secondary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP). ○ Low priority (LP) in offshore areas. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.	None.		None.	• Check IUCN Mediterranean Red Listing and if EN, CR, VU then maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • No decrease of ≥20% over 3 generations (1.9% within a reporting period). • Regional reference value: ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details). ○ Adriatic: Reference value (2010: Fortuna et al. 2018)
Common dolphin	Primary monitoring: As in "Fin whale" cell. Secondary monitoring • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional / National. ○ High Priority sub-regions (HP) in WM, A&LS key habitats for this species (i.e. feeding, corridor). ○ Low priority (LP) in A, I&CM. • Method: As in "Fin whale" cell. • Frequency: As in "Fin whale" cell.	None.		None.	• Check IUCN Mediterranean Red Listing and if EN, CR, VU then maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • When listed as LC, no decrease of ≥20% over 3 generations (2.7% within a reporting period). • Regional reference value: ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details).
Striped dolphin	Primary monitoring: As in "Fin whale" cell.	None.		None.	• Check IUCN status and if EN, CR, VU then > only. • Maintain total abundance at or above reference levels. • When listed as LC, no decrease of ≥20% over 3 generations (1.8% within a reporting period). • Regional reference value: ASI 2018 DS design-based estimate (see Box 4 for details).
Monk Seal	Primary monitoring (pending definition of a single standardized method to avoid double counting and allow inter-regional comparison) • Geographic scale: Sub-regional • Method: ○ Group A countries: ▪ Individuals counts based on cave monitoring (minimum requirement) and/or mark-recapture based on photo-identified seals data in sites consistent with the revised Monk seal strategy. ○ Group B & C countries: ▪ Photo-identification of individuals based on images obtained from non-invasive monitoring of resting caves. Caves in sites that require monitoring should be decided based on evidence of recurrent sightings recorded through the results of the opportunistic sighting registry ○ Frequency: Annual.	None.	• Assessment/ MRU: Regional	None.	• Increase on total population of 1% over six-year reporting period AND increase in number of pups compared to the last assessment. • Provisional reference value: to be estimated.

Key: MS=Monitoring Scale, AS=Assessment Scale, MRU=Marine Reporting Units

Common Indicator 5 (CI5)					
Refining scales of <u>monitoring</u>, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		Developing scales of assessment and assessment criteria		Develop threshold and baseline values	
Species/ functional group	*Proposed changes* Key: WM=Western Mediterranean; I&CM=Ionian and Central Mediterranean; A=Adriatic; A&LS=Aegean and Levantine seas.	*Existing context*	*Proposals*	*Existing context*	*Proposals*
Cetaceans (*Stenella*, *Tursiops* and *Balaenoptera* as proxy for functional groups)	<u>Primary monitoring</u> • Geographic scale: Sub-regional / National. • Species: focus on *Stenella*, *Tursiops* and *Balaenoptera*. Parameters: o adult survival probability, juvenile survival probability; fecundity/breeding productivity/rate; age class distribution; sex ratio; population growth rate. • Method: o Stranding network collecting standard measures and biological material (e.g., teeth and reproductive organs) o Photo-ID network collecting standard pictures (list of parameters including calf) • Frequency: continuous for strandings', regularly and frequent for photo-ID. <u>Secondary monitoring</u> • Geographic scale: Sub-Regional. • Method: one dedicated concerted and cooperative campaign collecting biopsies (for sex ratio, and hormones rates). • Frequency: at least once per reporting period.		• Assessment/ MRU: Sub-regional & all "local populations" (long-term studies). • Frequency: once per reporting period.		It is not possible to develop reference and threshold values at this point.
Monk seal	<u>Primary monitoring</u> • Geographic scale: Sub-regional in countries Group A. • Method: Pup counts in critical/selected breeding caves (minimum requirement). • Frequency: annual.		• Assessment/MRU: Sub-regional & all "colonies". • Frequency: once per reporting period.		Reference values demography: • <u>*Total annual national pup counts*</u>: to be estimated. • <u>*Annual birth rate*</u>: define index areas and produce estimates. Threshold values: • Increase from last assessment.

Key: MS=Monitoring Scale, AS=Assessment Scale, MRU=Marine Reporting Units

CI12: Bycatch of vulnerable and non-target species (EO1 and EO3)					
Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		Developing scales of assessment and assessment criteria		Develop threshold and baseline values	
Species/ functional group	*Proposed changes* Key: WM=Western Mediterranean; I&CM=Ionian and Central Mediterranean; A=Adriatic; A&LS=Aegean and Levantine seas.	*Existing context*	*Proposals*	*Existing context*	*Proposals*
Marine mammals	• In each GFCM GSA, at least one year of cetacean bycatch rate monitoring per each high priority fishing métiers (to be defined), within each reporting cycle. • GFCM provides data on fishing effort during reference year for priority fishing métiers, for each GSA. • Annually: bycatch (onboard observations, questionnaires and strandings) and systemic pollution (strandings) • CPs monitor their fleets (at least one métier per sub-region per year, rotating). • National stranding network collect data on fishery-induced mortality and level of pollutants in marine mammal tissues. They provide biennial reports on these matters. • Each CP: national monitoring schemes to provide bycatch rates and annual fishing effort.		• Assessment /MRU: Regional & Sub-regional (or aggregated GFCM GSAs). • Frequency: annual or biennial.		• Regional: BRA on each species for the potentially most dangerous fishing gears. ○ Threshold of the total estimated bycatch per all fishing gears: 1% of the total population. This triggers in-depth monitoring programmes. • Sub-regional: *thresholds* calculated with CLA or RLA on each species, based on actual observations on bycatch rates, total fishing effort, biological parameters and conservation objectives (CLA = 72% K; RLA = 80% K).

Key: MS=Monitoring Scale, AS=Assessment Scale, MRU=Marine Reporting Units

PART IV Assessment Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Marine Turtles

Table 5. Summary Tables of the methodological approach and results of the analysis on monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria and thresholds and baseline values for the Common Indicators 3,4 and 5 related to sea turtles

Common Indicator 3 (CI3)							
STEP 1 Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		STEP 2 Developing scales of assessment		STEP 3 Developing assessment criteria		STEP 4 Develop threshold and baseline values	
Existing context	Proposed changes	Existing context	Proposals	Existing context	Proposals	Existing context	Proposals
Species distribution ranges[45] can be gauged at local (i.e., within a small area like a national park) or regional (i.e., across the entire Mediterranean basin) scales using a variety of approaches. Long- term monitoring of these areas provides information on the temporal evolution in species distributions.	Revise mapping requirements to two maps; one for nesting areas and one for marine areas. Nesting areas monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National. Up to 7 established sites or 75% of national nesting activity (index areas) • Method: ostandard nesting beach surveys. • Frequency: ○ Minimum = June/July annually for index areas. osix-yearly national scale. Nearshore monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National. Up to 4 sites. • Method: osystematic regular monitoring index areas. obycatch/stranding data. • Frequency: o biannual monitoring index areas. o year-round bycatch/stranding recording. osix-yearly national scale. Offshore monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National/regional. • Method: ○ Aerial surveys ○ Boat surveys ○ Bycatch recording. ○ Opportunistic boat surveying. • Frequency: ○ Yearly for aerial and boat surveys ○ Year-round for bycatch records ○ *Ad hoc* boat surveying. osix-yearly national scale.	The European (ETRS) 10x10km grid is used for mapping the distribution and range…, Three different maps (grids) are produced yearly for each species accounting for breeding sites, wintering sites and feeding/developmental sites. Number of 10x10 km cells (presence/absence) occupied for breeding or wintering or feeding/developmental areas along the Mediterranean (or subregional) coast and in all pelagic marine areas.	Nesting areas National and Subdivisional level GES assessments based on maintenance of distribution of all nesting sites. Marine areas Subregional GES assessments.	Turtles continue to nest in all known nesting sites. Turtle distribution is not significantly affected by human activities.	Nesting areas Turtles remain present in all parts of annually monitored nesting sites and at all established sites during periodic surveys. Marine areas Turtles remain present in all annually monitored, CP defined, hotspot areas and no evidence of definitive absences in any other area withing the RMU distribution.	None	Nesting areas Baselines centred on 1992 to be used for established nesting sites. More recent data to be modelled to 1992 era levels for these sites. New and emerging sites to use maximum existing 6- year average as baseline. Marine areas All areas assumed to have turtle presence (in line with updated IUCN-MTSG RMU boundaries) unless proven otherwise.

[45] https://www.medqsr.org/common-indicator-3-species-distributional-range-marine-turtles

Common Indicator 4 (CI4)							
STEP 1 Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		STEP 2 Developing scales of assessment		STEP 3 Developing assessment criteria		STEP 4 Develop threshold and baseline values	
Existing context	Proposed changes	Existing context	Proposals	Existing context	Proposals	Existing context	Proposals
For counts carried out on an annual basis, a number of sites should be selected that represent a sufficiently large proportion of the subregional or national population, with criteria being delineated by expert groups. of selected species[46]	Nesting areas monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National. Up to 7 sites or 75% of national nesting activity (index areas) • Method: ○ standard nest count surveys. • Frequency: ○ Minimum = June/July annually for index areas. ○ six-yearly national scale. Nearshore monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National. Up to 4 sites. • Method: ○ systematic regular monitoring index areas. ○ bycatch/stranding data. • Frequency: ○ biannual monitoring index areas. ○ year-round bycatch/stranding recording.	For counts carried out on an annual basis, a number of sites should be selected that represent a sufficiently large proportion of the subregional or national population, with criteria being delineated by expert groups. The "Demography Working Group" suggests that comprehensive surveys should be carried out every 5 years, with the aim of covering all breeding, foraging, wintering and developmental sites. However, here, it is recommended that the whole coastal and marine area is covered on a national or subregional scale to take into account changes in population	Nesting areas National and Subdivisional level GES assessments based on maintenance of nesting abundance at all sites. Marine areas Subregional GES assessments based on relevant population segments present in each area.	Nesting areas The average breeding population size during at least a decade is suggested as the base level (based on International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List minimal criteria for sea turtles) Marine areas for non-breeding animals at wintering / foraging / developmental sites, number of individuals (n) with appropriate modelling to extrapolate population numbers	Nesting areas Rolling average of previous six years' data to count in the annual assessment. To coincide with the six-yearly regionwide GES assessments. Marine areas Rolling average of previous six years' data to count in the annual assessment. To coincide with the six-yearly regionwide GES assessments. Observations on numbers of turtles in different life-stages and sex ratios to be considered	None.	Nesting areas Baselines centred on 1992 to be used for established nesting sites. More recent data to be modelled to 1992 era levels for these sites. New and emerging sites to use maximum existing 6-year average as baseline. Marine areas GES baseline taken as annual abundance derived from existing modelled

[46] https://www.medqsr.org/common-indicator-4-population-abundance-selected-species-marine-reptiles
Cardona L, et al. (2015) Demography of marine turtles nesting in the Mediterranean Sea: a gap analysis and research priorities. Demography Working Group of the 5th Mediterranean Conference on Sea Turtles. 37pp. Bern Convention, T-PVS/Inf (2015) 1
4 Sparks LM & DiMatteo AD (2020) Loggerhead sea turtle density in the Mediterranean Sea. NUWC-NPT Tech Rep 12360. 77pp.

Common Indicator 5 (CI5)							
STEP 1 Refining scales of monitoring, by revising the existing IMAP proposals and identifying adequate scales for the most relevant species in the Mediterranean context.		STEP 2 Developing scales of assessment		STEP 3 Developing assessment criteria		STEP 4 Develop threshold and baseline values	
Existing context	Proposed changes	Existing context	Proposals	Existing context	Proposals	Existing context	Proposals
A number of sites should be selected that represent a *sufficiently large proportion of the subregional or national population for demographic data to be collected (reflecting the breeding, wintering, foraging and developmental populations that are representative of the region)*[47]. If possible, populations should be selected where animals have been tracked with a	Nesting areas monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National. Up to 7 established sites or 75% of national nesting levels • Methods: ○ Standard: hatchling emergence success (HES) and nest temperature data. ○ Additional: Sex ratio adults • Frequency: ○ Annually, Minimum: Aug./Sept. er for index area HES and May-September for temperature data. April-May for adult sex ratios. ○ six-yearly national scale. Nearshore monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National. Up to 4 index hotspot sites. • Method: ○ systematic regular monitoring index areas. ○ bycatch/stranding data. • Frequency: ○ biannual monitoring index areas. ○ year-round bycatch/stranding recording. ○ six-yearly national scale. Offshore monitoring • Geographic scale: ○ (sub-)National. • Method:	The selected breeding sites should aim to be genetically diverse, so as this diversity can be detected at foraging/ wintering/ developmental grounds where different populations diverge. This will facilitate the selection of marine areas for protection that support the highest genetic diversity (i.e., the greatest accumulation of different breeding populations), as well as those that support single breeding populations, which may be of equal importance. Opportunistic data should be collected from all possible sources, wherever possible, and compiled into a single database, which might be used to provide an overview of the entire area. Knowledge about the sex, health and genetic structure of the different populations/sub-populatio ns will be obtained, by Understanding recruitment and mortality within different parts of a population and across populations. This information is important to understand	Nesting areas National and Subdivision al level GES assessment s. Marine areas Subregional GES assessments.	publication). Most studies that do exist are focused on the breeding areas; thus, greater focus is required at foraging, wintering and developmental areas, with in-water limitations needing to be accounted for in analyses. Therefore, set analyses need to be established that are applicable within and/or across the different habitat types to allow comparison at the Mediterranean level.	Nesting areas Maintenance of suitable hatchling sex ratios and high hatchling emergence success. Marine areas Quantificatio n of bycatch and calculation of bycatch mortality rates. Observations on numbers of turtles in different life-stages and sex ratios to be considered for indications of perturbations in population structure.	No threshold and baseline values have been consistently defined and applied to date.	Nesting Areas 'Good' HES values can be taken from published literature and taken as thresholds with a buffer zone for improved conservation measures. Nest temperature records to be monitored with estimations of over 95% female production as an upper threshold. Marine areas Human-induced mortality as a component of longevity and survivorship is the one factor that can be measured and affected by conservation actions and hence can be considered as an actionable indicator for GES.

[47] https://www.medqsr.org/common-indicator-5-population-demographic-characteristics-marine-reptiles

sufficient number of units (i.e., >50 individuals), from which the connectivity among these different habitat types can be established.	○ Bycatch recording. ○ Opportunistic boat surveying. • Frequency: ○ Year-round bycatch records ○ *Ad hoc* boat surveying. • ○ six-yearly national scale.	whether there are sex-specific mortality risks at different age/size classes, which is important towards aiding population recovery. Also, knowledge on the physical health and genetic health of populations will be obtained, which will indicate the capacity for resilience to human activities, including climate change.					Numbers of deaths should be used as the indicator with a stable or declining trend in numbers indicating GES

PART V: Assessment Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Sea Birds

Table 6. Summary Tables of the methodological approach and results of the analysis on monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria and thresholds and baseline values for the Common Indicators 3,4 and 5 related to seabirds

	Species	Common Indicator	Assessment Criteria	Baseline	Threshold	Scales of Assessment	Scales of Monitoring
1	Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds. % Shift in occupancy	Reference-based baseline: pristine conditions baseline with widest known range in the last 100 years. Modern baseline: If no reliable historic data are available, modern baseline with widest known range in last 20 years	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Regional and sub- regional Temporal: Annual, with reporting every six years	Spatial: National, surveys covering at least all known breeding areas Temporal: Annual where feasible and depending on scale, alternatively one time to two times within six years, linked to IMAP reporting cycles
		CI 4: Population abundance	Annual relative breeding bird abundance (annual abundance / baseline abundance)	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Abundance at the start of the implementation of BD (1981) Alternatively: highest breeding abundance estimate in the last 20 years Additionally: Highest abundance of entering population in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: annual relative breeding and wintering abundance > 0.7	Spatial: Regional and sub- regional (all sub-regions, but with main focus on Western Mediterranean Sea) Temporal: Aiming at annual assessment with reporting every six years	Spatial: National or sub- national (aiming at 100% of known nesting sites) Temporal: Annual
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate: Reproductive success of monitored nests Survival rates of adult and young from capture-mark-resighting (colour-ringing of nestlings)	Model-based baseline: growth rates in the last assessment cycle Population	Deviation from growth rate of 1.0 or higher baseline: Population	Spatial: Regional, sub- Temporal: Annual breeding success and survival rates with reporting every 6 years regional and national	Spatial: National or sub-national, aiming at 100% assessment (all known nests) of reproductive success Representative subsample of accessible nests for colour-ringing of nestlings Temporal: Annual for breeding

							success and survival via reading of colour rings
2	Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding and wintering populations % Shift in occupancy for breeding and wintering population	Reference-based baseline for breeding and wintering population separately: Widest known range in the last 20 years, except a major and reversible decline in the range is known to have taken place before	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National Temporal: Annual
		CI 4: Population abundance	For breeding birds: Annual relative breeding bird abundance For non-breeding birds Annual relative wintering bird abundance	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding abundance estimates and wintering abundance estimates (separately) in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: annual relative breeding and wintering abundance > 0.7	Spatial: Sub-regional Temporal: Every 6 years, linked to IMAP reporting cycle, alternatively every 3 years linked to NE-Atlantic flyway count initiative	Spatial: Breeding population: National or sub-national (at least 40% of the national breeding population and certainly no less than 10% of the national population,) Non-breeding population: sub-national representative number of known sites
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored nests reproductive success Adult survival rates from capture- mark-resighting of monitored nests (colour-ringing of breeding adults) Immature survival rates from capture- mark-resighting (via colour ringing of chicks directly after hatching	Model-based baseline: Population growth rates in the last 6 to 12 years where data is available	Population growth rate to be set close to 1.0 over a 6-year average as requirement to reach GES	Spatial: Sub-regional Temporal: Annual: breeding success from sub-samples Every six years: adult and immature survival	Temporal: Annual Spatial: National or sub-national Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies Temporal: Annual: breeding success Every six years: adult and immature survival

3	Mediterranean Shag *Gulosus aristotelis desmarestii*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	Distribution of breeding colonies, and separately, distribution during non-breeding (July roosts)	Reference-based baseline for breeding and non-breeding population separately: Widest known range in the last 20 years, except a major and reversible decline in the range is known to have taken place before	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline, (potentially re- evaluated at higher threshold due to potentially strong fluctuations between years, alternatively: 10% deviation between averages)	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National Temporal: Annual where feasible and depending on scale, alternatively one time to two times within six years, linked to MSFD reporting cycle
		CI 4: Population abundance	For breeding birds: Annual relative breeding bird abundance For non-breeding birds: Annual relative non-breeding bird abundance	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding and non-breeding abundance estimates in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: Annual relative breeding and non-breeding abundance > 0.7	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six-years	Spatial: Breeding population: National or sub-national (at least 40% of the national breeding population and certainly no less than 10% of the national population) Non-breeding population: sub-national: relevant, representative sites during mid-winter counts Temporal: Annual
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored nests (alternatively count of fledglings pre- dispersal to reduce disturbance) Adult survival rates from capture-mark- resighting of monitored nests (colour-ringing of breeding adults) Immature survival rates from capture-mark-resighting (via colour ringing of chicks), additionally by ratio adult vs first year birds at roosts	Model-based baseline: Population growth rates in the last assessment cycle	Deviation from baseline: Population growth rate of at least 1.0	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six year: adult and immature survival Annual: reproductive success	Spatial: National or sub-national Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies Relevant, representative sites for mid-winter counts Temporal: Annual

			(July counts).				
4	Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds. % Shift in occupancy	Maximum range of breeding colonies as measured in the last 20 years, alternatively since implementation of the BD (1981)	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National, surveys covering all known (major) breeding colonies per country Temporal: Annual highly recommended! (where not feasible 1 to 2 times within a 6 years reporting cycle)
		CI 4: Population abundance	For breeding birds in colonies: Annual relative breeding bird abundance For non-breeding birds during coastal mid-winter roost counts and at bottleneck during post-breeding/ post fledging migration (Gibraltar Strait): Annual relative non-breeding bird abundance	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding and non-breeding abundance estimates in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: annual relative breeding and non-breeding abundance > 0.7	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Annual with reporting every six-years	Spatial: Breeding population: National or sub-national, all (larger) colonies Non-breeding population: sub-national, all known roost sites during mid- winter, bottleneck during outbound migration Temporal: Annual
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored colonies or subsamples Post-fledging, immature and adult survival rates modelled from capture-mark- resighting of birds colour-ringed as chicks in colonies Ratio of first winter versus adult birds from counts at bottleneck and mid- winter roosts for cross-assessment of reproductive output	Model-based population growth rate	Population growth rate 1.0 or higher	Spatial: Sub-regional Temporal: Annual: breeding success, immature and adult survival rates with reporting every six years	Spatial: National or sub-national Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies All-important mid-winter roosts per country for ratio of adult versus 1st winter birds and reading of colour ringed individuals bottleneck (Gibraltar Strait) for ratio of adult versus 1st year during outbound migration

							Temporal: Annual for breeding success, adult and immature survival

5	Slender- billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds. % Shift in occupancy	Average range of breeding colonies as measured in the last 20 years, alternatively since implementation of the BD (1980)	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National, surveys covering all known (major) breeding colonies per country Temporal: Annual if feasible, alternatively 1 to 2 times within a 6 years reporting cycle
		CI 4: Population abundance	For breeding birds in colonies: Annual relative breeding bird abundance For non-breeding birds during coastal mid-winter roost counts and at roosting areas during post-breeding. Annual relative non-breeding bird abundance	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Average breeding and non-breeding abundance estimates in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: Annual relative breeding and non-breeding abundance > 0.7	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Annual with reporting every six-years	Spatial: Breeding population: National or sub-national, all (larger) colonies Non-breeding population: sub-national, all known roost sites during mid- winter Temporal: Annual
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored colonies or subsamples Post-fledging, immature and adult survival rates modelled from capture-mark-resighting of birds colour-ringed as chicks in colonies Ratio of first winter	Model-based population growth rate	Population growth rate 1.0 or higher	Spatial: Sub-regional Temporal: Annual: breeding success, immature and adult survival rates with reporting every six years	Spatial: National or sub-national Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies All-important mid-winter roosts per country for ratio of adult versus 1st winter birds and reading of colour ringed individuals Temporal: Annual for breeding success, adult and immature

			versus adult birds from counts at bottleneck and mid-winter roosts for cross-assessment of reproductive output				survival

6	Lesser- crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis emigratus*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds. % Shift in occupancy	Maximum range of breeding colonies as measured in the last 20 years	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline, set as a preliminary value, potentially to be set lower due to restricted range	Spatial: Sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Annual for breeding success, adult and immature survival
		CI 4: Population abundance	For breeding birds in colonies: Annual relative breeding bird abundance For non-breeding birds during coastal mid-winter roost counts and at bottleneck during post-breeding/ post fledging migration (Gibraltar Strait) Annual relative non-breeding bird abundance	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding and non-breeding abundance estimates in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: annual relative breeding and non-breeding abundance > 0.7	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Annual with reporting every six-years	Spatial: Breeding population: National or sub-national, all (larger) colonies Non-breeding population: sub-national, all known roost sites during mid- winter, bottleneck during outbound migration Temporal: Annual
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored colonies or subsamples Post-fledging, immature and adult survival rates modelled from capture-mark- resighting of birds colour-ringed as chicks in colonies Ratio of first winter versus adult birds from counts at bottleneck	Model-based population growth rate	Population growth rate 1.0 or higher	Spatial: Sub-regional, national (Libya) Temporal: Annual: breeding success, immature and adult survival rates with reporting every six years	Spatial: National or sub-national All colonies Representative subsample of nests/ chicks from these sample colonies All mid-winter aggregations per country for ratio of adult versus 1st winter birds and reading of colour ringed individuals bottleneck (Gibraltar Strait) for ratio of

			and mid- winter roosts for cross-assessment of reproductive output if feasible				adult versus 1st year during outbound migration Temporal: Annual for breeding success, adult and immature survival, alternatively, breeding success every second year to reduce disturbance

7	Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding and wintering birds % Shift in occupancy for breeding and wintering population	Maximum range of breeding colonies as measured in the last 20 years	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National Temporal: Annual where feasible and depending on scale, alternatively one time to two times within six years, linked to EcAp reporting cycles
		CI 4: Population abundance	Relative abundance for breeding and wintering birds	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding and non-breeding abundance estimates in the last 20 years	Annual relative abundance > 0.7	Sub-regional Annual where feasible, with reporting every six- years	Sub-national: Breeding: high- and low-pressure areas > sample of nests Wintering: selection of high- and low-pressure areas or all known areas Temporal: annual

		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored colonies or subsamples Post-fledging, immature and adult survival rates modelled from capture-mark-resighting of birds colour-ringed as chicks in colonies Ratio of first winter versus adult birds from counts at mid-winter roosts for cross-assessment of reproductive output if feasible	Model-based population growth rate	Population growth rate 1.0 or higher	Spatial: Regional, Sub-regional Temporal: Annual: breeding success, immature and adult survival rates with reporting every six years	Spatial: National or sub-national Temporal: Annual for breeding success, adult and immature survival, alternatively, breeding success every second year to reduce disturbance
8	Mediterranean Storm- petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds. % Shift in occupancy	Reference-based baseline: Widest known range in the last 20 years, except a major and reversible decline in the range is known to have taken place before	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National Temporal: Annual where feasible and depending on scale, alternatively one time to two times within six years, linked to EcAp reporting cycles
		CI 4: Population abundance	Annual relative breeding bird abundance	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding abundance estimate in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: Relative annual abundance > 0.8	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National or sub-national (at least 40% of the national population and certainly no less than 10% of the national population, according to suggestions by UNEP/IMAP (2017)) Temporal: every 3 to 6 years

		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate: Adult survival rates from capture-mark-recapture of monitored colonies	Model-based baseline: Average population growth rates if available in the last 6 to 12 years	Average growth rate of at least 1.0	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Aiming at annual monitoring and assessment with reporting every six years	Spatial: National or sub-national, representative subsamples Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies Temporal: Annual

9	Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds. % Shift in occupancy	Reference-based baseline: Widest known range in the last 20 years, except a major and reversible decline in the range is known to have taken place before	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National Temporal: Annual where feasible and depending on scale, alternatively one time to two times within six years, linked to EcAp reporting cycles
		CI 4: Population abundance	Annual relative breeding bird abundance supported by or substituted with raft counts where deemed suitable, following the confirmation of connectivity of rafts with certain colonies by means of GPS-tracking	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Abundance at the start of the implementation of BD (1980): needs to be discussed Highest breeding abundance estimate in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: Relative annual abundance > 0.8	Spatial: Regional or sub-regional Temporal: Aiming at annual monitoring and assessment with reporting every six	Spatial: National or sub-national (at least 40% of the national population and certainly no less than 10% of the national population, according to suggestions by UNEP/IMAP (2017)) Temporal: Annual
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored nests Adult survival rates from capture-mark-recapture of monitored nests	Model-based approach: Population growth rates over one assessment and reporting cycle	Population growth rate of at least 1.0	Spatial: Regional Temporal: Annual	Spatial: National or sub-national Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies Temporal: Annual

10	Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	% Change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds. % Shift in occupancy	Reference-based baseline: Widest known range in the last 20 years, except a major and reversible decline in the range is known to have taken place before	Not more than 10% deviation from baseline	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National Temporal: Annual where feasible and depending on scale, alternatively one time to two times within six years, linked to EcAp reporting cycles
		CI 4: Population abundance	Annual relative breeding bird abundance by combination of methods including CMR in colonies; supported by land-based passage counts in the evening, combined with telemetry were deemed suitable	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding abundance estimate in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: annual relative breeding abundance > 0.9	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Every six years	Spatial: National Temporal: Annual where feasible and depending on scale, alternatively one time to two times within six years, linked to EcAp reporting cycles
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success of monitored nests Adult survival rates from capture-mark-recapture of monitored nests	Model-based approach: Population growth rates over one assessment and reporting cycle	Population growth rate of at least 1.0	Spatial: Regional and sub-regional Temporal: Annual	Spatial: National or sub-national Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies Temporal: Annual

11	Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*	CI3: Species Distributional Range	Distributional pattern: % change in occupancy in distribution range of breeding birds Distributional pattern: % change in at-sea distribution (50% KDE), modelled from representative number of tracked individuals and/or transect line counts % Shift in occupancy	Reference-based 'modern' baseline: Due to unfavorable conservation status (CR): maximum ranges (at sea and regarding breeding colonies) e.g. since start of the implementation of BD (1980)	No negative deviation in range size between assessment cycles due to precarious conservation status. Maximum 10% in range shift between assessment cycles	Spatial: Sub-regional (Balearic islands for breeding, Western Mediterranean Sea (mainly) for at-sea distribution during breeding (relevant OSPAR sub-region during non-breeding) Temporal: Every six years	For breeding range: Balearic Islands, covering at least all known breeding areas Temporal: Annual
		CI 4: Population abundance	Annual relative breeding bird abundance Annual count net maxima of individuals passing bottleneck on migration	Reference-based (modern) baseline: Highest breeding abundance estimate in the last 20 years	Deviation from baseline: annual relative breeding abundance annual relative breeding abundance 1.0 or larger	Spatial: Regional (Western Mediterranean Sea) Temporal: Aiming at annual monitoring and assessment with reporting every six years	Spatial: Sub-national (ideally 100% but at least 90% of the population) Temporal: Annual
		CI5: Population Demographic Characteristics	Population growth rate Reproductive success Adult survival rates from capture-mark-recapture of monitored nests	Model-based approach: Population growth rates over one assessment and reporting cycle	Population growth rate 1.0 or higher	Spatial: sub-regional Temporal: Annual with reporting every six years	Spatial: Sub-national Representative sample of colonies from high pressure vs protected areas Representative subsample of nests from these sample colonies Temporal: Annual

PART VI: Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species (NIS)

Assessment Criteria	Assessment criteria for preparing validated check lists of NIS to be used for assessing GES include a) taxa (all taxa or excluding phytoplankton, parasites); b) species to be considered in trends indicator (extinct species, cryptogenic species, crypto-expanding, questionable species); c) pathways to be considered (all pathways or excluding unaided expanding species, e.g. Lessepsian immigrants). Partly native species, NIS introduced through natural dispersal, unicellular marine algae, parasites, extinct and freshwater species should be reported in NIS lists but considered in CI6 assessments on a case-by-case basis.
Spatial and Temporal Scales of Monitoring and Assessment	Broad Geographic Units: Assessment of threshold values based on the trends indicator (CI6) calculated to date can be achieved at the basin and country level, although it is more meaningful to be assessed at the subregional level (i.e. EcAp subregional units) and, accordingly, at the national part of a subregion for each country, e.g. Greece: EMED, CMED, ADRIA; Italy: WMED, CMED, ADRIA, Tunisia: WMED, CMED. Broad Temporal Scales: For consistency and harmonization reasons, it is recommended that the assessment period of CI6 should be the same across all Mediterranean countries and follow the assessment and reporting 6-year periods already established for EU countries under the MSFD.
Finer scales for NIS monitoring	At basin scale, there are no established standard protocols for the monitoring of NIS. However, guidelines for monitoring NIS in the Mediterranean were developed and endorsed by the CPs to the Barcelona Convention in 2019 under the framework of the EcAp/IMAP (UNEP/MED WG.467/16 (2019) "Monitoring Protocols for IMAP Common Indicators related to Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous species"). The majority of countries do not have a dedicated strategy but have a monitoring strategy including marine NIS applied either at hot-spot areas of the country (i.e. ports, aquaculture units, marine protected areas) or in specific subregions through a related network of sampling stations. Targets of NIS monitoring include mainly the detection of new NIS and the measurement of abundance/coverage/biomass of established and/or invasive NIS, while only a small number of countries monitor the impact of established/invasive NIS on the native communities. The IMAP Common Indicator Guidance propose more intense monitoring effort at "hot-spots" and "steppingstone areas" for non-indigenous species introductions, e.g. sampling at least once a year at ports and their wider area and once every two years in smaller harbours, marinas, and aquaculture sites. Importantly, the same sites should be surveyed each monitoring period, to avoid biases potentially caused by differences among sites.
Threshold Values	Currently, threshold values for the number of new introductions of non-indigenous species have not been set neither at the EU or the Mediterranean level. Ongoing work in the framework of the MSFD (Tsiamis et al., 2021b) has concluded that the most suitable approach for setting threshold values for D2C1 is to adopt the percentage reduction of new NIS and the exact value of percentage reduction should be decided at regional and/or subregional scale, based on the pathways pressure and level of monitoring coverage of each region/subregion. Preliminary analysis of the available data for the Mediterranean between 1970-2017 for the purposes of this report demonstrated that there is a significant increase in the rate of new NIS entering all EcAp subregions after 2000 (presumably as a result of increased scientific effort) and that this parameter is significantly different between EcAp subregions. Consequently, the initial recommendations are that i) the threshold values for CI6 in the Mediterranean need to be set at subregional level and not at regional level and ii) we need to consider data only after 2000s in order to establish today's threshold values. Furthermore, for Mediterranean region/subregions that have not been efficiently monitored in terms of NIS

	during the previous decades, a shorter time span of 6-years cycle periods should be preferred, e.g. 3 years. Conclusively, threshold values should be established separately for each of the Mediterranean subregions and should be sought by examining the data of the last two decades, if not an even more recent time period. At the same time, a consensus needs to be reached about which species groups will be included in the calculations and how their environmental impact will be taken into account. These are decisions that will determine the definition of GES for EO2 and will affect the management obligations of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. As such, it is proposed that further work takes into account the contribution of regional experts not only from the fields of taxonomy, monitoring and assessment but also conservation and management and last, but not least, ecologists with strong statistical/mathematical background
Baseline	The regional baseline (i.e., UNEP/MED WG.521/Inf.8) includes only validated species records observed up to the end of 2020, harmonizing regional and subregional inventories and updating national lists (including the JRC baselines for EU Mediterranean countries). A total of 1,011 non-indigenous species (NIS) have been recorded in Mediterranean marine waters, of which 748 are considered established—an overall establishment rate of nearly 74%, varying by subregion. These include 144 Macrophytes, 224 Mollusca, 188 Arthropoda, 203 Chordata, 83 Annelida, 33 Bryozoa, 42 Cnidaria, 47 Foraminifera, and 47 other taxa. Alien status and record validity have been clarified for most species. Where information was lacking, data-deficient and questionable records were compiled at regional and subregional levels.

Appendix 2

IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter[48]

[48] The Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter (except for Common Indicator 24) have been approved by COP23 (Decision IG.23/3, Annex II)

Appendix 2: IMAP Assessment Criteria for Nutrients, Contaminants and Marine Litter

PART I: Pollution (IMAP EO5 and EO9)

1. The assessment criteria for Common Indicators 13 and 14[49]

Table 1. Major coastal water types in the Mediterranean

	Type I	Type II-A, II-A Adriatic	Type III-W	Type III-E	Type Island-W
σt (density)	<25	25<d<27	>27	>27	All ranges
S (salinity)	<34.5	34.5<S<37.5	>37.5	>37.5	All ranges

Note: With the view to assess eutrophication, the classification scheme on Chl a concentration (in µg/l)is optimal in coastal waters as a parameter easily applicable by all Mediterranean countries based on the indicative thresholds and reference values presented in Table 3.
Note: The major coastal water types are also indicative of the part of offshore waters next to coastal waters; however, it should be used with caution in the offshore (open) areas.

Table 2. Coastal water types reference conditions and boundary values in the Mediterranean, along with the new and updated values for coastal and open (offshore) waters in the Adriatic Sea Sub-region[50].
(Reference conditions and boundary (Good/Moderate status) values, expressed as G_mean annual values, are based on long time series (>5 years) of monthly sampling at least, which differ from type to type on the sub-regional scale, and therefore, were built with different strategies).

	Coastal waters					
	Reference conditions of *c*(Chl*a*) (µg/L)		Boundaries of *c*(Chla) (µg/L) for G/M status		Reference conditions of *c*(TP) (µmol/L)	Boundaries of *c*(TP) (µmol/L) for G/M status
Water Typology	*G_mean*	90% percentile	*G_mean*	90% percentile		
Type I	1.19[22]	3.33[b]	4.1[22]	10		
Type I Adriatic	1.40	3.94	5.0[a]	14.1	0.19 [a]	0.55 [a]
Type II-A-FR-SP[d]	0.78[51]	1.9	1.48[22]	3.50[52]	-	-
Type II-A Adriatic	0.33	0.87	1.5	4.0	0.16 [a]	0.48 [a]
Type II-A[e] Tyrrhenian	0.32	0.77	1.2	2.9	-	-
Type III-W Adriatic[c]	-	-	0.64[f]	1.7[f]	-	0.26
Type III-W Tyrrhenian	-	-	0.48	1.17	-	-
Type III-W-FR-SP	0.37[22]	0.9	0.74[22]	1.89[53]	-	-
Type III-E		0.1		0.4		
Type Island-W		0.6		1.2-1.22		

	Open (offshore) waters in the Adriatic Sea Sub-region			
Water Typology	**Reference conditions**	**Boundaries of *c*(Chl*a*) (µg/L)**	**Reference conditions of *c*(DIN) (µmol/L)**	**Boundaries of *c*(DIN) (µmol/L) for G/M status**

[49] For ease of reference, the Secretariat included the values as approved by Decisions IG.22/7 (COP 19) and IG. 23/6 (COP 20) which are shown in shaded cells.
[50] The new values are calculated based on data as available by December 2022.
[51] Gmean values corresponding to the reference and boundary values of Chla (expressed as the 90th percentile) are provided for Type II A FR SP and Type III W FR SP, along with the corrected calculation of Gmean value for Type I, compared to those included in Decisions IG.22/7 and IG.26/3, shown in blue shaded cells.
[52] The value of 3.58 µg/L is corrected to 3.50 µg/L for Type II A FR SP in comparison to the values provided in Decision IG.22/7 on Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (COP 19, 2016) and Decision IG.26/3 on 2023 MED QSR and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean (COP 23, 2023), following the identification of an error by the Joint Meeting of CorMon on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring held on 27–28 May 2025 in relation to the boundary values used in the 2023 MED QSR.

[53] The value of 1.80 µg/L is corrected to 1.89 µg/L for type III W FR SP in comparison to the values provided in Decisions IG.22/7 and Decision IG.26/3, following the identification of an error by the Joint Meeting of CorMon on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring held on 27–28 May 2025 in relation to the boundary values used in the 2023 MED QSR.

	of *c*(Chl*a*) (µg/L)		for G/M status			
	G_mean	90 % percentile	*G_mean*	90 % percentile		
Type I Adriatic	0.15[g]; 0.29[h]	0.42[f]; 0.81[g]	3.1	8.7	0.21[g]; 0.66[h]	22.3
Type II-A Adriatic	0.11	0.29	-	-	-	-
Type III-W Adriatic [c]	-	-	0.64	1.7	-	-

[a] *From Giovanardi et al, 2018*
[b] *Applicable to Golf of Lion Type I coastal waters*
[c] *The ecological classification scheme would not be suitable for proper and safe classification, and therefore the boundary values for WT III-W Adriatic waters are based on the H/G values for WT II-A Adriatic in coastal waters i.e. 0.64 µg/L for Chla and 0,26 µmol/L for TP*
[d] *Correction of error included to ensure consistency with the classification as provided in Commission Decision 2013/480/EU i.e. Type II -FR-SP, as included in Decision IG.22/7, replaced with Type II -A-FR-SP*
[e] *Correction of error included to ensure consistency with the classification as provided in Commission Decision 2013/480/EU i.e., Type II-A Tyrrhenian replaced Type II-B Tyrrhenian, as included in Decision IG.22/7, since the latter does not exist in the Tyrrhenian Sea*
[f] *values based on the H/G values for WT II-A[c] The ecological classification scheme would not be suitable for proper and safe classification, and therefore the boundary values for WT III-W Adriatic waters are based on the H/G values for WT II-A Adriatic in coastal waters i.e. 0.64 µg/L for Chla and 0,26 µmol/L for TP*
[g] *for ME;* [h] *for HR, IT*
[h] *No pressure – effect relationship was found, and therefore RC for DIN and boundary G/M values for Chla and DIN could not be proposed.*

2. The assessment criteria for IMAP Common Indicator 17[54][55]

2.1The BC and BAC values for IMAP Common Indicator 17

Table 3. The BC and BAC values for trace metals in sediments. The units of concentration are given in µg/kg dry wt, as requested by IMAP.

The BC and BAC values for trace metals in sediments					
The BC values in sediments, µg/kg dry wt					
TM	MED	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
Cd	107	140	120	#	78.9
Hg	50.0	90.0	50.0	#	31.5
Pb	15000	16000	15700	1805	15674
The BAC values in sediments, (µg/kg dry wt)					
	Med	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
Cd	161	210	180	#	118
Hg	75.0	135	75.0	#	47.3
Pb	22500	24000	23550	2708	23511
*#All data points for Cd are **BDL** as well as 72% of the Hg data points.*					

[54] For ease of reference, the Secretariat included the values as approved by Decisions IG.22/7 0F (COP 19) and IG. 23/6 (COP 20) which are shown in shaded cells.
[55] The new values are calculated based on data as available by December 2022.

Table 4. The BC and BAC values for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons **(**PAHs) in sediments. The units of concentration are given in µg/kg dry wt, as requested by IMAP.

The BC and BAC values for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) in sediments					
	The BC values in sediments, µg/kg dry wt				
PAH compounds	MED	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
Naphthalene	2.00	8.0	2.0	#	2.3
Acenaphthylene	(1.0)#	#	#	0.4	#
Acenaphthene	(2.0)#	#	#	*	#
Fluorene	(2.0)#	#	#	0.4	#
Phenanthrene	3.10	14.9	3.5	0.8	3.1
Anthracene	(2.2)#	#	#	#	#
Fluoranthene	5.00	#	7.0	0.1	2.7
Pyrene	6.20	24.8	8.0	0.4	3.0
Benzo[a]anthracene	3.38	19.7	4.1	*	1.8
Chrysene	2.70	35.9	4.6	1.6	1.6
Benzo(b)fluoranthene	5.00	8.7	15.0	*	2.6
Benzo(k)fluoranthene	4.00	#	3.0	*	#
Benzo[a]pyrene	(4.0)#	#	4.0	#	1.0
Benzo[g,h,i]perylene	(4.2)#	#	5.7	*	1.8
Dibenz[a,h]anthracene	(1.0)#	7.0	#	*	#
Indeno[1,2,3-c,d]pyrene	(4.0)#	#	4.4	*	2.1
Sum PAHs	27.4	160	41.0	6.3	21.4
	The BAC values in sediments, µg/kg dry wt				
PAH compounds	MED	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
Naphthalene	3.0	12.0	3.0	#	3.5
Acenaphthylene	(1.5)#	#	#	0.6	#
Acenaphthene	(3.0)#	#	#	*	#
Fluorene	(3.0)#	#	#	0.5	#
Phenanthrene	4.7	22.4	5.3	1.2	4.7
Anthracene	(3.3)#	#	#	#	#
Fluoranthene	7.5	#	10.5	0.2	4.1
Pyrene	9.3	37.1	12.0	0.6	4.5
Benzo[a]anthracene	5.1	29.6	6.2	*	2.7
Chrysene	4.0	53.9	6.9	2.4	2.4
Benzo(b)fluoranthene	7.5	13.0	22.5	*	3.8
Benzo(k)fluoranthene	6.0	#	4.5	*	#
Benzo[a]pyrene	(6.0)#	#	6.0	#	1.5
Benzo[g,h,i]perylene	(6.3)#	#	8.6	*	2.7
Dibenz [a,h]anthracene	(1.5)#	10.5	#	*	#
Indeno[1,2,3-c,d]pyrene	(6.0)#	15.0	6.5	*	3.2
Sum PAHs	41.0	240	61.5	9.5	32.0

*#most data (>50%) below detection limit, * no data reported*

Table 5. The BC and BAC values for trace metals in mussel (*M. galloprovincialis*) and fish (*M. barbatus*) . The units of concentration are given as requested by IMAP.

The BC and BAC values for trace metals in mussel soft tissue (*M. galloprovincialis*), µg /kg dry wt					
The BC values					
TM	**MED**	**WMS**	**ADR**	**CEN**	**AEL**
Cd	710	1030	629	*	942>
Hg	77.9	85.0	75.4	*	110>
Pb	1100	1260	1000	*	2300>
The BAC values					
TM	**MED**	**WMS**	**ADR**	**CEN**	**AEL**
Cd	1065	1545	944	*	1413>
Hg	117	128	113	*	165>
Pb	1650	1890	1500	*	3450>

** Only a few data points were available for the CEN. The calculated BCs were lower than in other sub-regions, however, the few data are not representative of the CEN.*
> Since new data were not available in the AEL to update BC/BAC values for M. galloprovincialis, it was approved to use the values calculated in 2019.

The BC and BAC values for trace metals in fish muscle *(Mullus barbatus*), µg/kg wet wt					
The BC values					
TM	**MED**	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
Cd	3.9	*	5.3	*	3.6
Hg	40.6	*	120	*	33.7
Pb	18.3	*	40.8	*	13.5
BAC values					
	MED	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
Cd	7.8	*	10.6	*	7.2
Hg	81.2	*	240	*	67.4
Pb	36.6	*	81.6	*	27.0

** Given the lack of data, it was not possible to propose values for BC in these sub-regions, therefore it was approved to use the regional MED BC values for the GES assessment*

Table 6. The BC and BAC values for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons **(**PAHs) in mussel (*M. galloprovincialis)* . The unit of concentration is given in µg/kg dry wt, as requested by IMAP. No data were available for the CEN and the AEL Sub-regions.

The BC and BAC values for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) in mussel (*M. galloprovincialis),* µg/kg dry wt			
BC values			
	MED	WMS	ADR
Naphthalene	0.56	0.52	#
Acenaphthylene	(0.05)[#]	#	#
Acenaphthene	(0.50)[#]	#	#
Fluorene	2.50	7.87	#
Phenanthrene	5.35	19.9	2.25
Anthracene	1.12	0.94	#
Fluoranthene	4.83	10.0	#
Pyrene	2.50	5.54	#
Benzo[a]anthracene	0.60	0.69	#
Chrysene	2.54	2.98	#
Benzo(b)fluoranthene	1.00	1.36	#
Benzo(k)fluoranthene	1.00	0.73	#
Benzo[a]pyrene	(1.00)[#]	0.94	#
Benzo[g,h,i]perylene	1.00	0.67	#
Dibenz[a,h]anthracene	(0.10)[#]	#	#
Indeno[1,2,3-c,d]pyrene	(0.63)[#]	0.29	#
Sum 16 PAHs.[56]	5.80	5.60	6.60
The BAC values			
	MED	WMS	ADR
Naphthalene	0.84	0.79	#
Acenaphthylene	(0.08)[#]	#	#
Acenaphthene	(0.75)[#]	#	#
Fluorene	3.75	11.8	#
Phenanthrene	8.03	29.8	3.38
Anthracene	1.68	1.40	#
Fluoranthene	7.25	15.0	#
Pyrene	3.75	8.31	#
Benzo[a]anthracene	0.90	1.04	#
Chrysene	3.81	4.46	#
Benzo(b)fluoranthene	1.50	2.04	#
Benzo(k)fluoranthene	1.50	1.09	#
Benzo[a]pyrene	(1.50)[#]	1.42	#
Benzo[g,h,i]perylene	1.50	1.01	#
Dibenz[a,h]anthracene	(0.14)[#]	#	#
Indeno[1,2,3-c,d]pyrene	(0.94)[#]	0.43	#
Sum 16 PAHs	8.70	8.40	9.90

[#]*most data (>50%) below detection limit;*

[56] Data dictionary gives 2 additional categories: Sum 4 PAHs Benzo(a)pyrene, Benzo(b)fluoranthene, Benzo(k)fluoranthene, Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene) and Sum 5 PAHs (Benzo(a)pyrene, Benzo(b)fluoranthene, Benzo(k)fluoranthene, Benzo(ghi)perylene, Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene). It is suggested that they be considered for use in the future data reporting.

Table 7. The BAC values for organochlorinated contaminants (PCBs and pesticides) in sediments and mussel (*M. galloprovincialis*). The unit of concentrations is given in µg/kg dry wt, as requested by IMAP. For sediments, very limited data were available for the CEN sub-region, while for biota no data were available for the CEN and AEL sub-regions. When most (>50%) of the data points were below the detection limit for the sub-regions, BACs were not calculated.

The BAC values for organochlorinated contaminants (PCBs and pesticides) in sediments and mussel (*M. galloprovincialis*)					
SEDIMENTS, µg/kg dry wt	MED	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
PCBs					
PCB28	0.10	#	#	#	0.09
PCB52	0.07	0.10	0.09	#	0.04
PCB101	0.10	0.16	0.16	*	#
PCB118	0.10	0.46	0.18	#	0.01
PCB138	0.11	0.26	0.24	#	#
PCB153	0.14	0.40	0.28	#	0.02
PCB180	0.09	0.13	0.13	#	#
Sum 7 PCBs	0.40	1.60	0.21	#	0.19
Pesticides					
γ-HCH (Lindane)	(0.1)[#]	#	#	*	0.02
DDE(p,p')	(0.1)[#]	0.23	#	#	*
Hexachlorobenzene	(0.1)[#]	#	#	#	*
Dieldrin	(0)[#]		#	#	#
BIOTA – MG, µg/kg dry wt	MED	WMS	ADR	CEN	AEL
PCBs					
PCB28	0.20	0.07	1.38	*	*
PCB52	0.38	0.3	0.5	*	*
PCB101	1.20	1.1	1.4	*	*
PCB118	1.23	1.5	1.4	*	*
PCB138	2.31	2.4	3.3	*	*
PCB153	3.45	4.6	4.6	*	*
PCB180	0.50	0.3	0.5	*	*
Sum 7 PCBs	18.4	28.6	17.3	*	*
Pesticides					
γ-HCH (Lindane)	(1.0)[#]	#	#	*	*
DDE(p,p')	3.05	3.05	*	*	*
Hexachlorobenzene	(0.5)[#]	#	#	*	*
Dieldrin	(1.0)[#]	#	*	*	*

*# most data (>50%) below detection limit. * no data reported*

2.2The Environmental Assessment Criteria (EAC) values for IMAP CI 17

Table 8. The Mediterranean EAC values for trace metals in sediments and biota, as endorsed by Decision IG.23/6

The Mediterranean EAC values for trace metals in sediments and biota			
TM	**MedEAC***	**#MedEAC**	**#MedEAC**
	Sediments, µg/kg dry wt	***M. galloprovincialis*, µg/kg dry wt**	***Mullus barbatus*, µg/kg wet wt**
	IG.23/6	IG.23/6	IG.23/6
Cd	1200	5000	50
Hg	150	2500&	1000
Pb	46700	7500	300

** Med EAC values equal to ERL (Effects Range Low, Long et al. 1995, idem OSPAR values). # Med EAC values equal to the maximum regulatory levels for contaminants in foodstuffs as provided in EC/EU 1881/2006 and 629/2008 Directives*
& Not included in EU directives, but adopted by OSPAR

Table 9. The Mediterranean EAC values for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons **(**PAHs) in sediments and biota, as endorsed by Decisions IG.23/6 and IG.22/7, along with a few updated values to ensure consistency with ERL Long et al., and OSPAR EAC values

The Mediterranean EAC values for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) in sediments and biota				
	Sediments, µg/kg dw		**Biota Mussels, µg/kg dw**	
PAH compounds	**EAC* IG.22/7 and IG.23/6 - OSPAR and ERLs**	**ERL Long et al, 1995#**	**EAC** IG.22/7 and IG.23/6 - OSPAR**	**OSPAR#**
Naphthalene		160		340
Acenaphthylene		44		
Acenaphthene		16		
Fluorene		19		
Phenanthrene	240		1700	
Anthracene	85		290	
Fluoranthene	600		110	
Pyrene	660		100	
Benzo[a]anthracene	261		80	
Chrysene	384			
Benzo(b)fluoranthene				
Benzo(k)fluoranthene			260	
Benzo[a]pyrene	430		600	
Benzo[g,h,i]perylene	85		110	
Dibenz [a,h]anthracene		63.4		
Indeno[1,2,3-c,d]pyrene	240			
Sum 16 PAHs		4022		

** Med EAC values equal to ERL (Effects Range Low, Long et al. 1995, idem OSPAR values)*
*** Med EAC values equal to OSPAR values*
 # Med EAC values equal to ERL (Effects Range Low, Long et al., 1995) which were not included in Decisions IG.22/7 and IG.23/6.

Table 10. The Mediterranean EAC values for organochlorinated contaminants (PCBs and pesticides) in sediments and biota, as endorsed by Decisions IG.23/6 and IG.22/7 along with the one updated value**.**

The Mediterranean EAC values for organochlorinated contaminants (PCBs and pesticides) in sediments and biota					
	Sediments			**Mussel**	**Fish**
PCBs	**EAC[#] IG.22/7 (µg/kg dry wt) – updated**	**EAC* IG.22/7 (µg/kg dry wt)**	**EAC** IG.23/6 (µg/kg dry wt)**	**EAC** IG.22/7 and IG.23/6 (µg/kg dry wt)**	**EAC** IG.22/7 and IG.23/6 (µg/kg lipid)**
CB28			1.7	3.2	64
CB52			2.7	5.4	108
CB101			3	6	120
CB118			0.6	1.2	24
CB138			7.9	15.8	316
CB153			40	80	1600
CB180			12	24	480
Sum 7 PCBs	67,9				
Pesticides					
γ-HCH (Lindane)		3		1.45	11 µg/kg ww
DDE(p,p')		2.2		5-50	
Hexachlorobenzene		20			
Dieldrin		2		5-50	

** ERL (Effects Range Low, (Long et al., 1995) or used by OSPAR (2009)*

*** From OSPAR (2009)*

#The EAC value of 11.5 µg/kg dry wt in Decision IG 22/7 originated probably from Long et al, 1995 as explained in document UNEP/MED 427/Inf.3. However, Long et al.,1995 present the ERL value of 22.7 µg/kg dry wt for Total PCBs in sediments but do not specify which congeners were considered. Moreover, OSPAR has not adopted an EAC value for the sum of 7 PCBs in sediments. Therefore, further to experience related to the preparation of the assessments within the 2023 MED QSR, the EAC value of 67,9 is included to present the sum of 7 individual IMAP PCB congeners.

3. The Environmental Assessment Criteria (EAC) values for IMAP CI 18[57]

Table 11. The Mediterranean BACs and EACs for biomarkers in mussel (*M. galloprovincialis*) as endorsed by Decisions IG.22/7 and IG.23/6.

The Mediterranean BACs and EACs for biomarkers in mussel (*M. galloprovincialis*)				
Biomarkers/Bioassays and units	BACs IG.23/6 in Mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincilais)*	EACs IG.23/6 in Mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincilais)*	BACs IG.22/7 in Mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincilais)*	EACs IG.22/7 in Mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincilais*)
Lysosomal membrane stability Neutral Red Retention Assay (minutes)			120[a*]	50 [a*]
Lysosomal membrane stability Cytochemical method (minutes)			20 [a*]	10 [a*]
AChE activity (nmol min-1 mg-1 protein) in gills (French Mediterranean waters)			29	20
AChE activity (nmol min^{-1} mg^{-1} protein) in gills (Spanish Mediterranean waters)			15	10
Stress on Stress (days)	11	5		
Metallothioneins (µg/g digestive gland)	247			
Micronuclei frequency (number of cases /1000 cells) in haemocytes)	1			

[a]Technical annex: assessment criteria for biological effects measurements. Integrated monitoring of chemicals and their effects. ICES Cooperative Research Report No. 315. Davies, I.M. and Vethaak, A.D.Eds.
**Moore et al., 2006 (Standard values adopted by ICES)*

[57] For ease of reference, the Secretariat included the values as approved by Decisions IG.22/7 of (COP 19) and IG.23/6 (COP 20) which are shown in shaded cells.

4. The Environmental Assessment Criteria (EAC) related to IMAP Common Indicator 20

Table 12. The Mediterranean EACs values for CI 20 related to trace metals based on the maximum regulatory levels for trace metals in foodstuffs for the protection of human health, as provided in EC/EU Directives1881/2006 and its amendments 488/2014 and 1005/2015. The concentrations are presented in mg/kg wet wt.

The EAC CI 20 for trace metals- EU 1881/2006 directive and its amendments 488/2014 and 1005/2015			
	TM, mg/kg wet wt		
matrix	**Cd**	**Hg**	**Pb**
fish muscle	0.05-0.25	0.5-1	0.3
cephalopods	1		1
crustaceans	0.5	0.5	0.5
bivalve mollusc	1		1.5

Table 13. The Mediterranean EAC values for IMAP CI 20 related to Benzo(a)pyrene and sum of four PAHs based on the maximum regulatory levels for these contaminants in foodstuffs for the protection of human health, as provided in EC/EU EC Regulations 835/2011 and 1259/2011 amending Regulation (EC) 1881/200.6. The concentrations are presented in µg/kg wet wt.

The EACs values for CI 20 related to Benzo(a)pyrene and sum of four PAHs (benzo(a)pyrene, benz(a)anthracene, benzo(b)fluorantheneand chrysene) - EC Regulation (EC) 1881/2006 and amendments 835/2011 and 1259/2011		
Matrix	**Maximum levels (µg kg^{-1} wet wt)**	
	Benzo(a) pyrene	**Sum of Benzo(a) pyrene, Benzo(a) anthracene, Benzo(a) fluoranthene and chrysene**
Smoked fish muscle	2-5	12-30
Smoked bivalve mollusc	6	35
Bivalve mollusk (fresh, chilled or frozen)	5	30

Table 14. The Mediterranean EAC values for CI 20 related to Dioxins and PCBs based on the maximum regulatory levels for these contaminants in foodstuffs for the protection of human health, as provided in EC/EU EC Regulation 1259/2011 amending EC Regulation 1881/2006. The concentrations are presented in wet wt.

The EACs values for CI 20 related to Dioxins and PCBs – EC Regulation 1259/2011 amending EC Regulation 1881/2006			
Foodstuffs	**Maximum levels**		
	Sum of dioxins (WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ) (1) pg g^{-1} ww	**Sum of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBS (WHO-PCDD/F-PCB-TEQ) (1) pg g^{-1} ww**	**Sum of PCB28, PCB52, PCB101, PCB138, PCB153 and PCB180 (ICES 6) ng g^{-1} ww**
Fish muscle	3.5	6.5	75
Fish liver	3.5	20	200
Eel muscle	3.5	10	300

(1) Dioxins (sum of polychlorinated dibenzo-para-dioxins (PCDDs) and polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDFs), expressed as World Health Organisation (WHO) toxic equivalent using the WHO-toxic equivalency factors (WHO-TEFs)) and sum of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs (sum of PCDDs, PCDFs and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), expressed as WHO toxic equivalent using the WHO-TEFs). WHO-TEFs for human risk assessment based on the conclusions of the World Health Organization (WHO) (For TEF values see note 31, (EC) Regulation 1259/2011 – Annex 1.1.9.).
Where fish are intended to be eaten whole, the maximum level shall apply to the whole fish.

PART II: Marine Litter (IMAP – EO10)[58]

5. Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Common Indicator 22

Table 15: Baseline Values and Threshold Values for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (i.e., beach macrolitter).

IMAP Indicator	Categories of Marine Litter	Baseline Values (BV – 2021)	Threshold Value (TV – 2021)
Common Indicator 22	Beach Macro-litter	369 items/100m	130 items/100m

6. Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Common Indicator 23

Table 16. Baseline Values and Threshold Values for IMAP Common Indicator 23 (i.e., seafloor macrolitter, floating microplastic).

IMAP Indicator	Categories of Marine Litter	Baseline Values (BV – 2023)	Threshold Value (TV – 2023)
Common Indicator 23	Seafloor Macro-litter	135 items/km^2	38 items/km^2
Common Indicator 23	Floating Microplastics	0.044338 items/m^2	0.000845 items/m^2

7. Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Common Indicator 24[59]

Table 17. Updated Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Common Indicator 24 (i.e., for ingestion and entanglement on *Caretta caretta*).

IMAP Common Indicator 24	Updated BV (2025)	Proposed TV (2025)
Common Indicator24: Ingestion	0.07 gr dry weight ML ingested[60]	0.01 gr dry weight ML ingested
Common Indicator24: Entanglement	35% affected sample	9% affected sample

8. Environmental Targets for Marine Litter

Table 18. Intermediate (IET) and Final (FET) Environmental Targets for IMAP EO10 Marine Litter Common Indicators.

IMAP Common Indicator (CI)	Marine Litter Categories	Threshold Value	ML Average Concentrations*	IET 2026	IET 2028	IET 2030	FET		
							Value	by:	RP**
CI22 (item/100m)	Beach Macrolitter	130	6,425±9,075	150	-	-	130	Approx. 2027	65%
CI23 (item/km^2)	Seafloor Macrolitter	38	570± 2,588	66	58	50	38	> 2030	63%
CI23 (item/m^2)	Floating Microplastics	0.000845	0.36 ± 1.9	0.015	0.010	0.008	0.000845	> 2030	80%

[58] Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP EO10 (Marine Litter) are subject to update for the third iteration of the MED QSR.
[59] Values for ingestion and entanglement were revised further to the review of the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring (Anavyssos, Greece, 27 -28 May 2025). The detailed elaboration and applied methodology with regards to the updated values is provided in WG.627/Inf.10.

[Draft Decision IG.27/7

Draft amendments to the "*Common Criteria for proposing amendments to Annexes II and III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean*" and amendments to Annexes II and III to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled *"Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",*

Recalling the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), its goals A and B and targets 4, 5 and 9 and other important decisions underpinning its implementation adopted by 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Montreal, Canada, 7 - 19 December 2022),

Having regard to Article 10 of the Barcelona Convention, and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, and in particular Articles 14 and 16 thereof, on the procedure to amend the annexes to the Protocol and the adoption of common criteria for the inclusion of additional species in the annexes to the Protocol respectively,

Recalling Decision IG.17/14 on the Common Criteria for proposing amendments to Annexes II and III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 15th meeting (COP 15, Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008),

Reaffirming the need to ensure that the lists of species appearing in Annexes II and III to the Protocol are updated, taking into account the evolution of the conservation status of species, changes occurred in taxonomy, the need for additional protection and the emergence of new scientific data,

Emphasising the importance of ensuring harmonisation between Annexes II and III to the Protocol and the relevant annexes to other international and/or regional conventions and agreements pertaining to the preservation of species,

Considering the proposals submitted by Albania, Israel, Greece and Spain at the 17th Meeting of Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Focal Points (Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025) to amend Annexes II and III to the SPA/BD Protocol to include:

- three species of cartilaginous fishes in Annex II to the SPA/BD "List of endangered or threatened species":
    - **From Albania**
        - *Centrophorus uyato* (Rafinesque, 1810)
        - *Dalatias licha* (Bonnaterre, 1788)
    - **From Israel**

- *Echinorhinus brucus* (Bonnaterre, 1788)

- six species of sponges in Annex II "List of endangered or threatened species":

  - **From Greece**
    - *Neophrissospongia* spp. Pisera & Lévi, 2002
  - **From Spain**
    - *Foraminospongia balearica* Díaz, Ramírez-Amaro & Ordines, 2021
    - *Haliclona poecillastroides* (Vacelet, 1969)
    - *Leiodermatium* spp. Schmidt, 1870
    - *Pheronema carpenteri* (Thomson, 1869)
    - *Poecillastra compressa* (Bowerbank, 1866)

- Four species of cartilaginous fish species to be removed from Annex III to the SPA/BD Protocol "List of species whose exploitation i s regulated" and included in Annex II "List of endangered or threatened species":

  - **From Israel**
    - *Alopias vulpinus* (Bonnaterre, 1788)
    - *Carcharhinus plumbeus* (Nardo, 1827)
    - *Centrophorus* spp. (Müller & Henle, 1837)
    - *Prionace glauca* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Recalling Decision IG.25/11 on the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO), and its goals aiming to reduce the threats to biodiversity and ensure that biodiversity is preserved and maintained or enhanced in order to meet people's needs, targets (T.1.1, T.1.2, T.1.3, T.1.4, T.1.5, T.1.6, T.1.7, T.1.8, T.2.1 and T2.2) and actions (1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 35) adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 22nd Meeting (COP 22, Antalya, Türkiye,7-10 December 2021),

Recalling the mandate of the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), as laid down in Decision IG.19/5 on the Mandates of the Components of MAP, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 16th Meeting (COP 16, Marrakesh, Morocco, 3-5 November 2009), and its relevance to the implementation of this Decision,

Having considered the report of the 17th Meeting of Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Focal Points (Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025),

1. *Adopt* the amendments to the "Common Criteria for proposing amendments to Annexes II and III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean", set out in Annex I to the present Decision;

2. *Adopt* the amendments to Annexes II and III to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, set out in Annex II to the present Decision[1];

3. *Request* the Secretariat to notify without delay the Depositary of the amendments to Annexes II and III to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean;

[1] Tunisia: reservation regarding Carcharhinus plumbeus, *Centrophorus spp. (Centrophorus uyato)* and *Prionace glauca*
Libya: reservation regarding the amendment proposal for the cartilaginous species

4. *Request the Depositary to communicate to all Contracting Parties the adopted amendments without delay, pursuant to Article 23(2)(iii) of the Barcelona Convention, which will become effective 60 days after the notification by the Depositary, in accordance with Article 23(2)(iv)(v) and (vi) of the Barcelona Convention;*

5. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to take, at national level, the necessary measures for the effective implementation of conservation of the species included in the annexes II and III to the SPA/BD Protocol;

6. *Request* the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to assist the Contracting Parties, based on the available budget, in the implementation of the necessary conservation and management measures of the species included in the Annexes II and III to the SPA/DB Protocol, including through resource mobilisation activities.
]

Annex I

Amendments to the "*Common Criteria for proposing amendments to Annexes II and III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean*"

General principles

1. The present criteria will apply to the evaluation of proposals for:

- inclusion of new species in Annexes II and III of the Protocol;
- removing species from these annexes;
- transferring species from one of the said annexes to the other;
- modifying the names of species, as a result of changes occurred in taxonomy.

2. No limit is set either on the total number of species included in Annexes II and III of the Protocol, nor on the number of species that an individual Party can propose for inclusion in these annexes. However, Parties agree that species will be selected on a scientific basis and will be included in the Annexes based on their conservation status; they will therefore have to conform to the conditions laid out in the Protocol and to one or several of the following criteria:

- The IUCN Red List[2] categories and criteria developed for assessing the conservation status of species are used by most international conventions. It is recommended that they be used for assessing the status of species when examining proposals for amending Annexes II and III of the Protocol.

- A species that is threatened outside the Mediterranean region and is known to be occasionally or marginally present in the Mediterranean may be considered for inclusion in the Annexes to the Protocol unless it is a potential invasive species.

- The World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS)[3] is recognised as the basis on which the Annexes II and III to the SPA/BD Protocol and amendments thereto, are prepared. Parties agree to follow a conservative approach in the use of the online reference to update names of listed species.

- The following rules are adopted for the treatment of cases of synonymy, generic changes, species splitting and species aggregation (lumping) as a result of a change of standard nomenclatural reference:

  - Synonymy and generic change: corrections can be made automatically as there is no change of status for any listed population;

  - Splitting: when a listed taxon is split into two or more, each of the resulting taxa retains the listing status of the former aggregated taxon; and

  - Aggregation (lumping): if a taxon listed in either Annex II or Annex III is merged with one or more unlisted taxa, under its name or that of one of the unlisted taxa, the entire aggregate taxon will be listed in the Annex that included the originally listed, narrower taxon in all cases where the unlisted entity thus added has the same conservation status as, or a worse one then, the one of the previously listed taxon.

3. The criteria listed below do not figure either in order of importance or of priority.

Common Criteria to be applied in evaluating proposals for inclusion of species in Annex II of the

[2] (a) IUCN 2001. IUCN red list Categories and criteria. Version 3.l. Species Survival Commission, Gland. (b) IUCN 2003. Guidelines for the Application of IUCN red list Criteria on the regional level. Version 3.0 Species Survival Commission. Gland. The two documents can be downloaded from: https://www.iucnredlist.org/resources/categories-and-criteria.
[3] WoRMS (https://www.marinespecies.org) integrates databases like AlgaeBase, FishBase, MolluscaBase, and others covering marine taxa (e.g., amphipods, sponges, sea anemones). Full list at WoRMS.

Protocol as adopted by the Fifteenth Ordinary Meeting (COP 15; Almeria, January 2008

4. A species can be included in Annex II to the Protocol if, on the basis of reliable scientific data, it is demonstrated that:

    - the **species is in decline** with a substantial reduction in its numbers (observed, estimated, inferred or suspected); or that
    - **important reductions** (including fragmentation) **of its habitats** have been observed in the Mediterranean; or that
    - the **species or its Mediterranean population** figures on **the IUCN Red List as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable** or appears in the **IUCN-ACCOBAMS Cetacean Red List**.

5. **Habitat building species and those at the basis of important biological formations** for the Mediterranean may be included in Annex II of the Protocol if important regressions of the said habitats or of the areas covered by the said formations have been observed, inferred or suspected over the last 10 years.

6. **A species endemic to a country, or a group of countries**, may be included in Annex II of the Protocol at the proposal of the country, or of the group of countries in question.

7. The inclusion of a species in Annex II of the Protocol may be decided if it proves necessary to the adequate **implementation of conservation measures advocated for a species already included** in the said annex.

Common Criteria to be applied in evaluating proposals for the inclusion of species in Annex III of the Protocol as adopted by the Fifteenth Ordinary Meeting (COP 15; Almeria, January 2008

8. A species may be included in Annex III of the Protocol if:

    - **statistical data show a regression of more than 50%** of landings over the past 5 years; or

    - unless its exploitation is regulated, it is likely to fall into the **category of endangered or threatened species** as defined by the Protocol.

9. A species may be included in Annex III of the Protocol if the techniques used to exploit it are destructive to biological formations or habitats listed on the reference list of habitats of conservation interest adopted within the MAP framework.

Common Criteria to be applied in evaluating proposals for removing species from Annexes II and III of the Protocol

10. A species may be removed from Annexes II or III of the Protocol if **reliable data**, especially **better available scientific data**, indicate that **the reasons that led to its initial inclusion no longer exist**.

11. However, removal can only be considered if the said species **runs no risk**, in the **short or medium term**, of finding itself in the condition that originally warranted its inclusion in the said annexes.

Procedures to be followed in proposing amendments to Annexes II and III of the Protocol

With a view to facilitating the implementation of Article 23 of the Convention and articles 14 and 16 of the SPA/BD Protocol, the following procedure is proposed to be followed:

a) The Parties submitting proposals for inclusion of species or their removal from an Annex will submit a proposal to the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), in conformity with the attached model, at least 90 days before the Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points. The proposal must be submitted either in English or in French;

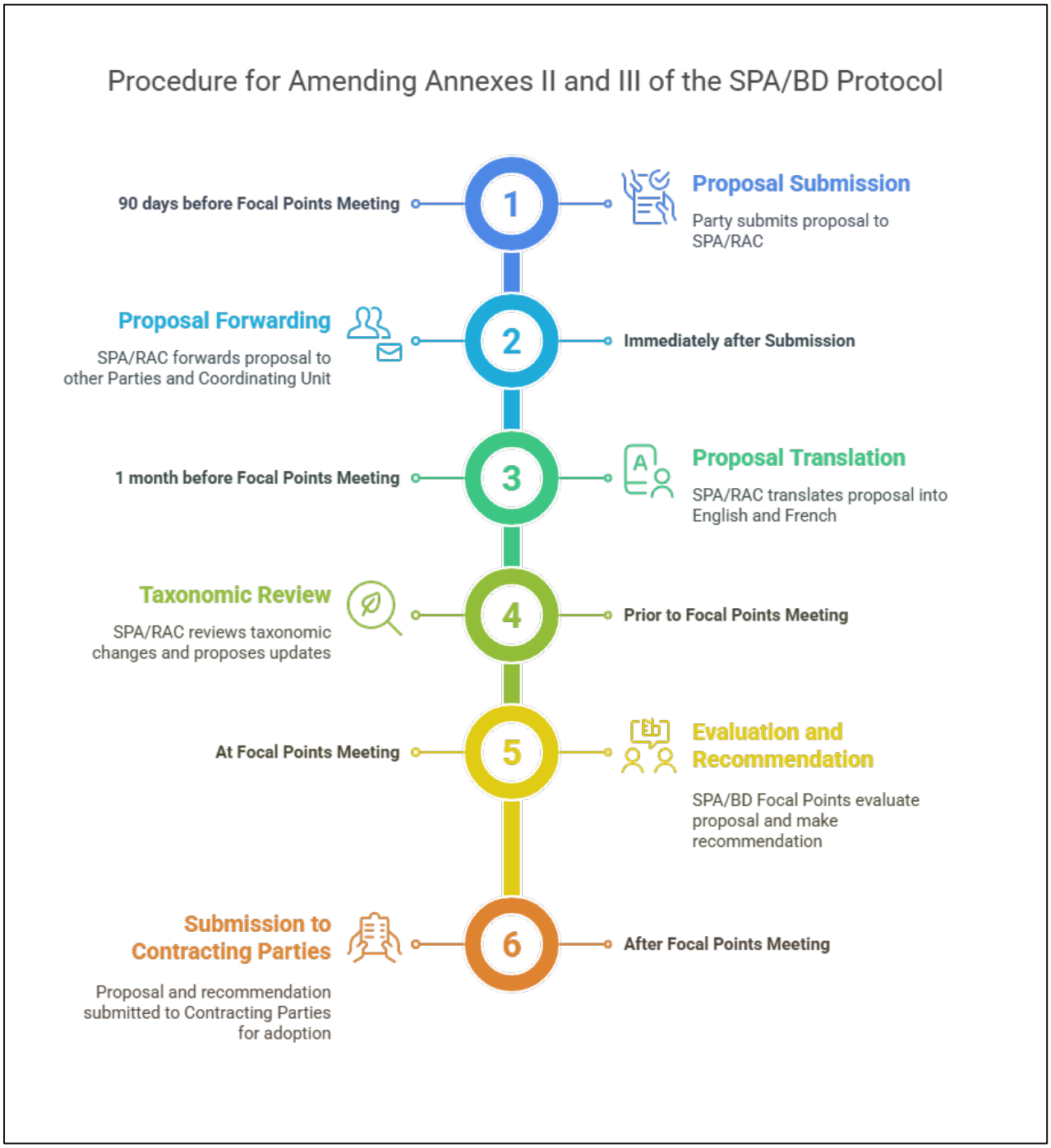
b) The Centre will immediately forward the proposal, in its original version, to the other Parties and to the Coordinating Unit;

c) The proposal will be submitted to the meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points, which will proceed to evaluate it in the light of the above common criteria. To this end, SPA/RAC will proceed to the translation of the original version so that the proposal may be sent to the SPA/BD Focal Points and to the relevant international organisations in English and in French at least a month before the Focal Points Meeting;

d) The proposal, by the concerned Party, accompanied by the recommendation of the meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points, will be submitted to the Contracting Parties for their consideration and adoption according to paragraph 2 letter (ii) of Article 23;

e) Prior to each meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points, the Centre will carry out a review of taxonomic changes in relation to the species listed on Annexes II and II of the SPA/BD Protocol and bring to its attention any need for possible taxonomic updates of the lists for their consideration and submission, as appropriate to the COP.

Furthermore, the Contracting Parties may instruct SPA/RAC to undertake evaluation exercises about the status of species with the view of proposing amendments to Annex II and or Annex III to the Protocol.


Procedure for Amending Annexes II and III of the SPA/BD Protocol
90 days before Focal Points Meeting
1
Proposal Submission
Party submits proposal to SPA/RAC
Proposal Forwarding
SPA/RAC forwards proposal to other Parties and Coordinating Unit
2
Immediately after Submission
1 month before Focal Points Meeting
3
Proposal Translation
SPA/RAC translates proposal into English and French
Taxonomic Review
SPA/RAC reviews taxonomic changes and proposes updates
4
Prior to Focal Points Meeting
At Focal Points Meeting
5
Evaluation and Recommendation
SPA/BD Focal Points evaluate proposal and make recommendation
Submission to Contracting Parties
Proposal and recommendation submitted to Contracting Parties for adoption
6
After Focal Points Meeting

Annex II
Amendments to Annex II (List of endangered or threatened species) and Annex III (List of species whose exploitation is regulated)

Annex II:
List of endangered or threatened species[4]

Magnoliophyta
Cymodocea nodosa (Ucria) Ascherson 1870
Posidonia oceanica (Linnaeus) Delile 1813
Zostera marina Linnaeus 1753
[*Nanozostera noltei* (Hornemann) Tomlinson & Posluszny 2001]
Chlorophyta
[*Caulerpa prolifera* (Forsskål) J.V.Lamouroux 1809]
Heterokontophyta
[*Cystoseira* genus (except *Cystoseira compressa*)]
[*Ericaria* genus]
[*Gongolaria* genus]
Fucus virsoides J. Agardh 1868
Laminaria rodriguezii Bornet, 1888
Sargassum acinarium (Linnaeus) Setchell, 1933
Sargassum flavifolium Kützing, 1849
Sargassum hornschuchii C. Agardh, 1820
Sargassum trichocarpum J. Agardh, 1889
Rhodophyta
Gymnogongrus crenulatus (Turner) J. Agardh, 1851
[*Felicinia spathulata* (J.Agardh) Le Gall & Vergés, 2018]
[*Lithophyllum byssoides* (Lamarck) Foslie, 1900]
[*Ptilophora dentata* (Kützing) Alongi, Cormaci & G. Furnari, 2020]
Schimmelmannia schousboei (J. Agardh) J. Agardh, 1851
Sphaerococcus rhizophylloides J.J. Rodríguez y Femenías, 1895
Tenarea tortuosa (Esper) Me.Lemoine, 1910
[*Lithophyllum woelkerlingii* Alongi, Cormaci & G.Furnari, 2017]
Titanoderma trochanter (Bory) Benhissoune, Boudouresque, Perret-Boudouresque & Verlaque, 2002
Porifera
Aplysina sp. plur.
[*Lycopodina hypogea* Vacelet & Boury-Esnault, 1996]
Axinella cannabina (Esper, 1794)
*Axinella polypoides (*Schmidt, 1862)
Foraminospongia balearica Díaz, Ramírez-Amaro & Ordines, 2021
[*Geodia cydonium* (Linnaeus, 1767)]
[*Haliclona poecillastroides* (Vacelet, 1969)]
[*Leiodermatium* spp. Schmidt, 1870]
[*Neophrissospongia* spp. Pisera & Lévi, 2002]
[*Petrobiona massiliana* (Vacelet & Lévi, 1958)]

[4] Proposed updates in species names are in bold and between brackets. Proposed amendments to the Annex are in red and between brackets.

[*Pheronema carpenteri* (Thomson, 1869)]
[*Poecillastra compressa* (Bowerbank, 1866)]
[*Sarcotragus foetidus* (Schmidt, 1862)]
[*Sarcotragus pipetta* (Schmidt, 1868)]
Tethya sp. plur.
Cnidaria
Antipathella subpinnata (Ellis & Solander, 1786)
Antipathes dichotoma Pallas, 1766
Antipathes fragilis Gravier, 1918
Astroides calycularis (Pallas, 1766)
Callogorgia verticillata (Pallas, 1766)
Cladocora caespitosa (Linnaeus, 1767)
Cladocora debilis Milne Edwards & Haime, 1849
Dendrophyllia cornigera (Lamarck, 1816)
Dendrophyllia ramea (Linnaeus, 1758)
Desmophyllum dianthus (Esper, 1794)
Ellisella paraplexauroides Stiasny, 1936
Errina aspera (Linnaeus, 1767)
Isidella elongata (Esper, 1788)
Leiopathes glaberrima (Esper, 1792)
[*Desmophyllum pertusum* (Linnaeus, 1758)]
Madrepora oculata Linnaeus, 1758
Parantipathes larix (Esper, 1790)
[*Savalia savaglia* (Bertoloni, 1819)]
Bryozoa
Hornera lichenoides (Linnaeus, 1758)
Mollusca
Charonia lampas (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Charonia variegata* (Lamarck, 1816)]
[*Dendropoma cristatum* (Biondi-Giunti, 1859)]
[*Naria spurca* (Linnaeus, 1758)]
[*Steromphala nivosa* (A. Adams, 1853)]
Lithophaga lithophaga (Linnaeus, 1758)
Luria lurida (Linnaeus, 1758) (= *Cypraea lurida*)
[*Episcomitra zonata* (Marryat, 1819)]
Patella ferruginea Gmelin, 1791
[*Cymbula safiana* (Lamarck, 1819)]
Pholas dactylus Linnaeus, 1758
Pinna nobilis Linnaeus, 1758
Pinna rudis Linnaeus, 1758
[*Ranella olearium* (Linnaeus, 1758)]
Schilderia achatidea (J. E. Gray, 1837)
Tonna galea (Linnaeus, 1758)

Zonaria pyrum (Gmelin, 1791)
Crustacea
Ocypode cursor (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pachylasma giganteum (Philippi, 1836)
Echinodermata
Asterina pancerii (Gasco, 1870)
Centrostephanus longispinus (Philippi, 1845)
Ophidiaster ophidianus (Lamarck, 1816)
Pisces
Acipenser naccarii Bonaparte, 1836
Acipenser sturio Linnaeus, 1758
Aetomylaeus bovinus (Geoffroy St. Hilaire, 1817)
Alopias superciliosus Lowe, 1841
[*Alopias vulpinus* (Bonnaterre, 1788)]
Aphanius fasciatus (Valenciennes, 1821)
[*Apricaphanius iberus* (Valenciennes, 1846)]
Bathytoshia lata (Garman, 1880)
Carcharias taurus Rafinesque, 1810
Carcharodon carcharias (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Carcharhinus plumbeus* (Nardo, 1827)]
[*Centrophorus spp. (Müller & Henle, 1837)*[5]]
Cetorhinus maximus (Gunnerus, 1765)
[*Dalatias licha* (Bonnaterre, 1788)]
Dasyatis Pastinaca (Linnaeus, 1758)
Dipturus batis (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Echinorhinus brucus* (Bonnaterre, 1788)]
Galeorhinus galeus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Gymnura altavela (Linnaeus, 1758)
Hippocampus guttulatus Cuvier, 1829
Hippocampus hippocampus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Huso huso (Linnaeus, 1758)
Isurus oxyrinchus Rafinesque, 1810
Lamna nasus (Bonnaterre, 1788)
Lampetra zanandreai Vladykov, 1955
Leucoraja circularis (Couch, 1838)
Leucoraja melitensis (Clark, 1926)
Mobula mobular (Bonnaterre, 1788)
Myliobatis aquila (Linnaeus, 1758)
Odontaspis ferox (Risso, 1810)
Oxynotus centrina (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Ninnigobius canestrinii* (Ninni, 1883)]
Pomatoschistus tortonesei Miller, 1969
Pristis pectinata Latham, 1794

[5] The entire genus *Centrophorus* is listed in Annex II (with no species names), and *C. granulosus* is deleted from Annex III. The listing in Annex II shall be therefore *Centrophorus spp*., which refers to all species of this genus.

Pristis pristis (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Prionace glauca* (Linnaeus, 1758)]
[*Glaucostegus cemiculus* (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1817)]
Rhinoptera marginata (Geoffroy St. Hilaire, 1817)
Rhinobatos rhinobatos (Linnaeus, 1758)
Rostroraja alba (Lacépède, 1803)
Sphyrna lewini (Griffith & Smith, 1834)
Sphyrna mokarran (Rüppell, 1837)
Sphyrna zygaena (Linnaeus, 1758)
Squatina aculeata Cuvier, 1829
Squatina oculata Bonaparte, 1840
Squatina squatina (Linnaeus, 1758)
Valencia hispanica (Valenciennes, 1846)
Valencia letourneuxi (Sauvage, 1880)
Reptiles
Caretta caretta (Linnaeus, 1758)
Chelonia mydas (Linnaeus, 1758)
Dermochelys coriacea (Vandelli, 1761)
Eretmochelys imbricata (Linnaeus, 1766)
Lepidochelys kempii (Garman, 1880)
Trionyx triunguis Forsskål, 1775
Aves
Calonectris diomedea (Scopoli, 1769)
Ceryle rudis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Charadrius alexandrinus Linnaeus, 1758
Charadrius leschenaultii columbinus Lesson, 1826
Falco eleonorae Géné, 1834
Gelochelidon nilotica (Gmelin, 1789)
Halcyon smyrnensis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Hydrobates pelagicus ssp. *melitensis* (Schembri, 1843)
Hydroprogne caspia (Pallas, 1770)
Larus armenicus Buturlin, 1934
Larus audouinii Payraudeau, 1826
[*Chroicocephalus genei* (Brème, 1839)]
[*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* (Temminck, 1820)]
Microcarbo pygmaeus (Pallas, 1773)
Numenius tenuirostris Viellot, 1817
Pandion haliaetus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pelecanus crispus Bruch, 1832
Pelecanus onocrotalus Linnaeus, 1758
[*Gulosus aristotelis* (Linnaeus, 1761)]
[*Phoenicopterus ruber* Linnaeus, 1758]
Puffinus mauretanicus Lowe, 1921
Puffinus yelkouan (Acerbi, 1827)

Sternula albifrons (Pallas, 1764)
[*Sterna bengalensis* Lesson, 1831]
[*Sterna sandvicensis* Latham, 1787]
Mammalia
Balaenoptera acutorostrata Lacépède, 1804
Balaenoptera borealis Lesson, 1828
Balaenoptera physalus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Delphinus delphis Linnaeus, 1758
Eubalaena glacialis (Müller, 1776)
Globicephala melas (Trail, 1809)
Grampus griseus (G. Cuvier, 1812)
[*Kogia sima* (Owen, 1866)]
Megaptera novaeangliae (Borowski, 1781)
Mesoplodon densirostris (de Blainville, 1817)
Monachus monachus (Hermann, 1779))
Orcinus orca (Linnaeus, 1758)
Phocoena phocoena (Linnaeus, 1758)
Physeter macrocephalus Linnaeus, 1758
Pseudorca crassidens (Owen, 1846)
Stenella coeruleoalba (Meyen, 1833)
Steno bredanensis (G. Cuvier in Lesson, 1828)
Tursiops truncatus (Montagu, 1821)
Ziphius cavirostris Cuvier, 1832

Annex III:
List of species whose exploitation is regulated[6]

Porifera
Hippospongia communis (Lamarck, 1814)
[*Spongia* (*Spongia*) *lamella* (Schulze, 1872)]
[*Spongia (Spongia) officinalis* Linnaeus, 1759]
[*Spongia (Spongia) zimocca Schmidt, 1862*]
Cnidaria
Antipathes sp. *plur.*
Corallium rubrum (Linnaeus, 1758)
Crustacea
Homarus gammarus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Maja squinado (Herbst, 1788)
Palinurus elephas (Fabricius, 1787)
Scyllarides latus (Latreille, 1803)
Scyllarus arctus (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Scyllarus pygmaeus* (Spence Bate, 1888)]
Echinodermata
Paracentrotus lividus (Lamarck, 1816)
Pisces
~~*[Alopias vulpinus (Bonnaterre, 1788)]*~~
Alosa alosa (Linnaeus, 1758)
Alosa fallax (Lacépède, 1803)
Anguilla anguilla (Linnaeus, 1758)
~~*[Carcharhinus plumbeus (Nardo, 1827)]*~~
~~*[Centrophorus granulosus* (Bloch & Schneider,1801)]~~
Epinephelus marginatus (Lowe, 1834)
Dasyatis marmorata (Steindachner, 1892)
Heptranchias perlo (Bonnaterre, 1788)
Hexanchus griseus (Bonnaterre,1788)
Lampetra fluviatilis (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Mustelus asterias* Cloquet, 1821]
Mustelus mustelus (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Mustelus punctulatus* Risso, 1826]
[*Petromyzon marinus* Linnaeus, 1758]
Pteroplatytrygon violacea (Bonaparte, 1832)
~~*Prionace glauca* (Linnaeus, 1758)~~
[*Sciaena umbra* Linnaeus, 1758]
[*Squalus acanthias* Linnaeus, 1758]
Thunnus thynnus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Umbrina cirrosa (Linnaeus, 1758)
[*Xiphias gladius* Linnaeus, 1758]

[6] Proposed updates in species names are in bold and between brackets. Proposed amendments to the Annex are in red and between brackets.

[Draft Decision IG.27/8

Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs), Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the Post-2020 SAPBIO

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Recalling further the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), its goals A and B and targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 11 and other important decisions underpinning its implementation adopted by 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, Montreal, Canada 7 - 19 December 2022),

Having regard to Article 10 of the Barcelona Convention and to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, and in particular Articles 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12, thereof, whereby Contracting Parties shall, individually or jointly, take all appropriate measures to protect and preserve biological diversity, rare or fragile ecosystems, as well as species of wild fauna and flora which are rare, depleted, threatened or endangered and their habitats, in the Mediterranean Sea Area,

Having also regard to Decision IG.25/11 on the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) and its goals aiming to reduce the threats to biodiversity and ensure that biodiversity is preserved and maintained or enhanced in order to meet people's needs, targets and actions, adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols at their 22nd Meeting (COP 22, Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021),

Noting Decision IG.17/12 on the Procedure for the Revision of the Areas included in the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI) List, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 15th Meeting (COP 15, Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008),

Considering Decision IG.24/6 on the Identification and Conservation of Sites of Particular Ecological Interest in the Mediterranean, including Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 21st Meeting (COP 21, Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019),

Having also regard to Decision IG.25/12 on Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 22nd Meeting (COP 22, Antalya, Türkiye,7-10 December 2021),

Appreciating the support provided by the *Ad hoc* group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean to the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties during the current biennium,

Recalling Decision IG.22/7, on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 19th Meeting (COP 19, Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016),

Recalling also Decision IG.25/13, on Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 22nd Meeting (COP 22, Antalya, Türkiye,7-10 December 2021) and Decision IG.26/5, on Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and ecosystem restoration, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 23rd Meeting (COP 23, Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023),

Noting with appreciation that for many populations of various threatened species GES is reached (Marine birds, Marine turtles) as indicated in the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (Decision IG26/3),

Taking into account the results of the assessments of the status of implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles in the Mediterranean, of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea, of the Regional Strategy for the conservation of monk seal in the Mediterranean, and of the Action Plan for the conservation of the Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the Evaluation of the Regional Action Plans Approach for selected species and habitats adopted under the SPA/BD Protocol and recommendations for the way forward,

Taking into account also the results of the extraordinary evaluations of the five following Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) undertaken during the biennium 2024-2025: Palm Islands Nature Reserve (Lebanon), Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Lebanon), La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia), Kneiss Islands (Tunisia), and Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia),

Guided by the UN-backed *30x30 Ocean Action Plan* (launched at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference) that outlines two critical pathways to achieve 30% marine protection by 2030: (1) enabling global conditions, notably ratifying the BBNJ Agreement; and (2) accelerating site-specific protection through political mobilization, embedding 30x30 in national frameworks, and fast-tracking MPA/OECM designations,

Committed to further streamlining the Mediterranean Action Plan Ecological Objectives and associated Good Environmental Status and Targets, as well as the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria into the Regional Action Plans for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and key habitats adopted within the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol,

Having considered the report of the 17th Meeting of Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Focal Points (Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025),

1. *Take note* of the Main findings of the mid-term assessment focusing on the Post-2020 SAPBIO start-up activities (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.24);

2. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to prepare or revise their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by fully incorporating the relevant elements of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, and maximise their efforts for their timely implementation and identification of financial needs for marine and coastal biodiversity and to this aim every effort should be made to prepare and implement National Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Finance Plans or similar instruments as recommended in the Post-2020 SAPBIO mid-term assessment;

3. *Urge* the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to provide support for the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, particularly by assisting in the preparation and updating of the NBSAPs, monitoring and assessment, undertaking targeted action as specified in the Programme of Work 2026-2027 and mobilizing resources through the development of project proposals;

4. *Invite* the relevant organisations, in particular the members of the Post-2020 SAPBIO Advisory Committee, to continue contributing to the efforts by the Contracting Parties in

implementing the Post-2020 SAPBIO, as appropriate, in close collaboration with the Secretariat (SPA/RAC);

5. *Invite* the relevant International Organisations, Funding Agencies, International Donor Community and Contracting Parties as appropriate to give due consideration to the priority actions of the Post-2020 SAPBIO in their programming for supporting actions in the Mediterranean region;

6. *Take note of* the Monitoring Framework for the assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO (UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.23), which will guide the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) and the Contracting Parties in undertaking the assessments of the expected results, in 2027 and 2030 respectively in close interaction with the Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to ensure alignment and coherence;

7. *Invite* the Secretariat to use the indicators of the Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework if relevant and applicable or to develop region-specific indicators for the Monitoring Framework of the assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO in 2026, in close consultation with the Post-2020 SAPBIO National Correspondents and with their endorsement, to be used in the assessment of the Post-2020 SAPBIO collective implementation in 2027 and 2030;

8. *Deeply concerned* about the low rate of protection in the Mediterranean, *urge* the Contracting Parties to expand and strengthen the network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as well as establishing Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean Sea with the aim to protect 30% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2030, ensuring effective conservation and sustainable management of the protected areas, including OECMs, and their integration into national and regional policies, thus contributing to target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), through the implementation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO and Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean, adopted at COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols;

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

10. *Decide* that the five SPAMIs subject to extraordinary reviews in the biennium 2024-2025 listed below leave the period of provisional nature and enter again the regular review process, in accordance with the Procedure for the revision of areas included in the SPAMI List:

- Palm Islands Nature Reserve (Lebanon),
- Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Lebanon),
- La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia),
- Kneiss Islands (Tunisia), and
- Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia);

11. *Request* the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to work with the relevant designated national authorities in France, Italy, Morocco, and Spain to carry out ordinary reviews for the 10 Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) listed below, and bring the outcome of these reviews to the attention of the Contracting Parties at their 25th Meeting (COP 25):

- The following four SPAMIs are to be subject to an ordinary review in 2026:
    - Marine Protected Area of Tavolara-Punta Coda Cavallo (Italy),
    - Marine Protected Area and Nature Reserve of Torre Guaceto (Italy),
    - Miramare Marine Protected Area (Italy), and

- Plemmirio Marine Protected Area (Italy);

- The following six SPAMIs are to be subject to an ordinary review in 2027:
  - Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve (France),
  - Marine Protected Area of Capo Caccia Isola Piana (Italy),
  - Punta Campanella Marine Protected Area (Italy),
  - Al-Hoceima National Park (Morocco),
  - Archipelago of Cabrera National Park (Spain), and
  - Maro-Cerro Gordo Cliffs (Spain);

12. *Adopt* the updated Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean, set out in Annex I to this Decision;

13. *Adopt* the updated Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea, set out in Annex II to this Decision;

14. *Adopt* the updated Regional Strategy for the conservation of monk seal in the Mediterranean, set out in Annex III to this Decision;

15. *Adopt* the updated Action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea, set out in Annex IV to this Decision*;*

16. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures for the effective implementation of the Action Plans and Regional Strategy and to report on their implementation, using the online Barcelona Convention Reporting System;

17. *Request* the Secretariat (SPA/RAC), in coordination with the relevant regional action plans partners and international organizations, where appropriate, to continue to provide technical support to the Contracting Parties for the effective implementation of the Action Plans and Regional Strategy, through technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, including resource mobilization activities;

18. *Take note of* the conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation of the Regional Action Plans Approach for selected species and habitats adopted under the SPA/BD Protocol and the recommendations for the way forward, set out in Annex V to this Decision;

19. *Request* the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to update the (i) Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea, and the (ii) Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea, taking into account as appropriate the conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation of the Regional Action Plans Approach and submit them for consideration to COP25.

]

Annex I

Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean

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1. Introduction

1. The Parties to the Barcelona Convention included among their priority targets for the period 1985-1995 the protection of Mediterranean marine turtles (Genoa Declaration, September 1985). To this purpose and as a response to growing international concern about the status of Mediterranean marine turtles, which encounter various threats, including mortality in fishing gear and loss of vital habitats on land (nesting beaches), they adopted in 1989 the Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles. In 1996, the Parties confirmed their commitment to the conservation of marine turtles by including the 5 species of marine turtle recorded for the Mediterranean in the List of **Endangered** and Threatened Species annexed to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (Barcelona, 1995). The Protocol calls on the Parties to continue to cooperate in implementing the Action Plans already adopted.

2. Since 1989, the Action Plan has been revised four times. The first review was in 1999, when the updated version of the Action Plan was adopted by the 11th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP11 Malta). The second review was in 2007 and concerned only the update of the timetable for the period 2008-2013. The third and fourth revisions occurred in 2013 and 2019 where the timetable was updated respectively for the periods 2014-2019 and 2019-2025. This fifth revision of the Action Plan, completed in 2025, updates the main text of the Action Plan and the associated implementation timetable following a review of the implementation of the previous version involving input from national Focal Points and national and regional experts.

3. Two species of marine turtles nest in the Mediterranean, the Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*[1]) and the Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*[2]). The Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*[3]) is observed regularly, while the remaining two species (Hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*[4] and Kemp's Ridley turtle *Lepidochelys kempii*[5]) in the original listing are very rarely encountered vagrant species. A sixth species of marine turtle, the Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*[6]) has also recently been recorded in the region. Both Loggerhead and Green turtles also enter the Mediterranean from the Atlantic as juveniles in their oceanic stage and generally return to the Atlantic at larger sizes.

4. Marine turtles are reptiles, and they need to utilise terrestrial habitats (sandy beaches) to lay their eggs and produce young. The intensive exploitation of marine turtles during much of last century has led to a virtual collapse of the marine turtle populations in the Mediterranean. The remaining populations still face threats such as incidental catches and mortality in commercial fishing gear and degradation of nesting habitats, entanglement as well as plastic ingestion. The conservation of marine turtles requires that threats and issues both on land and in the sea are addressed. Marine turtles are long-lived reptiles, and the recovery of populations is therefore a protracted process. Their reproduction on land poses threats, but it also provides opportunities, in a practical way, to help the species recover, for example through reducing predation rates on eggs and hatchlings. Good knowledge of marine turtle population biology is essential if this opportunity is to be used properly. Marine turtles do not nest every year and significant fluctuations from year to year in nesting activity

[1] Loggerhead Turtle *Caretta caretta Mediterranean subpopulation* has most recently been assessed for *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2015. *Caretta caretta Mediterranean subpopulation* is listed as Least Concern
[2] Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas Mediterranean subpopulation* has most recently been assessed for *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2022. *Chelonia mydas Mediterranean subpopulation* is listed as Near Threatened under criteria B2b(ii,iii)
[3] Leatherback Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* has most recently been assessed for *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2013. *Dermochelys coriacea* is listed as Vulnerable under criteria A2bd
[4] Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* has most recently been assessed for *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2008. *Eretmochelys imbricata* is listed as Critically Endangered under criteria A2bd
[5] Kemp's Ridley *Lepidochelys kempii* has most recently been assessed for *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2019. *Lepidochelys kempii* is listed as Critically Endangered under criteria A2bd
[6] Olive Ridley Turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea* has most recently been assessed for *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2008. *Lepidochelys olivacea* is listed as Vulnerable under criteria A2bd

are common, especially in green turtles. Consequently, long-term data are needed to study populations and draw conclusions on their status.

5. The wider issues of biodiversity conservation need to be considered in conserving species, such as marine turtles. Threatened species are components of an ecosystem and the interdependence of the implementation of the various SPA/RAC Action Plans for endangered species and biodiversity conservation is stressed here.

6. There is clear evidence of important negative impacts on the populations of Mediterranean marine turtles by human activities. The most serious current threats to and impacts on marine turtles are:

- Deterioration of the critical habitats for their life cycle, such as nesting, feeding and wintering areas, and key migration routes.
- Direct impacts from incidental capture in fisheries, intentional killing, consumption, egg exploitation and boat strikes.
- Pollution, which can impact both habitats and the marine turtles at individual and population level.
- Climate change (feminization of eggs, sea level rise impacting the nesting beaches)

7. Knowledge of the genetic units, status, biology and behaviour of marine turtles is increasing rapidly in the Mediterranean and, though gaps still exist, sufficient information is available for conservation purposes. This information has been used in updating and improving the provisions of the present MAP Action Plan for the Conservation of the Mediterranean Marine Turtles. Sufficient information is also available in most cases to draw up National Action Plans for the conservation of marine turtles.

8**.** Elaborating and implementing action plans to confront the threats to biological diversity is an effective way of guiding, coordinating and stepping up the efforts made by the Mediterranean countries to safeguard the region's natural heritage. The adopted Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) to management of human activities with a view to conserving natural marine heritage and protecting vital ecosystem services recognizes that to achieve Good Environmental Status "Biological diversity is maintained or enhanced". In this context, under the Barcelona Convention, three common indicators related to marine turtles have been elaborated within the 27 common indicators of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related Assessment Criteria (IMAP):

- **COMMON INDICATOR 3:** Species distributional range (EO1 related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles)
- **COMMON INDICATOR 4:** Population abundance of selected species (EO1, related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles)
- **COMMON INDICATOR 5:** Population demographic characteristics (EO1, e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/mortality rates related to marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles)

9. The 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2017 MED QSR), within the analysis conducted on Common Indicators 3 (Species distributional range), 4 (Population abundance of selected species) and 5 (Population demographic characteristics) related to EO1 on marine mammals, seabirds and marine reptiles, focused on the major existing gaps related to the current knowledge about the presence, distribution, habitat use and preferences of these marine species. It stressed the need to increase efforts on filling these gaps to predict with any certainty the future viability of marine turtle populations in the Mediterranean. Moreover, the 2023 MED QSR recalls that IMAP reporting framework, is a requirement of all riparian Mediterranean states, does not exist in isolation but coincides with other international reporting requirements such as those for the EU Habitats Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). There is much overlap and synergy between these programs, which means data collected if collected in adequately rigorous manner can be used multiple times and not only for the IMAP.

10. Information from various sources has been considered in this updated Action Plan. Effective protection and management of nesting areas, practical measures to reduce turtle bycatch, as well as the management of feeding grounds, based on scientific information, are some of the key elements that can help to ensure the survival and the recovery of populations of marine turtles. These elements have been paid due attention. Scientific information on population dynamics, biology and physiology and the topics of public awareness and education etc have also been given due consideration in this plan. Especially noted was the nesting range expansion and increased use of previously marginal areas for nesting by Loggerhead turtles in the central and western Mediterranean.

11. The effective and sustainable protection of the Mediterranean marine turtles implies the need for management of the Mediterranean as a whole, taking into account the ecosystem approach, it should take advantage of the actions of all the concerned stakeholders and be carried out in cooperation with organisations, programmes and plans, at the supranational and national level such as the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP); Fisheries Management Plans (FAO/GFCM); the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (IUCN/SSC); International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT); International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea (CIESM); relevant NGOs, research institutions and universities etc.

12. This Action Plan outlines objectives, priorities, and implementation measures in different fields as well as their coordination. The different components of the Action Plan are mutually reinforcing and may act synergistically.

13. Progress in implementing the Action Plan will be reviewed at each meeting of the National Focal Points for SPA/BD, based on national reports and on reports by SPA/RAC on the regional aspects of the Action Plan. The Action Plan will be assessed and revised and updated every five years, unless the SPA Focal Point Meetings deem otherwise.

2. Objectives

14. The objective of this Action Plan is to maintain the Good Environmental Status and to further recovery of the populations of Loggerhead turtles and Green turtles in the Mediterranean (with priority accorded to Green turtles, wherever appropriate, due to their more spatially and numerically smaller populations) through:

- Appropriate protection, conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats, including nesting, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages.
- Improved biological understanding of the status of marine turtle populations through scientific research and monitoring.

3. Priorities

15. Acknowledging the progress achieved over the past years and the proliferation of projects, activities and actions in many countries in the region, it is considered an overarching priority action to continue and enhance such ongoing projects and activities related to marine turtle conservation, research and monitoring. The following priorities have been identified for each component of this Action Plan:

3.1. Protection and management of the species and their habitats

16. Conservation should be fostered through the following actions:

- Development, implementation and enforcement of specific legislation on marine turtles.
- Reduction of incidental catches and elimination of intentional killings.
- Protection and effective management of nesting areas, including emerging nesting areas, and the adjacent mating and inter-nesting marine habitats.
- Protection and management of feeding, wintering and mating areas and key migration passages.

- Assessment, improvement, and restoration of degraded nesting beaches.
- Sharing and adopting standardised protocols for management and conservation.

3.2. Research and monitoring

17. Knowledge needs to be improved in the following topics:

- Location of mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration routes.
- Location of potential and new nesting areas with thermal conditions conducive to successful breeding.
- Biology of the species, in particular aspects related to life cycles, population dynamics and population trends and genetics.
- Rates of fisheries interactions (e.g. bycatch) and associated direct and post-release mortalities.
- Efficacy of modification of fishing practices, mitigation measures and related socioeconomic effects of implementing these measures.
- Efficacy of nesting beach management techniques that increase hatchling recruitment, especially for emerging nesting areas.
- Causes of injury and death that may be collected from stranded marine turtles through adoption of standardised protocols used by stranding networks and rescue centres.
- Impact of climate change on populations including habitat alteration, altering sex ratios to levels that could reduce population fitness, hatching success, changes in reproductive frequency and changes in food availability and in feeding ecology that could affect reproduction and/or survival.
- Impact of pollution (including plastics) on the health of individuals and populations.
- Population status and trends through long-term monitoring programmes, both on nesting beaches and at sea, based on the IMAP developed within the framework of the EcAp process of the Barcelona Convention as well as the monitoring requirements set under the MSFD of the EU.

3.3. Public awareness and education

18. For the implementation of this action plan, public support is needed. Information and education campaigns on relevant marine turtle conservation issues should target groups such as:

- Fishers and other stakeholders.
- Decision makers at national, regional and local levels.
- Local residents and visitors to nesting areas.
- Schoolchildren and teachers.
- Tourists and tourism-related organizations.

3.4. Capacity building/Training

19. Training in standardised conservation and management techniques and protocols relating to conservation, research and monitoring of the priority issues covered by the Action Plan, and data required for the IMAP, should be delivered to managers, scientists, researchers and other relevant staff.

3.5. Coordination

20. Promote and enhance cooperation and coordination among the Contracting Parties, the UNEP/MAP partners, relevant organizations and projects carried out in the field of marine turtle conservation. Promote intra-governmental coordination and communication for the enhancement of marine turtle conservation. Priority should be given to the regular assessment of the progress in the implementation of this Action Plan.

4. Implementation

21. The implementation of the measures recommended in this Action Plan will only be possible with the appropriate support of the Parties and by competent national and international organisations,

particularly with regards to the provision of adequate financial support, through national and regional funding programmes and through applications to donors for specific projects. Much progress has been achieved over recent years, with the proliferation of projects, programmes, activities and actions in many countries around the Mediterranean. The implementation, coordination and strategic alignment of such ongoing activities related to marine turtle conservation, research and monitoring is expected to benefit from the provisions of this Action Plan.

4.1. Protection and management

22. Regarding protection and management, the following measures are recommended:

(a) Legislation

23. The Contracting Parties that have not yet extended legal protection to marine turtles should do so as soon as possible. Protection should be extended to *all* species of sea turtle as any marine turtle present in the Mediterranean is worthy of protection; however, management legislation can be limited to loggerhead and green turtles as the only two species with established breeding populations.

24. Each Contracting Party should develop and implement as soon as possible the necessary legislation for the protection, conservation and/or management of areas important for marine turtles, such as nesting (including the adjacent sea), feeding, wintering and mating areas and key migration passages.

25. In pursuing the above the Contracting Parties should consider the provisions of the relevant international conventions and supranational legislation as well as the SPA/RAC "Guidelines to Design Legislation and Regulations Relative to the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles Populations and their Habitats".

26. Legislation on deliberate killing must be enforced and/or updated in some countries and developed in others that lack this fundamental measure.

(b) Protection and management of habitats

27. Integrated management plans should be elaborated and implemented for terrestrial and marine areas critical for nesting, feeding, wintering and mating, as well as key migration routes.

28. Measures and management rules aimed at protecting critical habitats, on land and at sea, should be developed and implemented. In the case of nesting areas, such measures should cover issues such as public access, use of vehicles, use of artificial lights, nautical activities, minimization of predation, inundation, disturbance during nesting, disturbance in adjacent waters, etc. In the case of marine areas such measures should address boat traffic and fishing. Contracting Parties are encouraged to use the SPA/RAC "Guidelines for setting up and management of Specially Protected Areas for marine turtles in the Mediterranean"

29. Training of the staff involved in protection and management activities is a prerequisite to good management.

(c) Reduction of incidental catches and elimination of intentional killings

30. A reduction of incidental catches and mortality can be achieved by:

- Applying appropriate regulations concerning fishing depth, season, gear, etc, especially in areas with a high concentration of marine turtles.
- The modification of fishing gear, methods and strategies proven to be effective, and as appropriate, their introduction in fisheries legislation and fishing practices.
- Education/training of fishers to correctly haul, handle, release and record incidentally caught marine turtles. Use of appropriate methods are described *inter alia* in the SPA/RAC publication "Sea turtle handling guidebook for fishermen".

31. Deliberate killing and exploitation of marine turtles can be practically eliminated by:

- Applying and enforcing appropriate legislation.
- Carrying out campaigns among fishers, to urge them to release unharmed any marine turtles caught incidentally and to participate in the information networks on turtles (report sightings of marine turtles, of tags, participation in tagging programmes, etc.).
- Carrying out campaigns for fishers and local populations to facilitate the implementation of legislation to ban the exploitation/consumption and trade/use of all products derived from marine turtles.

The above will help reduce mutilation and killing of marine turtles due to ignorance and/or prejudice.

(d) Other Measures to Reduce Mortality

32. The setting up and proper operation of Rescue Centres and First Aid Stations is suggested as an additional means to minimize individual marine turtle mortality. Rescue centres may also play an important role for the conservation of the populations by contributing to activities such as awareness, education, and data collection. The use of the SPA/RAC "Guidelines to Improve the Involvement of Marine Rescue Centres for Marine Turtles" is recommended.

33. There is a need to develop a common methodology for the management of rescue centres both for methods of collection and transfer of conservation relevant data and the improved welfare to individual marine turtles.

34. Staff involved at rescue and rehabilitation centres should all receive training to provide them with a certain level of competency. In addition, a Mediterranean-wide rescue network should be set up, to assist the exchange of knowledge and experience among those who work with marine turtles in facing difficulties. The network should include existing rescue centres and promote the establishment of new rescue centres in countries that are currently lacking adequate structures.

35. Through all work, standard protocols should be followed, which include good data collection and sharing for the general advancement of marine turtle welfare and generation of conservation-related information. Guidelines should be reviewed and updated where necessary.

4.2. Scientific Research and Monitoring

36. The strategic development of research and monitoring programmes and the exchange of information should focus on the priority fields for the conservation of marine turtle populations. This can be achieved through adoption of various methods, such as beach surveys and (long-term) monitoring of nesting beaches, tagging (keeping in mind the provisions of the SPA/RAC tagging guidelines), data logging, satellite telemetry, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), genetics, fishery observers and modelling.

37. Priority should be afforded to robust scientific data collection that contributes to regional assessment programmes such as the EU MSFD and the Barcelona Convention IMAP, and to the fledgling identification of Important Marine Turtle Areas initiative of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group.

(a) Scientific research

38. Research should cover *inter alia* the following (not in order of priority):

- Identification of mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages.
- Identification of potential or new nesting areas with thermal conditions conducive to successful breeding.
- Deeper understanding of the biology of the species, in particular aspects related to life cycles, population dynamics and population trends and genetics. Contracting Parties are encouraged to use the "Guidelines to standardize methodologies to estimate demographic parameters for marine turtles [sic] populations in the Mediterranean".

- The assessment of marine turtle bycatch and direct and post-release mortality rates from different fishing gears, including those used in small scale and artisanal fisheries.
- Gather data on the effects of gear modifications (new hooks etc.), other mitigation measures and fishing strategies to evaluate the effects of these on marine turtle mortality and catch rates as well as the effects on other species.
- The assessment of socio-economic effects of the implementation of marine turtle conservation measures that can impact fisheries to determine best course of action.
- Evaluation of the impact of different climate change scenarios on marine turtles; for example altered sex ratios (to levels that could reduce population fitness), behaviours and habitat use or shifted seasonality of nesting.
- Identification and quantification of new and emerging threats, whose impacts may be increasingly important at national to regional level.

(b) Monitoring

39. For monitoring, programmes should follow the recommendation of the MAP ecological objectives, the IMAP and the relevant Protocol3. They should cover *inter alia* the following (not in order of priority):

- Long-term monitoring programmes for important nesting beaches and foraging areas. All Contracting Parties that have nesting beaches or foraging areas should encourage their uninterrupted and standardized monitoring considering any national monitoring programmes related to biodiversity. Where such programmes do not exist, the Parties should set up such programmes or encourage them.
- Surveys of nesting beaches of lower nest densities, and of scattered nesting at emerging sites need also to be undertaken regularly if possible, so that a more complete picture of populations can be formed. Contracting Parties are encouraged to use the SPA/RAC "Guidelines for the long-term Monitoring programmes for marine turtles nesting beaches and standardized monitoring methods for nesting beaches, feeding and wintering areas".
- Cost-effective by-catch monitoring programmes, possibly using on-board observers (who could collect marine turtle tissue samples for genetic analyses) or cameras, to gather precise data on species biology and bycatch rates and outcomes should complement nesting beach and foraging area monitoring.
- Standard management techniques for nesting beaches within the scope of on-going monitoring programmes should be implemented
- Standard management techniques for foraging areas within the scope of on-going monitoring programmes, and for the establishment of new programmes should be developed and implemented.
- Data collection from stranded marine turtles through integrated stranding networks and rescue centres should be strengthened following standard protocols.
- Joint monitoring initiatives (possibly on a pilot basis) with the aim to share and exchange best practices, using harmonized methodologies, and ensuring cost efficiency. Contracting Parties, with the help of national, regional or international organisations, should undertake, when appropriate,
- Regional initiatives and projects led by competent partner organizations to strengthen strategic and operational regional synergies. Contracting Parties should support and take part them in them to contribute to the implementation of the IMAP, and other international initiatives.
- Regular reporting of quality assured data, based on national and international reporting requirements. Contracting Parties should encourage this together with promoting publication of results as peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals.

40. For some Contracting Parties there is still little information on marine turtle nesting beaches and size of breeding populations. These Parties should undertake urgently more comprehensive surveys and encourage the setting up of long-term monitoring programmes considering their national monitoring programmes related to biodiversity.

4.3. Public awareness and education

41. Public-awareness programmes, including appropriate multiple information tools (special documentary information material, electronic media etc), should be developed for fishers, local residents, tourists and tourism-related organizations, to help reduce the mortality rates of marine turtles, to induce respect for nesting, feeding and wintering and mating areas, and to promote the reporting of any useful information concerning marine turtles. Appropriate training/education of stakeholders can be given (e.g. turtle handling to fishers and promotion of legitimate eco-touristic options to tourism businesses.

42. Information campaigns directed at local authorities, residents, teachers, visitors, fishers, decision makers at local, regional and national levels and other stakeholders, are urgently needed to enlist their participation in the efforts for the conservation of marine turtles and for their support for conservation measures.

43. Inclusion of marine turtle conservation in school education, potentially as part of the national curriculum, is strongly recommended.

4.4. Capacity building/Training

44. Existing training programmes should be continued, particularly for those Parties that need more expertise and/or experts with specialized knowledge of marine turtles, and for managers and other staff of protected areas, in the conservation and management techniques needed (these include *inter alia* beach management, tagging and monitoring).

45. Training programmes in the setting up and operation of Rescue Centres should be continued, with the aim of guaranteeing that these centres have skilled personnel, appropriate equipment and adopt best practice and common methodologies for necessary data collection. Training programmes to be elaborated for other fields, as needed, especially where fisheries managers are concerned. The dissemination of standardised protocols to all relevant parties is encouraged, to obtain comparable and scientifically robust data for conservation and management.

4.5. National Action Plan

46. Contracting Parties should establish National Action Plans for the conservation of marine turtles, in line with the requirements for the Post-2020 SAPBIO.

47. National Action Plans should address the current factors causing loss or decline of marine turtle population and their habitats, suggest appropriate subjects for legislation, give priority to the protection and management of coastal and marine areas, the regulation of fishing practices and ensure continued research and monitoring of populations and habitats as well as the training and refresher courses for specialists and the awareness-raising and education for the general public, actors and decision-makers.

48. Long established National Action Plans should be reviewed to confirm they still meet the national needs of the marine turtles and how well-established recommendations have been implemented.

49. The national plans must be brought to the attention of all concerned actors and, when possible, coordinated on a regional basis.

4.6. Regional coordination structure

50. It is necessary to further develop cooperation and exchange of information among the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the Action Plan and to improve the coordination of activities within the region.

51. SPA/RAC continues to be considered the most appropriate existing mechanism for this coordination. The implementation of the Action Plan may be carried out, in cooperation with other bodies concerned, through establishing Memoranda of Cooperation, as necessary. Sub-regional working groups of experts and NGOs, such as NAST-Net for the northern Africa region, are

encouraged to be developed and become partners to the AP (see below). Such regions could include the Adriatic Sea and the northern Western Mediterranean.

52. The major function of the coordinating mechanism for the marine turtle AP would be to:

- Assess the progress achieved in implementing this Action Plan. SPA/RAC will request at regular intervals, not exceeding two years, update reports from the Parties and, based on these ongoing national reports and of its own assessment of the progress in the regional component of this Action Plan, prepare reports to be submitted to the SPA National Focal Point meetings, which will make follow-up suggestions to the Contracting Parties.
- Collect and evaluate the data at Mediterranean level.
- Prepare a timetable of activities and financing proposals for the Contracting Parties' meetings.
- Contribute to the dissemination and exchange of information and best practice standard protocols.
- Create more opportunities with relevant partner organizations, to strengthen technical support that countries might need to implement the IMAP in relation with marine turtles.
- Assist and/or organize expert meetings on specific topics regarding marine turtles.
- Continue to support the organisation of the Mediterranean Marine Turtle Conferences.
- Assisting and/or organising, training courses and support and catalyse the complementary work carried out by other international bodies, NGOs and UNEP/MAP partners aiming at the same objectives should be encouraged and capitalized to prevent possible overlapping and help disseminate their knowledge across the Mediterranean Community.
- Coordinate the activities needed for the revision/updating of this Action Plan every five years, or earlier, if this is deemed necessary by the SPA/DB National Focal Point meetings or based on important new information becoming available.
- Support data collection, compilation and analysis that will contribute towards the establishment of Important Marine Turtle Areas in the Mediterranean, which is a target of the IUCN-SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group.

4.7. Participation

53. Any interested international and/or national organisation, qualified through sufficient expertise, is invited to participate in actions necessary for the implementation of this Action Plan.

54. Links with other bodies responsible for Action Plans dealing with one or more species of marine turtles, especially regarding fisheries related issues, should be made to strengthen co-operation and avoid duplication of effort.

55. The co-ordination structure shall set up a mechanism for regular dialogue between the participating organisations and is encouraged to organise regular meetings to this effect.

4.8. Actions Plan Partners

56. Implementing the present action plan is the province of the national authorities of the Contracting Parties. Relevant international organisations, NGOs, laboratories, and any other entities are invited to join in the efforts necessary for the successful implementation of the Action plan. During their ordinary meetings, the Contracting Parties may, upon the recommendation of the meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs/BD, grant the status of «Action Plan Partner» to any organization or laboratory that requests it. This status will be awarded to those that carry out, or support (financially or otherwise), concrete actions (such as conservation, research, etc.) That contribute to the implementation of the present action plan, in line with its priorities. The conditions and criteria for the award of the regional action plan partner title are outlined in Annex VI to the decision IG.26/5.

4.9. Implementation timetable

ACTION	Deadline/ periodicity	By whom
A. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT		
A.1 Legislation		
a. Protection of marine turtles – general species protection	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties
b. Enforce legislation to eliminate deliberate killing	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties
c. Habitat protection and management (nesting, mating, feeding, wintering and key migration passages)	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties
A.2 Protection and management of habitats		
a. Setting up and implementing management plans of key areas	Immediate and continuous	Contracting Parties
b. Mitigation measures in place at damaged nesting habitats	Immediate and continuous	Contracting Parties
A.3 Minimisation of incidental catches		
a. Fishing regulations (depth, season, gear, duration, dynamic spatial extents) in key areas	Immediate and continuous	Contracting Parties
b. Modification of gear, methods and strategies	Immediate and continuous	SPA/RAC, Partners & Contracting Parties
A.4 Other measures to minimise individual mortality		
a. Setting up and/or improving operation of Rescue and Rehabilitation Centres	Continuous	Contracting Parties
b. Elaborate guidelines for the management of rescue centres, including methods for data collection, which align with existing protocols	1 year after adoption	SPA/RAC

ACTION	Deadline/ periodicity	By whom
B. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND MONITORING		
B.1 Scientific research		
a. Identification of new mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages in order to generate data for establishing MTSG Important Marine Turtle Areas	Continuous	Contracting Parties and Partners
b. Assess the interaction between marine turtles and fisheries through elaboration and execution of cooperative research projects of regional importance	Continuous	SPA/RAC, Partners & Parties
c. Identify sub-regional management units through re-identification and tracking of individual marine turtles and through genetic analysis	Continuous	SPA/RAC and Contracting Parties and Partners
d. Exchange information and experience between managed and monitored nesting sites through networking and other means	Continuous	SPA/RAC
B.2. Monitoring		
a. Set up and/or improve long-term monitoring programmes for nesting beaches, feeding and wintering areas in order to generate data for establishing MTSG Important Marine Turtle Areas and other regional initiatives such as IMAP and MSFD	Continuous	Contracting Parties and SPA/RAC
b. Elaboration of protocols for data collection from stranded marine turtles, ensuring minimum data standards are adhered to	2 years from adoption	SPA/RAC
c. Encourage establishment of national stranding networks and communication between established networks	As soon as possible	Contracting Parties

ACTION	Deadline/ periodicity	By whom
C. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION		
Awareness raising and information campaigns directed at fishers, coastal populations, authorities and other stakeholders	Continuous	SPA/RAC, Partners and Contracting Parties
D. CAPACITY BUILDING		
Establish training courses on topics such as nesting and foraging area management, nest management techniques and in-water research techniques. To be carried out by recognised regional expert individuals and organisations.	Continuous	SPA/RAC and Partners
E. NATIONAL ACTION PLANS		
Elaboration of National Action Plans	Continuous	Contracting Parties
F. COORDINATION		
a. Assessment of progress in the Implementation of the Action Plan	Every Five years	SPA/RAC and Parties
b. Cooperation in organising the Mediterranean Conferences on marine turtles	Every three year	SPA/RAC
c. Updating the Action Plan on Marine Turtles	Five years from adoption	SPA/RAC

Annex II

Action Plan for the Conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea

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FOREWORD

Chondrichthyan fishes constitute a class within the zoological classification, which includes cartilaginous fish commonly known as sharks, skates, rays, and chimaeras. The skates and rays, or batoids, are flattened, shark-like fish.

The Action Plan for the Conservation of Chondrichthyan Fishes in the Mediterranean Sea is in line with:

1. the Barcelona Convention which was adopted on 16 February 1976 in Barcelona by the Mediterranean countries and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean.

2. the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) proposed by FAO and adopted by UN member states in 1999 [Note: in the FAO documents, the term ‘sharks’ is used to refer to all chondrichthyans].

3. the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UN Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks) in effect since 11th December 2001.

4. paragraph 31 of the Implementation Plan of the Resolution of the World Summit for Sustainable Development adopted in Johannesburg in September 2002.

In the implementation of IPOA-Sharks, the Mediterranean Action Plan for the Conservation of Chondrichthyan Fishes constitutes a proposal for regional strategies, pointing out priorities and actions to be undertaken at national and regional levels, as regional coordination is needed to ensure the implementation of conservation measures. IPOA-Sharks suggests that FAO member states should develop national action plans when their fishing fleets conduct targeted fisheries for sharks or when sharks are taken as by-catch. Regarding this recommendation, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are strongly urged to elaborate national action plans based on the priorities defined herein to ensure the conservation, management, and long-term sustainable use of chondrichthyan species in the Mediterranean Sea.

Twenty-four species are listed in Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) of the SPA/BD Protocol are already protected, and more species have been proposed to be added through amendments to Annexes II and III. In addition, these species are protected based on following GFCM recommendations: Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/1 (now GFCM/42/2018/2), they cannot be retained on board, trans-shipped, landed, transferred, stored, sold, displayed, or offered for sale, and must be released unharmed and alive to the extent possible; Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/16 that address additional mitigation measures for the conservation of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean Sea; and Resolution GFCM/46/2023/4 that address the regional plan of action to monitor and mitigate interactions between fisheries and vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Additionally, some Mediterranean countries have taken specific protection measures for these species to reinforce their conservation status. Many species on this list appear on the IUCN Red List, in the appendices of the Bern and Bonn Conventions, and some have been included in the CITES appendices. In addition, some Contracting Parties have also joined the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks, which is an international instrument for the conservation of migratory species of sharks, under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS; also known as the Bonn Convention), which aims to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status for migratory sharks, rays and chimaeras. Some of the species listed in Annex 1 of the Sharks- MOU occur in the Mediterranean Sea.
Although conservation measures focusing on particular species have proven useful at species level, they are not sufficient at the ecosystem level.
Therefore, habitat and environmental parameters related to the species' conservation should be included in the Action Plan. As a result, the guidelines for elaborating the Action Plan are as follows:

- species conservation
- biodiversity maintenance
- habitat protection
- management for sustainable use
- scientific research
- monitoring
- funding for research, implementation, and monitoring
- public awareness
- international cooperation for controls in the open sea.

Thus, implementing the Action Plan will involve a broad range of stakeholders, and its success requires increasing cooperation between different jurisdictions, professional fishers, conservation and environmental bodies, recreational and game fishing associations, scientific and research organizations, academic institutions, as well as administrative bodies at national, regional, and international levels.

INTRODUCTION

1. The chondrichthyan fish fauna of the Mediterranean is relatively diverse, with approximately 90 species; at least 48 species of sharks, 40 batoids and two chimaeras. All species are fished as bycatch. and many of them are sold at fish markets, among them some species which are very rare, endangered or protected and may never have been common. There is evidence of significant negative impacts of unmanaged and irresponsible fisheries on the populations of many chondrichthyan species.

2. Chondrichthyan fishes have specific biological characteristics, such as low reproduction productivity due to late sexual maturity and low fecundity, which make them vulnerable to fishing pressures and ecological disturbances, and populations are slow to recover once depleted.

3. For chondrichthyan fishes, there also exists a close relationship between the number of young produced and the size of the breeding biomass (stock-recruitment relationship) and complex spatial structures (size/sex segregation and seasonal migration) that contribute to their vulnerability to habitat deterioration, environmental pollution, and over-exploitation.

4. Most sharks and some skates and rays are apex predators that have an important trophic function in the marine ecosystem. Therefore, the ecosystem approach is particularly important to understand the role of these fishes in the structuring and functioning of this system. The integrated effects of irresponsible fishing, pollution, and habitat destruction can result in changes in abundance, size structure and biological features, and can lead to extinction. The indirect impacts include changes in species prey/predator composition, with species replacement, since fishing tends to remove larger species and larger individuals from ecosystems. Exploitation of chondrichthyans should respect the principles of sustainability and the precautionary principle as defined in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

5. Elasmobranches are by far the most endangered group of marine fish in the Mediterranean Sea and worldwide. The IUCN Red List shows clearly the vulnerability of elasmobranchs and the lack of data; 39 species in 2016 (53% of 73 assessed species), and 47 species in 2020 (53% of 88 assessed species), are critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable. Around 13 % are data deficient (DD).

6. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, within the framework of the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Area of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II), give priority to ensuring the protection of sensitive species, habitats and ecosystems in the Mediterranean Sea.

7. In line with the Post-2020 SAPBIO and its alignment with the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, efforts to conserve cartilaginous fishes in the Mediterranean should emphasize harmonized regional actions, integrating habitat and species protection measures to achieve good conservation environmental status and ensure sustainable management of marine biodiversity.

8. The decline of some chondrichthyan populations has become a matter for international concern, and a growing number of organisations have expressed the need for urgent measures to be introduced for the conservation of these fish. To this end, SPA/RAC was entrusted (Monaco, November 2001) by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with the task of elaborating an action plan for the conservation of the chondrichthyan populations of the Mediterranean. This action plan was adopted within the frame work of the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the marine environment and the coastal region of the Mediterranean in 2003.

9. Parties to Barcelona Convention requested SPA/RAC during the COP 23 (Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) to update this Action Plan.

10. Today, the serious threats to the populations of chondrichthyan fishes are widely acknowledged: mainly unmanaged and irresponsible fishing, pollution and the negative aspects of

some littoral development. These threats affect both chondrichthyan biodiversity and abundance. The Mediterranean Sea being a semi-enclosed sea with strongly populated coastal countries, critical habitats have been damaged by some littoral development and pollution. Pollution may harm the marine ecosystem because contaminants, concentrating along the food webs, can alter the physiology and good functioning of individuals and populations.

11. Although the Mediterranean chondrichthyan fish fauna have been studied for a long time, scientific research still needs to be undertaken to study the biology, ecology, population dynamics and status of stocks of most of the species. These studies are necessary to better understand their ecological role. The taxonomic status of several species is still uncertain. A few species are endemic to the Mediterranean. Some Red Sea species enter the eastern Mediterranean through the Suez Canal (Lessepsian migrants); the progression of the populations of these species, and the effect of these invaders on the Mediterranean ecology, should be carefully studied.

12. Since many chondrichthyans are wide-ranging and/or migratory, regional coordination isrequired for research, monitoring and enforcement. Also, information should be widely disseminated amongst the public to make it aware of the threats to chondrichthyans and the urgent need for their conservation and the management of their exploitation.

A. OBJECTIVES

13. The present Action Plan is aimed at promoting:

13.1. The general conservation of the endangered chondrichthyan populations of the Mediterranean Sea, including supporting and promoting national and regional programmes on reducing bycatch and all other kind of disturbance.

13.2. The protection of chondrichthyan species, mainly those which are vulnerable and endangered;

13.3. The identification, the protection and the restoration of critical habitats, such as mating, spawning and nursery grounds;

13.4. The improvement of scientific knowledge by research and scientific monitoring, including the creating of regional standardised databases;

13.5. The recovery of depleted chondrichthyan stocks;

13.6. Public awareness and capacity-building about conservation of chondrichthyans.

13.7. Compliance with provisions of Annex II listings and GFCM Recommendations through improved national legislation and effective national enforcement.

B. PRIORITIES

14. The following general priorities are recommended:

14.1. Urgent provision of legal protection status for the species enlisted in the Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) of the SPA/BD Protocol, which based on Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/1 (now GFCM/42/2018/2) cannot be retained on board, trans-shipped, landed, transferred, stored, sold or displayed or offered for sale, and must be released unharmed and alive to the extent possible.

14.2. Urgent action is required to monitor and mitigate interactions between fisheries and vulnerable elasmobranch species in the Mediterranean Sea, in alignment with Resolution GFCM/46/2023/4 on a regional plan of action to monitor and mitigate interactions between fisheries and vulnerable species in the Mediterranean Sea.

14.3. Strengthened measures are needed to improve the conservation status of elasmobranch species listed in Annex II and III of the SPA/BD Protocol, and to mitigate or eliminate, where possible, the risk of incidental catch in fishing operations and associated mortality in the GFCM area of application, in line with Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/16 on additional mitigation measures for the conservation of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean Sea.

14.4. Other species are currently data-deficient with inadequate information to assess extinction risk. Thus, there is an urgent need to assess the status in the Mediterranean Sea of the 12 species identified by IUCN as Data Deficient: Marbled stingray (*Dasyatis marmorata*), Lusitanian Cownose (*Rhinoptera marginata*), Round fantail stingray (*Taeniurops grabata*), Bignose shark (*Carcharhinus altimus*), Copper shark (*Carcharhinus brachyurus*), Blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*), Dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*), Sharpnose sevengill shark (*Heptranchias perlo*), Longnose spurdog (*Squalus blainville*), Shortnose spurdog (*Squalus megalops*), Bigeyed sixgill shark (*Hexanchus nakamurai*) and Longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*). In addition, prioritize research and protection of deep-sea sharks, such as the Little Gulper Shark (*Centrophorus uyato*).

14.5. Identify further legislative, management and technical measures to protect species including minimizing bycatch and mortality of sharks, and develop management programmes for species currently marketed, which might include listing in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol.

14.5.1. Primarily for the endangered species: the dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), the thresher sharks (*Alopias spp.),* the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*), gulper sharks (*Centrophorus* spp.), and Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*).

14.5.2. Secondly, for the other commercially important species: the catsharks (*Scyliorhinus spp. and Galeus melastomus*), the hound sharks (*Mustelus spp*.), the requiem sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis, C. limbatus, C. obscurus and*), the Mackerel sharks (Lamnidae), the skates (*Leucoraja spp., Raja spp*.), and the stingrays (*Dasyatis spp*.).

14.6. Ensure good practice for handling rays and sharks caught accidentally and encourage fishing practices that reduce chondrichthyan by-catch and/or facilitate live release.

14.7. Identify, protect, and restore critical habitats, especially mating areas, and spawning and nursery grounds, ensuring their sustained ecological function through regular monitoring and conservation efforts.

14.8. Develop research programmes on general biology (feeding, reproduction and growth parameters), taxonomy, ecology and population dynamics, with particular regard to genetic and migration studies. Additionally, establish programs for the development and transfer of technology and innovative measures in fishing activities.

14.9. Develop both systems for the monitoring of fisheries and fishery-independent monitoring programmes at both, national and regional level.

14.10. Develop research programmes to identify best practices for the reduction of the Chondrichthyes-fishery interactions

14.11. Develop training to ensure capacity-building at both the national and regional levels in a participatory approach, mainly in the following fields: taxonomy, biology, ecology, monitoring methods, stock assessment, and digital data collection tools.

14.12. Develop information, education and training programmes for professionals and public awareness.

C. IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

In order to implement the above-mentioned general priorities, specific measures should be taken at national and regional level:

C.1. PROTECTION

15. Strict legal protection of elasmobranchs species under Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) of the SPA/BD Protocol to the Barcelona Convention, which concerned by Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/2 on fisheries management measures for the conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area of application, amending Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 (cf. paragraphs 10.2 and 11.1), Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/16 on additional mitigation measures for the conservation of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean Sea and Resolution GFCM/46/2023/4 on a regional plan of action to monitor and mitigate interactions between fisheries and vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea in accordance with national and international laws and conventions. The status of Mediterranean chondrichthyans should be regularly reviewed in order to recommend, when necessary, legal protection for threatened species.

16. Strengthen the legal framework for the conservation of elasmobranch species with consideration of amendments to Annexes II and III of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean. Mediterranean chondrichthyan species should be regularly reviewed to recommend updates and enhance legal protections for those listed in Annexes II and III.

C.2. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

17. According to the principles of the IPOA-Sharks and of the UN Straddling Fish Stocks Agreement, states that contribute to fishing mortality for a species or stocks should participate in their management.

18. Existing assessment reports and fisheries management programmes should be adjusted to chondrichthyan fishes or specific plans should be developed within the framework of the IPOA-Sharks and the GFCM recommendations GFCM/42/2018/2, GFCM/44/2021/16 and Resolution GFCM/46/2023/4.

19. It is urgent to collect and report precise fisheries statistics, mainly on catches and landings by species. For this purpose, field identification sheets should be published in appropriate languages with vernacular names, dispatched to fishery communities, digitized, and integrated into mobile platforms to enhance functionality and user-friendliness, designed to aid species identification, incorporated into regional policies to make it mandatory for fishers and conservation stakeholders. Additionally, data on fishing efforts should be collected and reported to GFCM, when possible.

20. bis. capacity building training of statistics collectors should be ensured and statistics categories defined.

21. Management programmes for chondrichthyan fishes should be based on studies of the assessment of stocks and populations. Management should be also based on by-catch and measures, including proven and efficiently tested innovative approaches to reduce incidental catches studies specifically threatened or endangered chondrichthyan species

22. Publish and disseminate guidelines on bycatch reduction and proper handling practices for protected species in relevant languages to ensure broad accessibility. Ensure the immediate and safe release of protected species, prioritizing their unharmed survival, whenever conditions allow.

23. Implementing a permanent monitoring, specifically scientific monitoring, of fisheries where chondrichthyans are impacted is a fundamental management measure, useful for the conservation of these species. This action would permit the timely detection of any decline in their biomasses that could be an unequivocal sign of over-fishing. This monitoring could be done through surveys, scientific obervation mainly on board, landing-site observation and the examining of logbooks. This action should also address sightings (strandings and observations at sea).

24. For most species, cooperative management is necessary at national, regional and international levels. The mechanisms for achieving a cooperative approach may consist of the following elements:

- information on existing exploited resources and management systems;
- the defining and provision of legal instruments;
- the use of a participatory planning approach;
- the defining of clear management agreements;
- the building and development of national groups.

25. Implement measures, including proven and efficiently tested innovative approaches, based on the assessment of fishing gear impacts and promote the adoption of alternative gear to minimize bycatch and enhance sustainable practices.

26. Mediterranean countries shall ban finning following GFCM recommendation GFCM/42/2018/2; it shall be prohibited to remove shark fins on board vessels and to retain, tranship or land shark fins.

C.3. CRITICAL HABITATS AND ENVIRONMENT

27. Field studies are needed to inventory and map critical habitats around the Mediterranean that are important for chondichtyans at all their life stage.

28. Legal protection should be given to these habitats, in conformity with the national and international laws and conventions on the subject, to prevent their deterioration due to the negative effects of human activity. When these habitats have deteriorated, restoration programmes should be undertaken. One example of legal protection is the creation, where possible, of marine protected areas in which human activity is regulated.

29. Such protection measures could be part of fishery management programmes as well as of integrated coastal zone management.

30. Habitat connectivity should be identified and preserved by mapping and protecting ecological corridors between critical habitats to ensure the movement, migration, and genetic exchange of sensitive species.

C.4. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND MONITORING

31. Parallel to protection and conservation measures, properly funded and staffed scientific research programmes should be undertaken or developed, mainly on species biology and ecology, emphasising growth, reproduction, diet, geographical and bathymetric distribution, migration, ecological connectivity, population structure using molecular tools and dynamics, non-indigenous species interactions (including their role as hosts of pathogens) and risk assessment, specifically focusing on risks related to overfishing, habitat destruction, climate change, pollution, and invasive species. Regional tagging (conventional, acoustic, pop-up and satellite tag) programmes should be developed for migratory species. Also, fishing efforts exploratory cruises and the status of species

within the precautionary principle, should be assessed. In the same way, discard should be evaluated in terms of quantity and composition. Research on tools to avoid or reduce by-catch should be fostered. Evaluation of the outcomes of management measures should be considered, through the utilisation of the scientific monitoring programme and should be inclusive of all stages, in order to support and guide the development of effective managment measures.

32. For the scientific monitoring of fisheries, the standardised collection of data at landing places and fish markets should be supplemented and completed by on-board observation programmes to gather precise data on fisheries and on species biology. Also, logbooks adapted to chondrichthyan fisheries should be distributed to fishermen. The following set of data would be required:

- species composition of the catch with length frequency distribution by sex and maturity stage;
- retained catch by species in number and weight;
- discarded catch in number and weight (+ reasons for discard);
- released species in number (sex, length when possible);
- gear and vessel specifications and cruise characteristics;
- provide data on location and depth of fishing

Furthermore, samples (vertebrae, dorsal spines) should be taken and adequately preserved for age determination, and tissue samples for genetic analysis (DNA). Furthermore, data collection and monitoring should be improved by utilizing new technologies for more effective and accurate tracking.

33. Mediterranean countries should establish or expand monitoring programmes, specifically scientific monitoring, at both national and regional level, to cover the whole Mediterranean Sea, and to collect standardised quantitative data to estimate fish density (relative abundance). Also these programmes should leverage innovative tools such as environmental DNA (eDNA), baited remove underwater videos (BRUVs), citizen science, and local ecological knowledge (LEK), fostering a participatory approach that actively involves all stakeholders. This would help evaluate the risk status of the various species.

34. Assess the socioeconomic impacts of interactions between elasmobranch species and fisheries, including incidental catch-related damages, testing mitigation technologies, and identifying barriers to adoption while developing alternative solutions and compensation measures.

C.5. CAPACITY BUILDING/TRAINING

35. The Contracting Parties should promote the training of specialists, fisheries officers and managers in the study and conservation of chondrichthyan fishes. To this end, it is important to identify already existing initiatives and to give priority to taxonomy, conservation biology and techniques for monitoring research programmes (cf. above paragraph on scientific research).

36. Training programmes should also focus on methods of fisheries data collection and stock assessment, by-catch mitigation especially data analysis.

37. Promote capacity-building initiatives that foster inclusivity by engaging experts, academia, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth representatives, and other relevant stakeholders. These efforts should aim to ensure diverse perspectives, equitable participation, and the effective dissemination of knowledge across all sectors

38. Provide adequate institutional support and promote capacity buidling activities to Contracting parties according to their needs, specifically training programs and workshops, tehcnical assistance, and technical expertise and consultancy.

C.6. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

39. For protection and conservation measures to be effective, public support should be obtained: In this respect, (1) information campaigns should be directed at national authorities, residents, teachers, visitors, recreational and professional fishermen, wholesale/market sector, sport anglers, divers and any other stakeholder; (2) Publication materials should be produced to present the life history, and vulnerability, of chondrichthyans; and (3) educational programme on the issue should be taught to school children (incluing new teaching approaches and technologies, such as virtual reality (3D-VR)).

40. Also, guidelines for chondrichthyan watching should be published and widely distributed to potential observers such as anglers, yachtsmen, divers, shark-fans, etc, in order to make them actively involved in the conservation of chondrichthyan fishes.

41. In this process of education and public awareness, the help of associations and other bodies involved in nature conseration should be solicited.

C.7. REGIONAL COORDINATING STRUCTURE

42. All the above-mentioned recommended actions related to the protection and the conservation of species and their habitats, and the research and educational programmes, should be monitored and implemented, with as much regional cooperation between all the countries operating in the Mediterranean basin.

43. These actions should be undertaken in cooperation with, and with the support of, other regional fisheries organisations (e.g. GFCM, ICCAT), through establishing MoUs where necessary. Non- governmental organisations, associations and national environmental bodies should also be involved, as well as other relevant MEA's such as CITES, CMS, Sharks-MOU, and the Bern Convention.

44. Implementation of the present Action Plan will be regionally coordinated by the Mediterranean Action Plan’s (MAP) Secretariat through the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC). The main functions of the coordinating structure shall consist in:

- favouring and supporting the collection of data and publishing and circulating results at Mediterranean level;
- promoting the drawing up of inventories of species and areas of importance for the Mediterranean marine environment;
- promoting transboundary cooperation;
- preparing reports on progress in the implementation of the Action Plan, to be submitted to the Meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs/BD and to meetings of the Contracting Parties;
- organising meetings of experts on specific subjects relating to Mediterranean chondrichthyans, and training courses;
- promoting the review of status of species and fisheries by relevant organisations;
- One year after the adoption of the Action Plan, coordinating the organisation of a Mediterranean symposium aiming at defining the state of knowledge on chondrichthyan fishes and taking stock of the progress made in implementing the Action Plan;
  five years after the present updating of the Action Plan, organising a meeting to review the progress of the Action Plan and to propose a revision of the Action Plan if needed.
  Complementary work done by other international organisations with the similar objectives shall be encouraged by SPA/RAC, promoting collaborative efforts and avoiding possible duplication.

45. Initiatives aiming at ensuring enforcement of the current Action Plan, particularly in international waters, should be promoted and aligned with the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD modalities on ecologically or biologically significant

marine areas (EBSA's), the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

46. Establish or improve a network and continuously update the directory of national, regional, and international experts on chondrichthyan fishes.

47. Enhancing coordination and collaboration at national and regional levels, among Contracting Parties, regional institutions, Convention Secretariats, Convention's Secretariats, Associates and Partners of the Action Plans, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth representatives, and other relevant stakeholders, initiatives, networks, and partnerships, while addressing gaps in geographical and thematic coverage.

48. Enhance contribution to efforts in identifying and facilitating partnerships with potential funding bodies, including international financial institutions, donors, and other relevant organizations, by promoting existing and new research proposals developed in the framework of this Action Plan.

D. PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION

49. Implementing the present Action Plan is the responsibility of the national authorities of the Contracting Parties. Parties should facilitate coordination between their national, environmental and fisheries departments to ensure implementation of activities directed at protected and non-protected chondrichthyan species. Organisations or bodies concerned are invited to associate themselves with the work of implementing the present Action Plan. At their ordinary meetings, the Contracting Parties may, at the suggestion of the Meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs/BD, grant the status of 'Action Plan Associate' to any organisation or laboratory which so requests and which carries out, or supports (financially or otherwise) the carrying out of, concrete actions (conservation, research, etc.) likely to facilitate the implementation of the present Action Plan, taking into account the priorities contained therein. NGOs can submit their applications directly to SPA/RAC.

50. The coordinating structure shall set up a mechanism for regular dialogue between the Action Plan Associates and, where necessary, organise meetings to this effect. Dialogue should be conducted mainly electronically, including virtual meetings and e-mail.

E. TITLE OF ACTION PLAN PARTNER

51. To encourage and reward outside contributions to the Action Plan, the Contracting Parties may at their ordinary meetings grant the title of 'Action Plan Partner' to any organisation (governmental, NGO, economic, academic etc.) that has to its credit concrete actions likely to help protect chondrichthyan fishes in the Mediterranean. During their ordinary meetings, the Contracting Parties may, upon the recommendation of the meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs/BD, grant the status of «Action Plan Partner» to any organization or laboratory that requests it. This status will be awarded to those that carry out, or support (financially or otherwise), concrete actions (such as conservation, research, etc.), that contribute to the implementation of the present action plan, in line with its priorities. The conditions and criteria for the award of the regional action plan partner title are outlined in Annex VI to the decision IG.26/5.

F. ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION OF THE ACTION PLAN

52. At each of their Meetings, the National Focal Points for SPAs/BD will assess the progress made in implementing the Action Plan, on the basis of national reports and of a report made by the SPA/RAC on implementation at regional level. In the light of this assessment, the Meeting of the National Focal Points for SPAs/BD will suggest recommendations to be submitted to the Contracting Parties, and, if necessary, suggest adjustments to the timetable given in the Annex to the Action Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE FOR THE PERIOD 2025-2030

ACTIONS	CALENDER	BY WHOM
Tools		
1. Establish or improve a network and continuously update the directory of national, regional, and international experts on chondrichthyan fishes. (cf. § 47 of C.7 "Regional coordinating structure")	(2025-2030)	SPA/RAC, CMS Shark MOU Secretariat, IUCN SSG, RFMO Shark Working Groups
2. Improve and promote the use of the existing Field identification sheets. (cf. § 19 of C.2. "Fisheries management")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties and RFMOs
3. Promote the use of the GFCM manual (2019) “Monitoring the incidental catch of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: methodology for data collection” (cf. § C.2. "Fisheries management")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties
4. Formalize/reinforce synchronous submission of catch, bycatch and discard data annually to the GFCM according to DCRF (Data Collection Reference Framework). (cf. § 32 of C.4. "Scientific research and monitoring")	Every year	Contracting Parties
5. Information campaigns and publishing materials for public awareness (cf. § 13.11. of B "Priorities" and cf. § 39 of "Education and public awareness")	(2025-2030)	SPA/RAC
6. Publish and disseminate guidelines for reducing the presence of sensitive species in by-catch and releasing them if caught and promote them in relevant languages to ensure broad accessibility. (cf. § 22 of C.2 «Fisheries management")	(2025-2030)	SPA/RAC and RFMO
7.Update and promote protocols and programmes for improved compilation and analysis of data, for contribution to regional stock assessment initiatives. (cf. § C2 “Fisheries management” and 29 of C.4. "Scientific research and monitoring")	Continuous action (2025-2029)	National and regional agencies and advisory bodies, CMS, GFCM and FAO.
8. Training manual on cartilaginous fish eco-biology (Taxonomy, biological parameters determination, identification and monitoring of fisheries and critical habitats, conservation…) (cf. § 29 of C.6 "Education and public awareness")	ASAP	SPA/RAC
9. Capacity building and training programmes on cartilaginous fish biology (cf. § 14.11., and 14.12 of B "Priorities", cf. § 35, 36, 37, 38 of C.6 "Capacity building/training" and cf. § 39, 41 of C.6 "Education and public awareness")	ASAP	SPA/RAC, Contracting Parties, RFMOs, GFCM, FAO.

ACTIONS	CALENDER	BY WHOM
10. Symposium on Mediterranean chondrichthyan fishes (cf. § C.7 "Regional coordinating structure")	One year after adoption	SPA/RAC
11. Meeting to review progress made on the Action Plan (cf. § 52 of C.7 and § F "Assessing the implementation and revision of the Action Plan")	5 years after adoption	SPA/RAC
Legal processes		
12a. Legal protection established for endangered species, recommended in this Action Plan, identified by country (species enlisted in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol) 12b. Urgent assessment of the status of data deficient species, recommended in this Action Plan (assessed by IUCN) (cf. § 14.1. of B "Priorities"; C.1 "Protection")	ASAP	Contracting Parties
13. Legal protection for prohibiting "finning" according to the GFCM recommendation (GFCM/42/2018/2) (cf. § 14.1 of B "Priorities" and cf. § 26 of C.2 "Fisheries management")	ASAP	Contracting Parties
14. Legal protection that addresses additional mitigation measures for the conservation of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean Sea, according to the GFCM recommendation (GFCM/44/2021/16) (cf. § 14.2 of B "Priorities")	ASAP	Contracting Parties
15. Legal protection that addresses the plan of action to monitor and mitigate interactions between fisheries and vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea according to the GFCM resolution (GFCM/46/2023/4) (cf. § 14.3 of B "Priorities")	ASAP	Contracting Parties
16. Critical habitats identified, legally protected, restored and monitored, as soon as they are identified. (cf. § 14.7. B "Priorities" and cf. § 27 and 28 C.3 "Critical habitats and environment")	ASAP	Contracting Parties
17. Implement measures based on the assessment of fishing gear impacts and promote the adoption of alternative gear to minimize bycatch and enhance sustainable practices. (cf. § 25 of C.2 "Fisheries management")	ASAP	Contracting Parties
18. Establish and promote national, sub-regional and regional plans or strategies for cartilaginous fish species (mainly listed in Annexes II and III). (cf. § C.2 "Fisheries management")	Continuous action (2025-2030)	Contracting Parties, SPA/RAC, GFCM, CMS

ACTIONS	CALENDER	BY WHOM
19. Facilitating the enforcement of legal measures aiming to set up a system for enforcement of monitoring fisheries in international waters such as extending MEDITS programme to all Mediterranean countries (Mediterranean International Trawl Survey). (cf. § 48 C. 7 "Regional coordinating structure")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties, SPA/RAC, GFCM, CMS and EU
20. Monitor and mitigate interactions between fisheries and vulnerable elasmobranch species in the Mediterranean Sea. (cf. § 14.2 of B "Priorities")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties, International organization, GFCM, FAO
Monitoring and data collection		
21. Establishing research programmes, specifically scientific programmes, mainly on the biology, ecology and population dynamics of the main species identified by the countries (cf. § C. 4 "Scientific research and monitoring")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties
22. Support the establishing of, or feed the existing, centralised databases (DCRF, MEDLEM…) (cf. § C.7 "Regional coordinating structure")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties and SPA/RAC
23. Inventory of critical habitats (mating, spawning and nursery grounds) (cf. § 14.7. B "Priorities" and cf. § 27 and 28 C.3 "Critical habitats and environment")	ASAP	Contracting Parties
24. Promote habitat connectivity and identify and protect ecological corridors between critical habitats. (cf. § 30 of C. 3 "Critical habitats and environment")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties and RFMOs
25. Promote existing and new research proposals developed under the SPA/RAC Action Plan to funding agencies (cf. § C. 4 "Scientific research and monitoring" and cf. § C.7 "Regional coordinating structure")	(2025-2030)	SPA/RAC, CPs, AP partners
26. Promote programme on citizen science and local ecological knowledge (LEK) in data collection and monitoring. (cf. § 33 of C. 4 "Scientific research and monitoring")	(2025-2030)	Contracting parties, RFMOs
27. Assess the socioeconomic impacts of interactions between elasmobranch species and fisheries. (cf. § 34 of C. 4 "Scientific research and monitoring")	(2025-2030)	Contracting parties, international organizations
28. Promote programs, specifically scientific programmes, on the status of bycatch to propose measures for attenuation of the phenomenon. Such programs should be developed with onboard observers and multispecies approach. (cf. § 32 of C. 4 "Scientific research and monitoring")	(2025-2030)	SPA/RAC, CPs, AP partners
29. Increase compliance with obligations to collect and submit species- specific commercial catch and bycatch data to FAO and GFCM, including through increased use of observers. (cf. § C. 7 "Regional coordinating structure")	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties
30. Support expert participation in RFMO and other relevant meetings and workshops, to share expertise and build capacity for data collection, stock assessment and bycatch mitigation.	ASAP	Contracting Parties, RFMO, SPA/RAC

ACTIONS	CALENDER	BY WHOM
(cf. § C.5 "Capacity building / Training")		
Management and assessment procedures		
31. Continuously review data and undertake new studies to clarify the status of Mediterranean chondrichthyan species focusing on endemics and species assessed as Data Deficient or Near Threatened (cf. § 14.4 of B "Priorities"; 15 of C.1 'Protection'; 31 of C.4 "Scientific research and monitoring")	(2025-2030)	International organisations
32. Develop and adopt National Shark Plans where they do not yet exist. (cf. § C.1 'Protection', C.2. "Fisheries management", & C.3 "Critical habitats and environment").	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties
33. Identify further management and technical measures to minimize bycatch and mortality of sharks in fisheries impacting cartilaginous fishes. (cf. § 14.5 of B "Priorities"')	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties & RFMOs
34. Identify and address mitigation measures for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes in the Mediterranean Sea (cf. § 15 of C.1. "Protection"')	(2025-2030)	Contracting Parties
35. Assess the fishing gear impacts and promote the adoption of alternative gear to minimize bycatch and enhance sustainable practices. (cf. § 25 of C.2. "Fisheries management")	(2025-2030)	International organizations, RFMOs, GFCM, FAO

Annex III

Regional Strategy for the conservation of monk seal in the Mediterranean

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List of Acronyms

AP: Action Plan

ISPRA: Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (Italy).

IMAP: Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme

IUCN/SSC: International Union for Conservation of Nature /Species Survival Commission

MSA: The Monk Seal Alliance.

MSAC: Monk Seal Advisory Committee.

MedCEM: Mediterranean Centre for Environmental Monitoring

MOm: Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal (Greece).

NECCA: Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (Greece)

UNEP/MED: United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan

RS: Regional Strategy for the Conservation of Monk Seals in the Mediterranean

SPA/RAC: Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (Tunisia).

1. Introduction and rationale

1. In 1988, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted an Action Plan for the management of the Monk Seal (AP). This was followed in 2013 by the adoption of the "Regional strategy for the conservation of Mediterranean monk seal (2014-2019)" (RS). A new updated RS (2020-2025) was adopted by the Barcelona Convention COP 19, 2019 Decision IG.24/7.

2. This new draft RS, like those preceding it, produced by the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) in 2013[7] and 2019[8], respectively, differs from the Barcelona Convention's "Action plan for the management of the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*)" (UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA 2003a) chiefly in terms of its method, considering that the old AP continues to be valid as far as its contents and general principles are concerned[9].

3. As, it was the case for the two earlier versions, this updated RS follows the guidelines detailed in the manual for the construction of Species Conservation Strategies (IUCN/SSC 2008). Accordingly, it is structured with the following elements:

a. a **Vision**, with associated **Goals** and **Goal Targets** that are SMART[10];
b. the **Objectives** needed to achieve the Goal Targets within the stated time span, with associated SMART **Objective Targets**.

4. The main problem encountered in envisaging a region-wide Strategy derives from the quite diverse conservation status of monk seals in the different portion of the Mediterranean and by consequence the quite different priorities and responsibilities saddled onto the various monk seal Range States.

5. To handle this challenge, Mediterranean countries were assigned to the following three groups (Figure 1 and Table 1):

A. Countries where monk seal breeding has been reported after year 2017[11];
B. Countries where no monk seal breeding is reported, but where repeated sightings of monk seals (>3) were reported since 2017;
C. Countries where no monk seal breeding is reported, and where very rare or no sightings of monk seals (≤3) were reported since 2017.

6. With respect to the precedent version, two countries have changed groups:

- Croatia, with practically no monk seal sightings reported in recent years, with the exception of a couple of opportunistic reports in 2022, has been moved to Group C from Group B.
- Syria, where between 2001-2023, Mediterranean monk seals were reported 34 times (17 of them between 2017-2023) in 7 different locations along the northern Syrian coast (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Of those 34 observations, with the exception of two dead individuals (one killed by a gunshot), all individuals were reportedly alive and routinely swimming around. These observations were concentrated in the area extending from Ras Al Bassit to Oum Al Tiur (9 caves) and that extending from Burj Islam to Slaib Al Turkman (7 caves). This data should however be interpreted with some caution since only three of those reports were supported with photographic evidence. Hence, Syria has been moved to Group B from Group C.

[7] https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_monackus/monk_seal_strategy.pdf
[8] https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/action_plans/strategie_phoque_en.pdf
[9] With few exceptions; e.g., concerning knowledge of the species, which is no longer as poor as it was in 1988 (Art. 3), and the fact that scientific opinion is no longer divided concerning conservation strategies (Art. 4).
[10] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.
[11] Year 2017 was selected as a criterion to separate the present from the country assessments described in the first and second RSs, respectively.

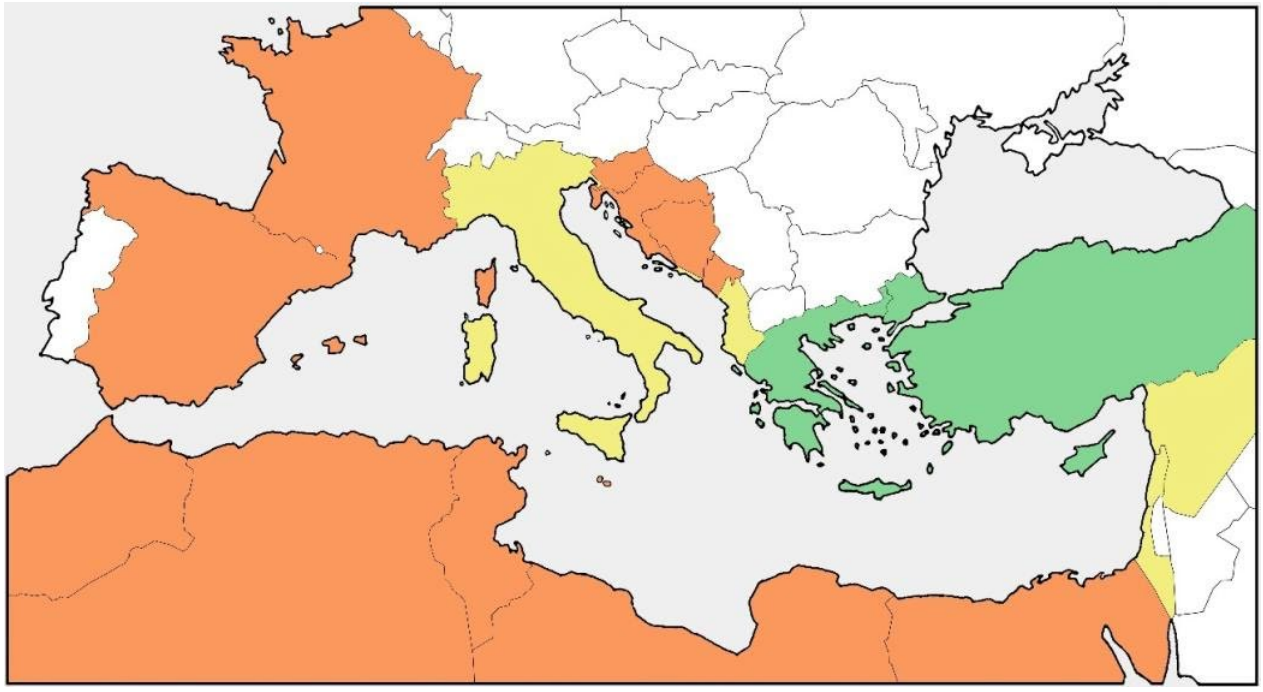


Figure 1. Monk seal conservation status by country (revised for this updated RS). Green: "Group A" countries (where monk seal breeding has been reported after year 2017). Yellow: "Group B" countries (where no monk seal breeding is reported, but where repeated sightings of monk seals (>3) were reported since 2017). Tan: "Group C" countries (where no monk seal breeding is reported, and where very rare or no sightings of monk seals (≤3) were reported since 2017).

7. We realise that the above are rough indicators (e.g., monk seals can be present in a location even if they are not seen, as sightings depend on the presence of observers and the animals can have very inconspicuous behaviours; breeding may not occur in some countries because of lack of breeding habitat, but there may be a healthy presence of animals in that country; etc.). However, the above indicators are conceived to separate countries into major categories according to their current importance for monk seals, thereby involving different types of actions.

8. Group A countries is where action is most urgent, because at the moment these countries are our best hope for the survival of the species. These countries host monk seal resident breeding populations and the majority of the species population.

9. Group B countries are important, because current monk seal sighting records suggest the potential for the species' survival and expansion in areas beyond Group A country borders. Group B countries may contain monk seal critical coastal habitat which is likely to be re-colonised, and may lead to resident breeding nuclei, if conditions are favourable (as demonstrated by the frequent appearances of monk seals in many locations).

10. Group C countries are also important because, although they are characterised by rare monk seal occurrence, they contain historical monk seal critical habitat. The reestablishment of monk seal presence will become more likely if actions in nearby Group B countries are successful and if environmental conditions in historical critical habitat become favourable. In the absence of data collection mechanisms for monk seal sightings, some countries, known to host seals and suitable environmental conditions in the recent past, may currently qualify as Group C.

11. To fulfil the Vision, this draft updated Strategy identifies four Goals. The first Goal relates to the creation of a conservation support structure at the international level, whereas the other three Goals relate to each of the three Groups the various countries have been assigned to.

Table 1: Summary of monk seal presence in the different Mediterranean countries. Countries were subdivided as follows: Green: "Group A" countries (where monk seal breeding has been reported after year 2017). Yellow: "Group B" countries (where no monk seal breeding is reported, but where repeated sightings

of monk seals (>3) were reported since 2017). Tan: “Group C” countries (where no monk seal breeding is reported, and where very rare or no sightings of monk seals (≤3) were reported since 2017). “Group C” includes countries where little or no data was collected at least since 2017, implying that monk seals could be occurring there more frequently, but no information is available

Country	Group A	Group B	Group C	References / Data sources	Notes
Albania				UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA 2003b, UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA 2005, Anon. 2012; Bundone *et al.* 2019, 2021, 2022; Bakiu and Cakalli 2018; Karamanlidis 2024	Sightings of single and 2 individuals reported in the last 15 years and evidence of cave use recorded recently. Birth of a pup in 2019 that survived the first 2 months of its life. The species should now be considered to be effectively re-established, at least from the border of Albania to Greece north to the bay of Vlorë.
Algeria				UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA 2006	The seal pup reported in 2006 was not *M. monachus* (Bouderbala *et al.* 2007). No recent confirmed reports
Bosnia Herzego.					No recent reports.
Croatia				Antolovic *et al.* 2007; Gomercic *et al.* 2011; Bundone *et al.* 2019	2000-2014: 300 individual sightings reported. Only ONE single adult female has been inhabiting area of Kvarner. It appeared in the area in June 2005 and died in August 2014. (data to be taken with caution since these sightings were ascribed to a limited number of animals). Almost monk seal sightings reported in recent years, with the exception of two opportunistic sightings in 2022 confirmed by photograph/video in Croatia (both in July and October 2022).: at Mljet National Park[12], by a Park Ranger, and in Dančе by a recreational fisher[13].
Cyprus				Gucu *et al.* 2009a; UNEP/MAP/RAC/SPA 2011; Karamanlidis 2024; Marcou 2015; Nicolau et al., 2021 ; Marcou and Nicolaou 2023	Evidence of breeding activities in the northern coast (2006-2007) and in the southern coast (since 2009). During 2009-2024, increasing number of seal sightings and the birth of several pups.
Egypt				Notarbartolo di Sciara and Fouad 2011	Single individual observed in 2011. No recent sightings.
France				UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA 1994	No recent reports.
France-Corsica				Data stored in Office de l'Environnement de Corse	Single individual sightings reported in 2007 and 2011
Greece				Karamanlidis 2024; Notarbartolo di Sciara *et al.* 2009; Panou 2009; National Action Plan for the Mediterranean Monk Seal	Mediterranean monk seals in Greece are expanding their range and increasing in numbers. Their marine habitat includes almost the entire coastline of the country up to a depth of 200 m. Greece is home to > 50% of the world population for the species.

[12] Mediterranean monk seal after 40 years spotted in the waters of NP Mljet https://np-mljet.hr/mediterranean-monk-seal-after-40-years-spotted-in-the-waters-of-np-mljet/?lang=en
[13] https://youtu.be/jehVIh6JWjE?si=nJO-yZj5TRppZDGj

Country	Group A	Group B	Group C	References / Data sources	Notes
				(Joint Ministerial Decision ΥΠΕΝ/ΔΤΦΠΒ/95178/2431/5-9-2024[14])	
Israel				Scheinin *et al.* 2011; Bundone *et al.* 2016; Bundone *et al.* 2019; Roditi-Elasar et al. 2021, pers. comm.; Rabou et al. 2023	80+ individual sighting records (2010-2020), 2 different individuals observed in 2010. Monk seal "Yulia", first spotted as a young adult in Türkiye, also known as Tuğra/Gülgez in Türkiye, back in 2007, seen in an open beach in Israel and even the Gaza Strip in May 2023, then spotted again in Israel in May 2024 and north of Beirut, Lebanon, in July 2024.
Italy				ISPRA records of in situ monitoring programs and national sighting database.	Individual validated sightings reported for the years :2010-2012, 2014-2015, 2017-2023. In situ cave use observed through monitoring: 2011-2013, 2016-2017,2020, 2022-2023. One stranded live seal pup but no direct observation of birth, lactation and coastal/cave use of mother-pup pairs observed. The species' current national Red Listing status is Data Deficient due to the difficulty in establishing an overall national population estimate.
Lebanon				Anon. 2010; Karamanlidis 2024; Khatib 2016; SPA/RAC-UNEP/MAP, 2020 Data stored in Society for Nature Protection Lebanon	Single animal sightings reported: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; Dead pregnant seal observed in 2015; 47 monk seal sightings recorded 2003-2020 from Beirut to Tripoli in the north of Lebanon. Recent reports on monk seal presence at Amchit Seal Cave[15];SPA/RAC 2024 by Fatfat; ·No evidence of successful pupping.
Libya				Hamza et al. 2003, UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA 2003b, UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA 2012; Alfaghi *et al.* 2013	25 sightings reported by fishermen between 1998-2002 A 60-kg female juvenile Mediterranean monk seal, approximately 6 months old was found in March 2012 entangled in a fishing net near El Elba Island. Another 2 dead individuals reported in 2023.
Malta				UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA 2003b	One recent report, where *Dive Systems Malta* captured some footage off the southwest coast of Malta in early July 2024[16]

[14] The National Action Plan for the Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*) was published in September 2024 in the Official Gazette and prepared by the Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk seal (MOm). https://search.et.gr/el/fek/?fekId=770812

[15] https://www.instagram.com/reel/DBQkDqvMRSk/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

[16] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuurntREzw0

Country	Group A	Group B	Group C	References / Data sources	Notes
Monaco					No recent reports. Monk seal habitat no longer present.
Montenegro				Panou *et al.* 2017, 2023	A total of 14 single individual sightings Between 1985-2010 throughout the country's coastline may indicate movements of animals from neighbouring countries. >25 suitable caves. A young individual, recorded by MedCEM in August 2023[17]. Sightings also reported at Ulcinj and again in September 2024 in Bar (different locations).
Morocco				UNEP-MAPRAC/SPA 2003b, Mo *et al.* 2011; Bundone *et al.* 2019	More than 90 sightings reported by fishermen 2000-2005, 1 sighting 2006 (Chafarinas isl.)
Slovenia				UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA 2003b	No reports.
Spain				Anon. 2008, Font and Mayol 2009; Karamanlidis 2024.	Individual sighted in 2008. More sightings in 2009. Possibly extinct, detection through eDNA, no recent sightings
Syria				Gucu 2004, Jony and Ibrahim 2006, Mo *et al.* 2003; Ibrahim et al. 2024	Between 2001-2023, Mediterranean monk seals reported 34 times (only three with photographic evidence) in 9 different locations along the northern Syrian coast. They were concentrated in the area extending from Ras Al Bassit to Oum Al Tiur (9 caves) and that extending from Burj Islam to Slaib Al Turkman (7 caves).
Tunisia				S. Guelloz ,pers. comm.	Single individual sightings reported: 2007, 2011 (La Galite archipelago)
Türkiye				Güçlüsoy *et al.* 2004; Gucu *et al.* 2009b; Karamanlidis et al. 2023; Karamanlidis 2024; Ok, M., & Kıraç, C. O. (2023). *Updated population size and status of the Mediterranean monk seal in Türkiye* [Unpublished working document]. METU Institute of Marine Science, Mersin, Türkiye and Underwater Research Society – Mediterranean Seal Research Group, Ankara, Türkiye. (Contributed to Karamanlidis, A. A., Dendrinos, P., Fernandez de Larrinoa, P., Kıraç, C. O., Nicolaou, H., & Pires, R. (2023). *Monachus*	The number of Mediterranean monk seals in Türkiye has been estimated at 76–140 individuals, including 42–120 mature individuals. As it is the case in neighbouring Greece, their marine habitat is considered to include most of the coastline of the country up to a depth of 200 m. Recently some individuals also reported in the Sea of Marmara. Besides in Northern Aegean Sea was under surveyed last year.

[17] https://medpan.org/en/news/exceptional-filmed-observation-monk-seal-montenegro

Country	Group A	Group B	Group C	References / Data sources	Notes
				monachus. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2023, e.T13653A238637039. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2023-1.RLTS.T13653A238637039.en); Dede, A., Tonay, A. M., Gönülal, O., Güreşen, S. O., &Öztürk, B. (2025). Camera trap monitoring of the haul-out behavior of Mediterranean monk seals on Gökçeada Island in the North Aegean Sea. *Regional Studies in Marine Science, 87*, 104224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rsma.2025.104224	

2. The Strategy

2.1. Vision

(As it was stated in the first version of the RS in 2013 and still valid)

12. *Over the next two decades, the ecological recovery of monk seals in the Mediterranean will deem to have occurred, when multiple colonies have become established within all major habitats in their historic range, interacting in ecologically significant ways with the fullest possible set of other species, and inspiring and connecting human cultures.*

2.2. Goals

13. **Goal 1.** Mediterranean Range States implement this Strategy in pursuance of the Vision, through the expeditious development and adoption of appropriate national policies and administrative frameworks, and with effective, coordinated support from relevant international organisations and civil society.

14. **Goal 2.** Monk seal breeding nuclei in sites located in "Group A" countries are effectively protected from deliberate and accidental killings, habitat degradation and human disturbance, so that seal numbers in such sites increase and seals are able to disperse to and re-colonise the surrounding areas.

15. **Goal 3.** Monk seal presence in sites where they are repeatedly seen today in "Group B" countries is permanently established, and breeding resumes. "Group B" countries are upgraded to "Group A".

16. **Goal 4.** Monk seal presence is reported repeatedly in the species' historical habitat in "Group C" countries, and these "Group C" countries are upgraded to "Group B". Once all "Group C" countries are upgraded, Group C is deleted.

2.3. Goal Targets, Objectives and Objective Targets

Goal 1. Strategy implementation.

17. Mediterranean Range States implement this Strategy in pursuance of the Vision, through the development and adoption of appropriate national policies and administrative frameworks, and with effective, coordinated support from relevant international organisations and civil society.

Goal Target 1.1. A framework for the implementation of the Mediterranean Monk Seal Conservation Strategy is established by the Mediterranean Range States. The framework will include the establishment of a Monk Seal Advisory Committee (MSAC).

18. **Objective 1.1.1.** SPA/RAC establishes a **Monk Seal Advisory Committee (MSAC)[18].** The main objective of the Committee is to support SPA/RAC in the development and implementation of specific conservation actions related to monk seal research and conservation in the framework of the RS and other initiatives/programmes in the region. Tasks of the MSAC will include :

- provide support to SPA/RAC in the implementation of the Strategy and its review and updating (e.g., by defining the Actions needed to attain the different Objective Targets);
- provide recommendations and advice on issues related to monk seal conservation;
- support SPA/RAC in the creation and maintenance of a forum for monk seal conservation practitioners, where relevant information and experience is shared, exchanges are facilitated, challenges are discussed, cooperative initiatives are enhanced, transparency and openness of procedures are safeguarded.

19. The MSAC is composed by a small number of experts, which should include, not only monk seal experts, but also professional profiles such as: marine conservation ecologists, marine veterinaries, fisheries experts, fisheries practitioners, socio-economists, MPA practitioners, and representatives from relevant intergovernmental regional organisations.

[18] Detail on draft Terms of Reference for the MSAC can be found at UNEP/MED WG.548/8 Rev.2 Annex I https://www.rac-spa.org/meetings/nfp16/docs/working/rev/WG548-8_ENG_REV_2_.pdf

20. The MSAC function is supported by SPA/RAC, and may benefit from relevant bodies within IUCN, the GFCM, and other international organisations.

21. **Objective Target 1.1.1.1.** MSAC established by 2026. The Advisory Committee meets at least once a year to review the status of monk seals in the Mediterranean, and to support the implementation of the Actions foreseen in the Strategy.

22. **Objective Target 1.1.1.2.** First meeting of MSAC in November 2026. The MSAC experts shall elect among them a chairperson that can be re-elected annually. SPA/RAC will act as secretariat and appoint a representative and Coordinator that will follow up on the organisation and work of the committee.

23. **Objective Target 1.1.1.3.** MSAC activities are harmonised, wherever appropriate, with prescriptions of the EU Habitats Directive, and with efforts by UNEP-MAP within the Ecosystem Approach process for the attainment of Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean, i.e., to attain Ecological Objective EO1 "Biodiversity" and Operational Objectives 1.1 ("Species distribution is maintained"), 1.2 ("Population size of selected species in maintained"), 1.3 ("Population condition of selected species is maintained"), 1.4 ("Key coastal and marine habitats are not being lost"), as far as monk seals are concerned.

24. **Objective Target 1.1.1.4**. Member States establish a national multiannual program that draws from, their National Action Plan (if any), the Action Plan and the Strategy objectives, that incorporates monitoring, capacity building and conservation measures into relevant existing national programs involving monitoring of marine biodiversity and spatial protection measures that have been formulated for national and international policy implementation (i.e. monitoring as per EcAP/IMAP region-wide programs and Habitats Directive and MSFD for EC Member States, MPA network development and marine Natura 2000 establishment for Mediterranean EC countries). The MSAC reviews the multiannual programs and reports to SPA/RAC, recommending content improvement so as to harmonise conservation efforts at a regional level with common objectives and comparable efforts. The MSAC will provide support to SPA/RAC so national multiannual programs are defined by early 2027.

25. **Objective 1.1.2.** The Parties to the Barcelona Convention ensure that the activities that the MSAC recommends are addressed.

26. **Objective Target 1.1.2.1.** The Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopt resolutions in support of specific MSAC recommendations concerning the implementation of this Strategy.

Goal Target 1.2. Based on this Strategy, the MSAC provides support to SPA/RAC in the development and implementation of specific conservation actions having a regional scope.

27. **Objective 1.2.1.** The first task of the MSAC is to support SPA/RAC on supervising the attainment of Goals 2, 3 and 4.

28. **Objective 1.2.2.** Capacity building and awareness activities are planned by the MSAC, and promoted in monk seal Ranges States by SPA/RAC so that monk seal protection and recovery is effectively embraced at the national level. This will include the preparation of a dedicated website (including links to the relevant existing web pages) and the regular issuing and widely distributed monk seal information newsletter in an adequate number of different languages.

29. **Objective Target 1.2.2.1.** Capacity building: the main groups of stakeholders in monk seal conservation are identified by the MSAC, taking stock of national frameworks pertaining to the relevant sectors, tailored to each different monk seal Range State (with first priority given to "Group A Countries" and second priority given to "Group B Countries"), and training courses are prepared and planned (see Goal Target 2.2.). Preferably, training events will be developed *in situ* at selected locations having special relevance to monk seal conservation, in collaboration with the

local groups, and will be followed by a constant "advice service" or accompanying process to ensure that full and long-lasting advantage derives from the effort.

30. **Objective Target 1.2.2.2.** In order to facilitate collaboration and communication amongst monk seal conservation experts throughout the region, the MSAC provides support to SPA/RAC for organizing periodical workshops on best practices of monk seal monitoring and conservation techniques, preferably taking advantage of other meetings being periodically organised (e.g., CIESM Congresses, ECS Annual meetings). Proceedings are edited and widely diffused (e.g., by pdf through the Internet) in formats that will serve as "best practice guidelines".

31. **Objective Target 1.2.2.3.** In consultation with MSAC awareness actions are promoted by SPA/RAC, with first priority given to "Group A Countries" and second priority given to "Group B Countries", in cooperation with **local** groups, targeting special-interest stakeholders such as fishermen and local coastal communities.

32. **Objective Target 1.2.2.4.** Ideally, an electronic monk seal newsletter should be issued yearly by SPA/RAC based on the recommendations from the MSAC and made freely available on-line (e.g., by resuming the *Monachus Guardian*), starting in 2026.

33. **Objective 1.2.3.** Monitoring of monk seal distribution and abundance, as well as advances in knowledge important for monk seal conservation, are promoted and supported by SPA/RAC through training, workshops and the facilitation of research and monitoring programmes. The monitoring process is made to coincide with the similar monitoring requirements within the framework of the Ecosystem Approach-IMAP process by UNEP-MAP, and (where appropriate) with the Marine Framework Strategy Directive and Habitats Directive of the EC.

34. **Objective Target 1.2.3.1.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the completion of monk seal breeding site inventories in "Group A Countries" by 2030.

35. **Objective Target 1.2.3.2.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the yearly monitoring of monk seal population parameters (e.g., population abundance, trends, pup production) in breeding sites in "Group A Countries", starting in 2026.

36. **Objective Target 1.2.3.3.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the monitoring of monk seal parameters (e.g., species distribution, population abundance, mortality levels and causes) in areas of "Group B countries" with recurrent sightings, habitat availability, and spatial protection measures for the species.

37. **Objective Target 1.2.3.4**. MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the set-up of common databases (e.g., photo-id catalogues). An initiative, in line with this, is being considered at the moment of producing this draft by the Monk Seal Alliance (MSA)[19]. Strengthening cross-border cooperation and data-sharing mechanisms among Mediterranean countries would help to enhance the tracking of monk seal movements and improve habitat protection measures.

38. **Objective 1.2.4.** The MSAC will provide support to SPA/RAC in facilitating the definition of a region-wide protocol for rescue and rehabilitation centres and programmes, and will provide support and advice, as required, to such centres and programmes supported by the different Range States.

39. **Objective Target 1.2.4.1.** Region-wide protocol for rescue and rehabilitation centres and programmes defined by the MSAC by 2026, taking stock of the successful initiatives developed during the last 30 years[20].

[19] https://www.monksealalliance.org/ The MSA was created in 2019 by five founding members experienced in funding Mediterranean monk seal conservation projects: the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the MAVA Foundation, the Segre Foundation, the Sancta Devota Foundation and the Thalassa Foundation.

[20] The Monk Seal Rehabilitation program in Greece (on-going for well over three decades) offers and obvious choice to contribute to the training of managers from other countries of the Group A. Rescue and rehabilitation protocols have been

40. **Objective 1.2.5.** MSAC supports SPA/RAC in the development of contingency plans for disastrous events (e.g., lethal epizootic outbreaks, massive oil spills within monk seal habitat), and for emergency conditions which may derive from catastrophic environmental change. Ideally, this should be done in cooperation with equivalent bodies dealing with the conservation of Mediterranean monk seals in the Atlantic, with the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean (i.e., within the ACCOBAMS framework), and with the appropriate bodies within the "Barcelona System" (e.g., REMPEC). The contingency plan will include the collection and safe storage of Mediterranean monk seal germplasm which may support in the future the recovery of the species, should it become necessary.

41. **Objective Target 1.2.5.1.** Contingency plan coordinated by SPA/RAC with support of MSAC in 2027 and adopted by the subsequent Barcelona Convention CoP.

(Note on MSAC: Once the MSAC is established, a first meeting of MSAC takes place and a chairperson is elected a two-year trial period could be envisaged for the MSAC so as to evaluate its real effectiveness.).

Goal 2. "Group A" countries.

42. Monk seal breeding nuclei in sites located in "Group A" countries are effectively protected from deliberate and accidental killings, habitat degradation and human disturbance, so that seal numbers in such sites increase and seals are able to disperse to and re-colonise the surrounding areas.

Goal Target 2.1. Maintain and secure monk seal presence in Group A countries with special attention to the following locations: a) Zakynthos, Kefalonia, Ithaca and the Inner Ionian Sea Archipelago (Meganisi, Arkoudi, Atokos, Kalamos, Kastos, Vromonas and surrounding islets and seas); b) Northwest Evia; c) Northern Sporades; d) Northern Cyclades (including the Natura 2000 site of the Island of Gyaros and its surrounding 3-mile marine area); e) Northern Karpathos - Saria and the Astakida islets; f) Kimolos and Polyaigos; g) Turkish coasts; h) Cyprus. Breeding nuclei in the locations listed above are effectively protected from deliberate and accidental killings, habitat degradation and human disturbance, so that seal numbers in such sites increase and young seals are able to disperse and re-colonise the surrounding areas. (Considering that in both Greece and Turkey monk seal's marine habitat includes almost the entire coastline of the country up to a depth of 200 m., and that a large portion of it is included in Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) identified by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force[21], priority should be paid to the locations listed above, but conservation actions should not be limited exclusively to them. In the case of Greece, the *National Action Plan for the Mediterranean Monk Seal in Greece*, officially adopted by the Greek Government in September 2024 -Official Gazette 5100/B/10-09-2024[22]- should provide guidance on future conservation action since it presents the most recent and reliable information on the species at a National level..)

43. **Objective 2.1.1.** Current legislation prohibiting to carry firearms and explosives aboard fishing vessels in Greece, Türkiye and Cyprus is enforced, with a special attention in locations listed in Goal Target 2.1. Monitoring and mitigating negative seal–fishery interactions schemes put in place.

44. **Objective Target 2.1.1.1.** Compliance with existing laws concerning firearms and explosives aboard fishing vessels in Greece, Türkiye and Cyprus is routinely enforced everywhere, to come into effect with immediate urgency. Appropriate statistics of infringements are kept and publicised. Infringements are prosecuted with penalties appropriate to address the destruction of an endangered, highly species. Enforcement of fishing regulations and eradication of illegal fishing practices**.**

officially adopted by the Greek state. Currently, the Greek monk seal rehabilitation program supports the Republic of Cyprus in the establishment of a monk seal rehabilitation structure.

[21] See https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/imma-eatlas/

[22] https://search.et.gr/el/fek/?fekId=770812

45. **Objective 2.1.2.** Locations listed in Goal Target 2.1, and other equally important locations that may be eventually discovered in the future, are geographically delimited and legally protected/managed. The resulting MPA network should be ecologically coherent and effectively managed in order to guarantee favourable conservation status.

46. **Objective Target 2.1.2.1.** A monk seal MPA network encompassing the most important monk seal habitat in the area is formally established in the Greek Ionian islands by 2030. All areas within the Greek NATURA 2000 network and designated of exceptional importance for the breeding of the species should have the necessary institutional protection in order to minimize disturbance from human activities at the breeding sites of the species. A valid example isf the islet of Formicula, in the Inner Ionian Sea Archipelago[23], where a decision by the Minister of the environment was adopted on 31/12/2024[24], establishing a strict protection regime[25] around Formicula.

47. **Objective Target 2.1.2.2**. Implementation and enforcement of specific interaction guidelines[26] to prevent any adverse effects of recently developed "monk seal tourism" in Lichadonisia islets off the northwestern end of the island of Evia.

48. **Objective Target 2.1.2.3.** Ensure continuity and the future effectiveness of a patrolling system of the National Marine Park of Alonissos Northern Sporades[27]

49. **Objective Target 2.1.2.4.** The current Natura 2000 site around the island of Gyaros is formally established. The legislative status of the MPA must be finalized through the issuance of a definitive Presidential Decree by 2026 and a science-based, regularly updated Management Plan.

50. **Objective Target 2.1.2.5.** A monk seal MPA is formally established in Karpathos - Saria by 2026[28].

51. **Objective Target 2.1.2.6.** A monk seal MPA is formally established in Kimolos - Polyaigos by 2026.
52. **Objective Target 2.1.2.7.** Monk seal MPAs are formally established along the Aegean and Mediterranean coastline of Türkiye by 2030, to protect monk seal critical habitat as determined and mapped by the Turkish National Monk Seal Committee. Continuity is given to both monk seal ongoing projects; a) in the Muğla Province, run in collaboration between MSA and the Ministry of Agriculture, and b) Forestry, and Fethiye and Babadağ Pilot Coastal Zoning and Management Planning supported by UNDP GEF-SGP. Similar initiatives to be developed in other important sites for the species.

53. **Objective Target 2.1.2.8.** Monk seal MPAs have been identified and are formally established in Cyprus[29].

[23] https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/?sitecode=GR2220003&views=Sites_View
[24] link to Decision ΥΠΕΝ/ΔΔΦΠΒ/123711/3066 of 31/12/2024 published in the Hellenic National Gazette, with maps: https://tinyurl.com/mb5a9kx9
[25] Measures aiming at mitigating tourist disturbance to monk seals include the delimitation of a 200 m-wide no-entry zone along the islet's coast, except for a corridor to allow access to organised tours to a single ad hoc mooring. The fact that fishing is not excluded from the no-entry zone, offers a loophole potentially opening the door to indiscriminate access, undermining the measure's effectiveness. Now the organisations that were actively involved in this process, together with the relevant government agencies, local communities and stakeholders should bring this plan to life.
[26] https://ioniandolphinproject.org/mediterranean-monk-seals/monk-seal-watching-guidelines/
[27] The Management Unit of Sporades National Park operates under the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA), Protected Areas Management Directorate (Sector A), based in Alonissos. https://necca.gov.gr/en/mdpp/management-unit-of-alonissos-northern-sporades-national-park-and-protected-areas-of-eastern-thessaly/#Actions
[28] Greece has already established the protected area Management Body in Karpathos in 2007, however the MPA has not been legally declared yet.
[29] In Cyprus, four MPAs were established through Ministerial Decrees (through the Fisheries Law and Regulations) for the protection of the Mediterranean monk seal and its habitats: Halavro MPA;Agios Georgios Alamanou MPA; Ayia Napa Sea Caves; Peyia Sea Caves:

54. **Objective 2.1.3.** Areas in locations listed under Goal Target 2.1 are effectively protected through a) appropriate management actions, and b) the involvement of the local communities, which will both ensure the good conservation status of monk seals found there. A management framework is in place and implemented, defining the spatial, temporal and specific measures needed in the species' critical habitats (e.g., regulating access to caves), thereby affording effective protection to haul out and pupping sites.

55. **Objective Target 2.1.3.1.** Until formal protection of the areas listed under Goal Target 2.1 is established and enforced, patrolling of the most important haul out and pupping locations and caves is organised at least during the summer and breeding season. Patrolling can be done by volunteers, well-trained and possibly local, who could also be performing awareness actions *in situ,* as well as solicit the intervention of law enforcers in case of need. Since this may be counterproductive if not properly executed, it should only happen under expert guidance (e.g., MSAC). In Greece, the competent management body is NECCA, which should coordinate any volunteer patrolling/monitoring scheme while extreme caution is taken to prevent any leaks of sensitive information (e.g., seal pupping cave locations) to the general public or to inadvertently cause an increase of disturbance.

56. **Objective Target 2.1.3.2.** All monk seal MPAs established under Objective 2.1.2, as well as those already created (e.g., National Marine Park of Alonissos – Northern Sporades), are endowed with an operant Management Body and a management plan that is adaptive, ecosystem-based and fully implemented by 2030.

57. **Objective Target 2.1.3.3.** Management in monk seal MPAs established under Objective 2.1.2 is conducted in a participatory fashion, with the full involvement of local relevant stakeholders, as considered necessary in a case-by-case basis (e.g., artisanal fishers, tourism operators, managers and politicians). All proposals and decisions aiming at establishing or modifying conservation and protection measures must be based on sound and indisputable scientific data and evidence. Elements of participatory approach will include awareness campaigns as well as theexperimentation/adoption of innovative mechanisms to address opportunity costs, damage mitigation and the generation of alternative sources of income (e.g., ecotourism).

Goal Target 2.2. Implementation of Goal Target 2.1. is enabled through appropriate capacity building activities.

58. **Objective 2.2.1.** Training sessions are organised in areas relevant to locations listed in Goal Target 2.1, with the support of the MSAC (see Objective Target 1.2.2.1). Training will concentrate, at least initially, on mitigating the main threats to monk seals (deliberate killing, habitat degradation, and accidental entanglements), and will target stakeholders identified by the MSAC (e.g., fishermen, tourist operators, enforcement officers, judges). Training will be developed together with the local groups and will be followed by a constant "advice service" or accompanying process to ensure that full advantage is taken from the effort. Lessons learnt from previously executed capacity-building initiatives will be implemented. Follow-up contacts by MSAC with those participating in capacity building activities will be scheduled to secure post-training support and guidance.

Goal 3. "Group B" countries.

59. Monk seal presence in sites where they are occasionally seen today in "Group B" countries is permanently established, and breeding resumes in areas characterised by sufficient and suitable coastal habitat. "Group B" countries are upgraded to "Group A".

https://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/dfmr/dfmr.nsf/0/0021828B42D07413C2258B64002DE442/$file/Report%20MONACHUS%202020-2023%20-%20eng.pdf

60. Monk seal presence in "Group B" countries must be verified with appropriate methods so as to define the actual species' use of the coastal seas and identify the areas in which priority monitoring, awareness and protection actions need to be carried out. Priority areas of usage will be identified thorough sighting collection campaigns, habitat surveys in areas of hotspot sightings, and where the coastal habitat is most pristine (which implies analysis of coastal habitat characteristics and their distribution in each nation), followed by *in situ* monitoring to assess the eventual degree of habitat use by monk seals. Coastal areas with confirmed repeated use must be evaluated in terms of pressures and risks.

61. In areas where the importance for the species has been well established in recent years, even if monitoring and protection actions may be already in place, such actions must be given long-term continuity[30].

62. Awareness activities to be carried out in each site will depend on the type of use of the coasts by the species, the degree of the pressures insisting in each site, and the risks involved. Spatial protection measures are established and site-specific management actions are implemented to reduce the pressures on the basis of the monitoring and risk analysis outcomes.

Goal Target 3.1. Monk seal presence in Albania and specially in southern Albania (between the area bordering with Greece and north to the bay of Vlorë), is permanently established and monk seal breeding resumes.

63. **Objective Target 3.1.1.** A reporting scheme to detect monk seal presence and alert authorities continues to be implemented along the Albanian coastal zone and awareness actions are conducted.

64. **Objective Target 3.1.2.** Monk seal habitat along the coasts of Albania is completely mapped and populations are monitored, paying special attention to Southern Albania (between the area bordering with Greece and north to the bay of Vlorë).

65. **Objective Target 3.1.2.1.** Non-invasive and scientifically sound monitoring technologies as recommended by the MSAC are applied to caves in appropriate locations.

66. **Objective Target 3.1.2.2.** A programme targeting the local community and visitors, aimed at increasing awareness and fostering species' protection measures is continued and enhanced.

Goal Target 3.2. Monk seal presence in Montenegro is permanently established.

67. **Objective 3.2.1.** A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented along the coastal zone of Montenegro.

68. **Objective 3.2.2.** To take advantage of the Coastal habitat assessment studies conducted in recent years (Mačić et al., 2019) and give continuity, and expand as necessary, the on-going long-term cave monitoring programmes in Montenegro.

Goal Target 3.3. Monk seal presence in Italy, in areas with recurrent sightings, habitat availability and proximity to nearby breeding colonies, is permanently established, and monk seal breeding resumes.

69. **Objective 3.3.1.** A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is enhanced along the coastal areas characterised by recurrent sightings and coastal habitat historically used by the species

70. **Objective 3.3.2.** Monitoring of monk seal distribution, abundance and behaviour (including eventual pup production) is continued in the Egadi islands.

[30] The Eastern Adriatic Monk Seal Project[30], funded by MSA, with dedicated actions and partners in Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro will be particularly relevant for Goal Targets 3.1, 3.2. and 4.3: https://www.monksealalliance.org/en/projets/eastern-adriatic-monk-seal-project-phase-ii-00557

71. **Objective Target 3.3.2.1.** Non-invasive and scientifically sound monitoring technologies, applied to caves in appropriate locations within the Egadi Islands MPA, is continued and enhanced.

72. **Objective Target 3.3.2.2.** A programme targeting the local community and visitors, aimed at increasing awareness and fostering species' protection measures is continued and enhanced.

73. **Objective 3.3.3.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in areas historically containing monk seal habitat and characterised by recurrent sightings in Sardinia.

74. **Objective 3.3.4.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in areas historically containing monk seal habitat in the Tuscan Archipelago.

75. **Objective 3.3.5.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in areas historically containing monk seal habitat and recurrent recent sightings in the lesser islands of the Sicily Strait (Pantelleria, Pelagie islands).

76. **Objective 3.3.5.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence is conducted in Salento (Apulia) in coastal areas containing historical monk seal habitat and characterised by recurrent sightings.

Goal Target 3.4. Monk seal presence in Lebanon is permanently established.

77. **Objective 3.4.1.** A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented along the Lebanese coastal zone; awareness actions are conducted in the concerned areas.

78. **Objective 3.4.2.** A coastal habitat assessment study is conducted in the areas characterised by recent recurrent monk seal sightings and long-term cave monitoring program is initiated in northern Lebanon; conservation actions are implemented in the Palm Islands nature reserve by 2026[31].

Goal Target 3.5. Monk seal presence in Israel is permanently established.[32]

79. **Objective 3.5.1.** A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is enhanced along the Israeli coastal zone and awareness actions are conducted in areas characterised by recent sightings or coastal habitat suitability.

80. **Objective 3.5.2.** A coastal habitat assessment study is conducted, and a long-term cave monitoring program is implemented in northern Israel.

Goal Target 3.6. Monk seal presence in Syria is permanently established.

Objective 3.6.1. A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented along the Syrian coastal zone and awareness actions are conducted in areas characterised by recent sightings or coastal habitat suitability.
Objective 3.6.2. A coastal habitat assessment study is conducted, and a long-term cave monitoring program is implemented in Syria.

Goal Target 3.7. Implementation of Goal Targets 3.1 - 3.6 is enabled through appropriate capacity building activities and sub-regional cooperation.

81. **Objective 3.7.1.** Capacity building. Training sessions are organised in areas relevant to locations listed in Goal Targets 3.1 - 3.6, with the support of the MSAC (see Objective Target 1.2.2.1). Training will concentrate, at least initially, on national / local groups working on the development of monitoring and

[31] Project *Recolonization of the Monk Seal in Lebanon*, supported by MSA and led by IndyACT, sets up a favorable framework to achieve Goal target 3.4. https://www.monksealalliance.org/en/projets/recolonization-of-the-monk-seal-in-lebanon-00563
[32] Project *Preparing the ground for the monk seal's return to the Israeli coast*, supported by MSA and led by Delphis, should greatly facilitate Goal target 3.6. https://www.monksealalliance.org/en/projets/preparing-the-ground-for-the-monk-seal-s-return-to-the-israeli-coast-00565

awareness programs directed at mitigating the main threats to monk seals (deliberate killing, habitat degradation, and accidental entanglements). Capacity building activities can also target stakeholders identified by national/local groups with the support of the MSAC (e.g., fishermen, tourist operators, enforcement officers, judges). Training will be developed together with the local groups and will be followed by a constant "advice service" or accompanying process to ensure that full advantage is taken from the effort.

82. **Objective 3.7.2.** Streamlining of sighting and cave monitoring results carried out in Goal Targets 3.1 - 3.6 above is discussed at sub regional level in order to better assess the population status in the "Group B" countries within a geographic context that goes beyond country borders, and in order to identify priority areas in which spatial protection measures are necessary.

83. **Objective 3.7.3.** Capacity building of MPA managers acting in monk seal distribution areas identified through the implementation of Goal Targets 3.1 - 3. 6, is carried out so as to discuss improved management and mitigation measures to be introduced in existing MPAs.

84. **Objective 3.7.4.** The implementation of Goals 3.1-3.6 is carried out, as much as possible, through the development of international collaboration frameworks, directed at guaranteeing sharing of expertise and monitoring results amongst neighbour countries for the purpose of sub regional status assessments and conservation goal attainment. The latter is particularly important for countries that have limited suitable coastal habitat and recurrent sightings and which border countries with breeding colonies or countries with sightings and extensive and suitable habitat. This may involve cross collaboration initiatives that involve an array mixture of Group A, B and C countries (i.e. Türkiye- Israel -Cyprus; Syria-Lebanon-, Libya-Egypt, Greece-Albania-Italy-Montenegro-Croatia, Italy-Tunisia-Algeria-Morocco).

Goal 4. "Group C" countries.

85. Monk seal presence is again repeatedly reported in the species' historical habitat in "Group C" countries, and these "Group C" countries are upgraded to "Group B". Once all "Group C" countries are upgraded, Group C is deleted.

Goal Target 4.1. Monk seal presence in locations of the Maghreb's Mediterranean coasts and annexed islands in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Chafarinas Islands (Spain) is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

86. **Objective 4.1.1.** A reporting scheme to detect monk seal presence through sightings and to alert authorities is implemented along Maghreb's Mediterranean coasts and annexed islands characterised by monk seal historical presence and recent sightings. This includes areas such as: northern Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and the Chafarinas Islands (Spain); awareness actions are conducted in the concerned areas.

87. **Objective 4.1.2.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in the Al Hoceima National Park[33] and Cap Trois Fourches in order to assess monk seal presence in the Mediterranean Moroccan coastal area.

88. **Objective 4.1.3.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in the Chafarinas islands in order to assess monk seal presence in the area.

89. **Objective 4.1.4. Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in previous studies carried out in selected Algerian locations in order to assess monk seal presence in the area.**

90. **Objective 4.1.5.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are initiated in the coastal habitat identified as suitable in the La Galite Archipelago[34] (North of Tunisia) in order to assess monk seal presence in the area.

[33] Project Med-Monk seal Project: Enhancing knowledge and awareness on monk seal in the Mediterranean, supported by MSA and led by SPA/RAC, sets up a favorable framework to achieve objective 4.1.2.
[34] Project Med-Monk seal Project: Enhancing knowledge and awareness on monk seal in the Mediterranean, supported by MSA and led by SPA/RAC, sets up a favorable framework to achieve objective 4.1.5

Goal Target 4.2. Monk seal presence in the Balearic Islands, Spain, is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

91. **Objective 4.2.1.** A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is implemented; awareness actions are conducted around the Balearic Islands, Spain.

Goal Target 4.3. Monk seal presence in Croatia is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

92. **Objective 4.3.1.** A reporting scheme to detect occasional monk seal presence and alert authorities is enhanced along the Croatian coastal areas.

93. **Objective 4.3.2.** Long-term cave monitoring activities are implemented in selected locations identified as suitable habitat for monk seals based on previous observations.

Goal Target 4.4. Monk seal presence in Bosnia Herzegovina and Slovenia repeatedly reported and permanently established.

94. **Objective 4.4.1.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species' historical habitat in Bosnia Herzegovina and Slovenia.

Goal Target 4.5. Monk seal presence in Corsica is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

95. **Objective 4.5.1.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species' historical habitat in Corsica.

Goal Target 4.6. Monk seal presence is reported again from continental France.

96. **Objective 4.6.1.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species' historical habitat in Corsica and continental France.

Goal Target 4.7. Monk seal presence in Libya and nearby western Egypt is repeatedly reported and permanently established.

97. **Objective 4.7.1.** Monk seal ecology and behaviour is monitored in Libya[35] (Cyrenaica) and nearby Egyptian coast[36] (from the border with Libya, including Sallum MPA, to Marsa Matrouh).

98. **Objective Target 4.7.1.1.** Full survey of monk seal habitat in the Libyan easternmost coast bordering with Egypt is conducted and long-term cave monitoring is established in this area as well as in the caves identified in previous projects.

99. **Objective Target 4.7.1.2.** Awareness actions are conducted in Libya, targeting local residents and most notably fishermen, with the aim of fostering respect and data collection on sightings.

100. **Objective Target 4.7.1.3.** Full survey of monk seal presence through data collection on sightings and awareness actions organised in Egypt (from the border, including Sallum MPA, to Marsa Matrouh) by 2025.

101. **Objective Target 4.7.1.4.** Full survey of monk seal habitat in the Egyptian areas characterised by recurrent sightings and a geomorphologically suitable coast is conducted, and long term cave monitoring is established.

[35] Project Med-Monk seal Project: Enhancing knowledge and awareness on monk seal in the Mediterranean, supported by MSA and led by SPA/RAC, sets up a favorable framework to achieve objective 4.6.1
[36] Project Med-Monk seal Project: Enhancing knowledge and awareness on monk seal in the Mediterranean, supported by MSA and led by SPA/RAC, sets up a favorable framework to achieve objective 4.6.1

Goal Target 4.8. Monk seal presence is reported from Malta.

102. **Objective 4.8.1.** Regular monitoring of monk seal presence and awareness actions are conducted in the species' historical habitat in Malta.

Goal Target 4.9. Implementation of Goal Targets 4.1 - 4.8. is enabled through appropriate capacity building activities and sub-regional cooperation.

103. **Objective 4.9.1.** Capacity building: training courses are organised in locations listed in Goal Targets 4.1-4.8, with the support of the -MSAC (see Objective Target 1.2.2.1).

104. **Objective 4.9.2.** The implementation of Goals 4.1-4.8 is carried out, as much as possible, through the development of international collaboration frameworks, directed at guaranteeing sharing of expertise and monitoring results amongst neighbour countries for the purpose of sub regional status assessments and conservation goal attainment (see Objective 3.7.4)

3. Revision of the Strategy

105. The suggested time horizon of this Strategy is six years, to be concluded in 2030, when a comprehensive review of the Strategy's accomplishments and failures, with a consideration for potential actions to be taken beyond 2030, should be conducted. Such timing also coincides with the process requiring EU Member States to report concerning the Habitats and Marine Strategy Framework Directives, thereby facilitating the implementation of the Strategy's actions by such States.

106. A mid-term assessment of the implementation results in 2028 is also recommended, to evaluate up-to-date attainment of Goals and Objectives within the Strategy's timeframe and to identify, if needed, moderate adjustments.

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Annex IV

Draft updated Action Plan for the conservation of the Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea

Acronyms list

CA : Coralligenous Assemblages

CI : Common Indicator (from IMAP)

CITES : Convention on International Trade of Endangered Animal and Plant Species

COP : Conference of the Parties

CP : Contracting Party (Barcelona Convention)

EcAp : Ecosystem Approach under the Barcelona Convention

EC : European Commission

EEC : European Economic Community

EMODnet : European Marine Observation and Data Network

EO : Ecological Objective

EU : European Union

EUNIS : European Nature Information System

FAO : Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

FRA : Fisheries Restricted Area

GES : Good Environmental Status

GFCM : General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

IG : Intergovernmental meetings/documents/decisions

IMAP : Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme

IUCN : International Union for Conservation of Nature

MAP or **PAM** : Mediterranean Action Plan

MBES : Multi-Beam Echo Sounder

MHW : marine heat wave

MPA : Marine Protected Area

MSFD : Marine Strategy Framework Directive

NGO : Non-Governmental Organisation

NFP : National Focal Point

OFB : Office Français de la Biodiversité

POST-2020 SAPBIO : Post 2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources in the Mediterranean Sea

ROV : Remotely Operated Vehicle

RMB : Rhodolith and Maerl Bed

SfM : Structure from Motion

SPA/BD Protocol : Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (Barcelona Convention)

SPAMI : Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Interest

SPA/RAC or **RAC/SPA** : Specially Protected Areas /Regional Activity Centre

SSS : Side Scan Sonar

UNEP or **PNUE** : United Nations Environment Programme

WG : Working Group meetings/documents

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BACKGROUND

1. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan, give priority to the conservation of the marine environment and to the components of its biological diversity. This was confirmed by the adoption of the new 1995 Barcelona Convention Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) and of its Annexes, among them a list of endangered or threatened species.

2. The development and implementation of action plans for the conservation of a species or group of species is an effective way of guiding, coordinating and reinforcing the efforts of Mediterranean countries to protect the natural heritage of the region.

3. Although not legally binding, these action plans have been adopted by the Contracting Parties as regional strategies setting out priorities and actions to be undertaken. In particular, they call for greater solidarity between the States of the region, and for coordination of efforts to protect the species concerned. This approach has been proved to be necessary to ensure the conservation and sustainable management of the species and habitats concerned in each Mediterranean area of their distribution.

4. These Action Plans are medium-term regional strategies that should be updated every five-year on the basis of an evaluation of their implementation at regional and national level.

5. The 2008 Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties in Almeria (Spain) adopted the Action Plan for the Conservation of Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea (Decision IG17/15-2008), which resulted from the work programme drawn up at the ad hoc meeting held in Tabarka (Tunisia) on May 6th and 7th, 2006. The last update of the Action Plan dates back to 2016 (Decision IG.22/12-2016).

6. For the 2024-2025 biennium, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention requested SPA/RAC, during COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), to update (i) the Action Plan for the Conservation of the Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea, (ii) the Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles, (iii) the Action Plan for the Conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea, and (iv) the Regional Strategy for the Conservation of Monk Seal in the Mediterranean Sea, for consideration at COP 24.

HABITAT TYPES CONCERNED BY THE ACTION PLAN

7. The Action Plan is devoted to coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl[37,38] beds as defined here after:

- **Coralligenous**: a typical Mediterranean underwater seascape comprising coralline algal frameworks that grow in dim light conditions and relatively calm waters.
- **Mediterranean rhodolith/maerl beds**: sedimentary bottoms covered by free-living calcareous algae growing in dim light.

8. Therefore, surface bio-concretions are not covered here, as they are already included in the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea.

9. Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions are biogenic constructions of calcareous algae, as well as erect invertebrates, complexing the assemblage, providing multiple micro-habitats for many species and harbouring high biological diversity (UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, 2015a).

10. Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions develop on vertical cliffs, rocky reefs, and biodetritic horizontal or subhorizontal bottoms (Basso *et al.*, 2016a; Ingrosso *et al.*, 2018; Romagnoli *et al.*, 2021; UNEP/MAP – SPA/RAC, 2021b; Angiolillo *et al.*, 2022; Innangi *et al.*, 2024). They can be found all around the Mediterranean Sea.

11. Coralligenous assemblages (CAs) show high spatial, morphological, and biological variability (Basso *et al.*, 2022) and due to great environmental variability, several different assemblages can coexist in a reduced space. They are considered among the most important assemblages of the Mediterranean (Ingrosso *et al.*, 2018) with slow growth, developing on both vertical and horizontal substrates (Basso *et al.*, 2022). Several species forming the CAs are endemic of the Mediterranean (Ferrigno *et al.*, 2023). Further, CAs provide habitat and food for many species and represent some of the most productive assemblages (Constantini *et al.*, 2018).

12. Rhodolith and/or maerl beds (RMBs) develop on horizontal or sub-horizontal surfaces, with water motion (either currents or waves) keeping the rhodoliths unburied and are generally composed of several coralline species (Basso *et al.*, 2016a).

13. The classification units concerned by the Action Plan are as follows:
In the revised Barcelona Convention classification system (Montefalcone *et al.*, 2021):

- Coralligenous assemblages. Infralittoral : **MB1.55** Coralligenous (enclave of circalittoral). Circalittoral: **MC1.5** Circalittoral rock/**MC1.51** Coralligenous cliffs, **MC1.52** Continental shelf /**MC1.52a** Coralligenous outcrops/**MC1.52b** Coralligenous outcrops covered by sediment, **MC2.5** Circalittoral biogenic habitat/**MC2.51** Coralligenous platforms.
- Rhodolith/maerl beds. Infralittoral: **MB3.51** Infralittoral coarse sediment mixed by waves/**MB3.511** Association with maerl or rhodoliths, **MB3.52** Infralittoral coarse sediment under the influence of bottom currents/**MB3.521** Association with maerl or rhodoliths. Circalittoral: **MC3.5** Circalittoral coarse sediment/**MC3.52** Coastal detritic bottoms with rhodoliths/**MC3.521** Association with maerl.

In the revised EUNIS classification system:

- Coralligenous assemblages. Infralittoral: **MB151a** Facies and association of coralligenous biocenosis (in enclave). Circalittoral: **MC151** Coralligenous biocenosis, **MC251** Coralligenous platforms, **MC252** Mediterranean circalittoral biogenic habitat.
- Rhodolith/maerl beds. Infralittoral: **MB3511** Association with rhodoliths in coarse sands and fine gravels mixed by waves. Circalittoral: **MC351** - Association with rhodoliths on coastal detritic bottoms, **MC352** - Assemblages of Mediterranean coastal detritic bottoms biocenosis

[37] As written in Collin's Dictionary but can often be found spelled *maërl*. In this document the orthograph *maerl* is used except for references where it is spelled *maërl*.
[38] "Maerl beds" are included in the larger term of "rhodolith beds", but there is still debate on the exact definitions of rhodolith and maerl beds which should not be considered as synonyms. It was therefore decided to refer to this habitat as rhodolith/maerl beds (RMBs).

with rhodoliths, **MC3523** - Association with maerl (*Lithothamnion corallioides* and *Phymatholithon calcareum*) on coastal dendritic bottoms.

STATE OF THE ART

14. Annual publications on coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds have increased significantly since 2015, especially from north-western Mediterranean countries but not only (Ferrigno *et al.*, 2023). These publications are related to spatial and bathymetric distribution, composition and structure, environmental status assessments, ecosystem conservation and management, and anthropogenic impacts.

15. There are about four times as many documents on Coralligenous Assemblages (CAs) as on Rhodolith and Maerl Beds (RMBs).

Scientific knowledge

Geographic and bathymetric distribution

16. Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions develop on vertical cliffs, rocky reefs, and biodetritic horizontal or sub-horizontal bottoms from 10 to 180 meters (Basso *et al.*, 2016a; Ingrosso *et al.*, 2018; Romagnoli *et al.*, 2021; UNEP/MAP – SPA/RAC, 2021b; Radicioli *et al.*, 2022; Innangi *et al.*, 2024), but occur most frequently between 50 and 150 m depth. Depth ranges of coralligenous on sub-horizontal to horizontal bottoms for different areas can be found in the document RAC/SPA (2003).

17. Light is an important factor controlling the vertical distribution of coralligenous assemblages as their main builders are macroalgae, which require sufficient light to grow, but low levels of irradiance (Pérès & Picard, 1964 and Laubier 1966 in RAC/SPA, 2003). In areas of high turbidity, coralligenous assemblages can thrive in shallow waters, whereas in areas of high-water transparency, these assemblages are typically found at greater depths (RAC/SPA, 2003 and reference therein).

18. Other variables, such as nutrient availability, hydrodynamics, temperature and salinity, also play an important role in the geographic and bathymetric distribution of coralligenous assemblages.

19. An attempt to collate recent available data at Mediterranean scale is presented in the following table:

Table 2 Available recent data relative to geographic distribution of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds by country

Country/Region	Area/Specificities	Coralligenous	Rhodolith/maerl beds
Mediterranean Sea (maps)	Mediterranean Sea (maps)	- Martin *et al.* (2014)	- Martin *et al.* (2014) - Basso *et al.* (2016a)
	Habitat forming invertebrates of Coralligenous Assemblages	- CorMedNet website - Linares *et al.* (2020) - Linares *et al.* (2022)	
	NE Mediterranean Coralligenous formation with *E. cavolini*	- Sini *et al.* (2019)	
	Modelled spatial distribution	- EMODnet (2021) see here	- EMODnet (2021) see here
Albania	National Marine Park of Karaburun-Sazan	- Giménez *et al.* (2022a) - Andromede Oceanology (2016)	
Algeria	Taza MPA	- Belbacha, Semroud, & Ramos-Esplá (2011)	
	Rachgoun island	- PNUE/PAM-CAR/ASP (2016)	
	Plane (Paloma) island in Oran Bay and Habibas islands	- Hussein & Bensahla-Talet (2019) - UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC (2020b)	
Croatia	National	- A preliminary map is available in RAC/SPA-UNEP/MAP (2014) - Updated map that gives more precise distribution is publicly available in Croatian: https://bioportal.hr/gis/. (project "Mapping of coastal and seabed habitats in the Adriatic Sea under the national jurisdiction" (2018-2023))	- Updated map that gives more precise distribution is publicly available in Croatian: https://bioportal.hr/gis/. (project "Mapping of coastal and seabed habitats in the Adriatic Sea under the national jurisdiction" (2018-2023))
	E. cavolini, E. singularis, P. clavata (compilation 2019)	- Ponti *et al.* (2019)	
Cyprus	Cyprus UK Overseas Territories Mesophotic zone (50-200m)	- Programme : Cyprus UK Overseas Territories Mesophotic zone (50-200m) exploring (2024-2025) see here	- Programme : Cyprus UK Overseas Territories Mesophotic zone (50-200m) exploring (2024-2025) see here
France	French Mediterranean	- A map of coralligenous assemblages in the French Mediterranean is available on the OFB site here	- Inventory of available data on maerl beds in French Mediterranean is available on the OFB site : here

Country/Region	Area/Specificities	Coralligenous	Rhodolith/maerl beds
		- The network of coralligenous sites and monitored sites RECOR maps their state of conservation here	
Greece	All Aegean Sea	- Sini *et al.* (2017) - Governmental site on selected species and habitats geographic distribution (maps)	- Sini *et al.* (2017) - Governmental site on selected species and habitats geographic distribution (maps)
Italy	National	- Ingrosso *et al.*(2018)	- Ingrassia *et al.* (2023)
	Coralligenous key species all around Italy, litter distribution on coralligenous outcrops	- Ponti *et al.* (2019) - Angiolillo *et al.* (2023)	
	South-eastern area of Lampedusa		- Maggio *et al.* (2022)
Lebanon	Sayniq area St George area	- Aguilar *et al.* (2018)	- Aguilar *et al.* (2018)
	Batroun Medfoun Byblos	- SPA/RAC-UN Environment/MAP (2017)	- SPA/RAC-UN Environment/MAP (2017)
Malta	North East Malta rhodolith/maerl beds interpolation		- ERA data viewer here - Deidun *et al.* (2022)
	South East Malta rhodolith accumulations		- LIFE BAHAR for N2K viewer - Tabone *et al.* (2024)
Monaco	Roches profondes du plateau	- Fourt *et al.* (2015)	
Montenegro	All Montenegro coast	- Petović & Mačić (2021) - UNEP/MAP-PAP/RAC i MEPU (2021) - UNEP/MAP-PAP/RAC-SPA/RAC and MSDT (2019).	- No rhodolith/maerl beds
Morocco	El Hoceima National Park	- UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC (2020a)	- UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC (2020a)
	Jbel Moussa MPA	- SPA/RAC - ONU Environnement/PAM & HCEFLCD (2019)	- SPA/RAC - ONU Environnement/PAM & HCEFLCD (2019)
Spain	Key species: *Paramuricea clavata* *Eunicella cavolini*	- Ponti *et al.* (2019)	
	Balearic Islands (map)	- Barrientos *et al.* (2022a)	- Barrientos *et al.* (2022b)

Country/Region	Area/Specificities	Coralligenous	Rhodolith/maerl beds
			- Additional information on Formentera and Ibiza islands can be found in the original study (Domínguez *et al.*, 2014)
	Minorca Channel (Balearic Islands)	- Barberá *et al.* (2012)	- Farriols *et al.* (2024) - Barberá *et al.* (2012)
	Costa Brava	- See poster here	
	Southeastern Iberian Peninsula (map)		- REGINA-MSP Project in Muricia Region has mapped RMBs in some areas and potential overlapping with aquiculture activities
	Seamounts of the Mallorca Channel (Balearic Islands)		The presence of RMBs has been documented by Marín *et al.* (2011) and by Massutí *et al.* (2022). A preliminary spatial distribution model has been developed by Frank *et al.* (2024), with further analyses currently in preparation.
Tunisia	Tunisian coast (table)	- Mustapha *et al.* (2002)	- Ghanem *et al.* (2022)
	Cap Negro-Cap Serrat	- Torchia *et al.* (2016)	- Torchia *et al.* (2016)
Türkiye	Aegean Sea Levantine Sea	- Çinar *et al.* (2020)	
	Foça Special Environmental Protection Area	- UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC (2020c)	
	Marmara Sea	- IUCN Red list of habitats (A4.26) (see Gubbay *et al.*, 2016)	

Composition and structure

20. The primary builders of coralligenous assemblages are encrusting red algae (Bracchi *et al.*, 2022), on which other species may develop, forming secondary and tertiary layers and creating a three-dimensional structure. Various environmental factors shape the composition and structure of both coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl assemblages (Piazzi *et al.*, 2021; Basso *et al.*, 2022). These variables also influence the geographic and bathymetric distribution of these assemblages.

21. Using an ecosystem-based approach, the associated mobile fauna can also be considered as being part of the composition of these assemblages. Such approaches are increasingly being developed. However, characterising the composition and structure of coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl assemblages is challenging due to the difficulty of accessing and assessing them, which are often deeper than 20-30 m, and due to the lack of taxonomic expertise.

22. According to the latest assessment of the implementation of the Action Plan (document under review), only five Member States have characterised coralligenous assemblages at the national scale, while six others are in the process of doing so. However, the characterisation of the composition and structure of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds at national or sub-regional scales is essential to assess their vulnerability to anthropogenic pressures and the impacts of climate change.

23. Several documents are available to assist in defining the composition and structure of coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl assemblages:

- RAC/SPA. 2003. The coralligenous in the Mediterranean Sea. Definition of the coralligenous assemblage in the Mediterranean, its main builders, its richness and key role in benthic ecology as well as its threats. By Ballesteros E. RAC/SPA, Tunis.
- Ballesteros, E. 2006. Mediterranean coralligenous assemblages: A synthesis of present knowledge. Oceanography and Marine Biology, 44: 123–195.
- UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA. 2015. Standard methods for inventorying and monitoring coralligenous and rhodoliths assemblages.
- SPA/RAC-UNEP/MAP, 2021. Mediterranean coralligenous assemblages: a synthesis of present knowledge. By E. Ballesteros. Ed. SPA/RAC, Tunis: 149 pp.
- SPA/RAC-UN Environment/MAP. 2019. Updated Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region.
- UNEP/MAP. 2021. Interpretation manual of the reference list of marine habitat types in the Mediterranean Sea.

Population dynamics of typical/key species

24. The typical/key species of coralligenous assemblages, such as calcareous algae, gorgonians, sponges or bryozoans, are generally long-lived species with low growth, natural mortality, and recruitment rates. For these sessile species, dispersal generally occurs at the larval stage.

25. The key species of the most studied coralligenous assemblages in terms of population structure and dynamics are conspicuous anthozoans such as *Paramuricea clavata*, *Eunicella cavolini* and *Eunicella singularis*.

26. Palma *et al.* (2018) describe and test a Structure from Motion (SfM) based method for the estimation of gorgonian population structure (e.g. height, density, fan surface etc.). Although this method seemed more accurate for medium to low population densities than for dense populations, it may contribute to a more efficient assessment of the dynamics of large three-dimensional coralligenous species.

27. The dispersal potential of anthozoans had already been studied in the past (e.g. Linares, 2006; Linares *et al.*, 2007), and several recent studies contribute to further understand the dynamics of these

key structuring species (e.g. Pilczynska *et al.*, 2016 for *Paramuricea clavata* in Italy; Padrón *et al.*, 2018 for *Eunicella singularis* in the Gulf of Lions; Sciascia *et al.*, 2022 for *P. clavata*).

28.Although larval dispersal of sessile benthic species depends on many variables (e.g. environmental factors such as currents or larval characteristics such as pelagic larval duration etc.), modelling of larval dispersal and gene flow studies to better capture connectivity processes between populations under climate change context could be efficient in designing a network of protected areas capable of maintaining connectivity between populations (see Padrón *et al.*, 2018b; Sciascia *et al.*, 2021). An interesting study by Blouet (2023) highlights the role of artificial reefs in enhancing connectivity between populations of structuring anthozoans, compensating for the absence or degradation of natural hard substrates.

29.Straight forward guidelines for larval dispersal simulations have been drawn by Sciascia *et al.* (2021), which could be useful for studies and simulations in other areas. However, connectivity predictions for gorgonian species require specific precautions (Sciascia *et al.*, 2022).

30.Pilczynska *et al.* (2016) studied the genetic diversity and connectivity of *P. clavata* in Italy. Their findings showed that larval exchange between sites supported the hypothesis that deeper subpopulations unaffected by marine heat waves (MHWs) could provide larvae for shallower populations and allow recovery after mortality events. However, more recent scientific publications on this topic are less optimistic.

31.Key species of Rhodolith and Maerl Beds have been less studied, especially concerning population dynamics. Research remains mainly focused on species inventories, such as calcareous red algae in Southern Spain (see Del Río *et al.*, 2022), sponge species in RMBs in Ustica, Italy (see Longo *et al.*, 2020). Research must be encouraged to better understand the dynamics and functioning of RMBs.

Legislation, regulation and conservation

32.Listing the legal texts, regulations, and strategic action plans concerning Mediterranean coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds (Table 3) highlights the lack of conservation and protection measures for these assemblages.

Table 3 Legislation and regulations relevant to coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions' protection in the Mediterranean Sea.

International	**Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats**
	Council decision (98/746/EC) of 21 December 1998 amended Appendices II and III (Protected fauna species) to the Berne Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats, and added the following species to Appendix III. The underlined species may be found in coralligenous assemblages: *Hippospongia communis*, *Spongia agaricina* (now *S. lamella*), *Spongia officinalis*, *Spongia zimocca*, Antipathes sp. plur., *Corallium rubrun*, *Paracentrotus lividus*, *Homarus gammarus*, *Maja squinado*, *Palinurus elephas*, *Scyllarides latus*, *Scyllarides pigmaeus*, *Scyllarus arctus*, *Epinephelus marginatus*, *Isurus oxyrinchus*, *Lamna nasus*, *Mobula mobular*, *Prionace glauca*, *Raja alba*, *Sciaena umbra*, *Squatina squatina*, and *Umbrina cirrosa* (all 22 species in the Mediterranean). Article 7 specifies that "Each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix III."
	Convention on International Trade of Endangered animal and plant Species (CITES)
	Very few species from coralligenous and maerl assemblages are listed under this convention: Scleractinia spp. (e.g. *Leptopsammia pruvoti*, *Caryophyllia* spp., *Hoplongia durotrix*) and Antipatharia spp. (which includes *Antipathella subpinnata* and to a lesser degree *Antipathes dichotoma*) which may be found in coralligenous or maerl assemblages) are listed in Appendix II (Species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction, but trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival). Whereas other *Corallium* species are listed, the Mediterranean *Corallium rubrum* is not listed.
European countries	**Habitat Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC, 1992) and Natura 2000 network**
	The Habitat Directive does not specifically address the coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions. However, pursuant to the Directive (Art. 2.2), member states must "*maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of community interest*" listed in Annexes I and II of the Directive. Member States must designate, protect and manage core areas for habitat types listed in Annex I and species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Only *Corallium rubrum* which sometimes can be found in coralligenous habitats, is listed in Annex II. Annex I: *Natural habitat types of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of Conservation* includes the habitat 1170 "Reefs" which comprises coralligenous concretions as a sub-type, as long as they arise from the seafloor (topographically distinct from surrounding seafloor). Rhodolith/maerl beds are included in habitat 1100 "Sandbank" as long as depths do not exceed 20m depth (see the Interpretation manual of European Union Habitats listed under Annex I of the Habitats Directive). **Therefore, the large majority of the Mediterranean rhodolith/maerl beds are not included in Annex I and specific protection of sub-types not being an obligation, coralligenous assemblages are not necessarily protected under this Directive.** Discussions have been going on to include rhodolith/maerl beds as protected habitats under Annex I of the Habitat Directive (Aguilar *et al.*, 2018), without having yet succeeded. Annex V *Animal and plant species of community interest whose taking in the wild and exploitation may be subject to management measures* includes two corallinaceae *Lithothamnium coralloides* Crouan frat. and *Phymatholithon calcareum* (Poll.) Adey & McKibbin which are main coralligenous species but not exploited in the Mediterranean therefore not needing exploitation management.
	EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)
	EU countries assess and monitor coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl beds for the MSFD under D6 and to a lesser degree D1 and D10 (Italy). Good Environmental Status (GES) is to be attained or maintained.
	EU Biodiversity strategy for 2023 and Nature Restoration Law entered in force in August 2024

	Restoration measures are requested to be put in place: • By 2030, on at least 30% of the total area of seven groups of habitats including "*maerl beds*" and "*sponge, coral and coralligenous beds*" that is not in good condition • By 2040, on at least 60% and, by 2050 on at least 90%
	EU Council Regulation (EC) N° 1967/2006 of 21 December 2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1626/94
	Under this regulation, Article 4.2 stipulates "*Fishing with trawl nets, dredges, shore seines or similar nets above coralligenous habitats and maerl beds shall be prohibited*". Further in part4.4 "*The prohibition shall (...) apply to all Natura 2000 sites, all special protected areas and all specially protected areas of Mediterranean interest (SPAMI) which have been designated for the purpose of the conservation of these habitats under either Directive 92/43/EEC or Decision 1999/800/EC".*
	Regulation (EU) 2023/2124 of the European Parliament and of the council of 4/10/2023 on certain provisions for fishing in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Agreement area
	Regulates the red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) harvesting in terms of depths, minimum size, gear to be used, landing points, data collection etc. Article 38 prohibits red coral retention on board, transhipment or landing of red coral for recreational fisheries. Article 39 requests national management plans for red coral that transpose this regulation.
Mediterranean Sea countries	Agreement for the Establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
	Article 8 b) iv) of the Agreement stipulates that the Commission can recommend "*to establish fisheries restricted areas for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, including but not limited to nursery and spawning areas".* Several Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) have been designated since to protect Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems.
	GFCM REC.CM-GFCM/46/2023/13 on the management plan for the sustainable exploitation of red coral in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/2 and GFCM/43/2019/4
	Management plan on the commercial exploitation of *Corallium rubrum* (red coral).
	IUCN Red list (see Otero *et al.*, 2017).
	Corallium rubrum is listed as Endangered and *Paramuricea clavata* is listed as Vulnerable.
Barcelona Convention	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) (Decision IG.22/7)
	Member states are requested to assess and monitor specifically three habitats including coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl beds within IMAP under EO1/EO6. Good Environmental Status (GES) of these habitats is to be attained and/or maintained.
	SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona convention
	- Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI's List) (see criteria) - *Corallium rubrum* is listed in annex III, *list of species whose exploitation is regulated*. - *Axinella polypoides* which can be found in coralligenous assemblages is list in Annex II *list of endangered or threatened species.*
	Post-2020 SAPBIO
	The updated regional action plans for the selected priority habitats and species are expected to be adopted and passed on to national planning and implementation processes in most Mediterranean countries by 2027 (Action 1 of Post-2020 SAPBIO Actions table, UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, 2021a see Annex III) and **decline of coralligenous habitats is expected to be halted by 2030**.
	Regional Action Plan for the conservation of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea (Decision IG.22/12)
	The following recommendations had been made regarding legislation and regulations:

	• Coralligenous/maerl assemblages should be granted legal protection at the same level as *Posidonia oceanica* meadows. • Coralligenous concretions and maerl beds should be priority habitat type in the EU Habitat Directive (92/43/EU) which would enhance the number of Natura 2000 sites including these habitats. • It is necessary to further protect representative coralligenous/maerl assemblages by applying the protection and management measures recommended by Articles 6 and 7 of the SPA/BD Protocol.

33. It is of high importance and priority to acquire spatial data on coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds at national level in order to:

- apply fishing restrictions of the EU Council Regulation (EC) N° 1967/2006 in European Barcelona Convention Member States which prohibits fishing with trawl nets, dredges, shore seines or similar nets above coralligenous habitats and maerl beds,
- assess and monitor the state of these habitats for MSFD and IMAP,
- attain the objectives of the Restoration Law.

34. It is important to apply at national level the EU Council Regulation (EC) N° 1967/2006 relative to the prohibition of fishing with trawl nets, dredges, shore seines or similar nets over coralligenous habitats and maërl beds. Fournier *et al.* (2020) show that the intensity of bottom fishing was still high in 2019, with almost 3,700 hours over coralligenous beds and 2,280 hours occurring over maërl beds.

35. It has been suggested that the fishing restrictions of EU Council Regulation (EC) N° 1967/2006 relative to the prohibition of fishing with trawl nets, dredges, shore seines or similar nets above coralligenous habitats and maerl beds, should be applied throughout the Mediterranean (see e.g. Aguilard *et al.*, 2018 ; Fournier *et al.*, 2020) through the Barcelona Convention - SPA/BD Protocol tools.

36. The European Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC, 1992) does not include Mediterranean rhodolith/maerl beds in Annex I (Natural habitat types of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of Conservation) and indirectly includes coralligenous assemblages (under habitat 1170 “Reefs”)

37. Coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds should benefit of increased protection, similar to conservation/protection measures for the Posidonia oceanica beds.

38. The conservation of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds can be managed through geographically defined areas such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) which may ultimately be SPAMIs, but also as suggested by Enrichetti *et al.* (2019), through area-based fisheries management tools such as Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs). FRAs are defined as “a geographically defined area in which all or certain fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of harvested living aquatic resources or the protection of marine ecosystems in the GFCM area of application” (FAO-GFCM, 2008). Therefore, it appears that a request for an FRA can be justified by the existence of vulnerable coralligenous assemblages and/or rhodolith/maerl beds that need to be protected from relevant fishing activities. This tool is of particular interest for international cooperative management.

Main threats

39. Coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds provide many ecosystem services to society. However, they are under high anthropogenic pressure.

40. The integrity of coralligenous assemblages can be affected by several anthropogenic threats such as:

- anchoring,

- sedimentation due to activities like aquaculture (Piazzi *et al.*, 2019),
- eutrophication/chemical pollution and litter (e.g. Giménez *et al.*, 2022b),
- abandoned fishing gear (e.g. Enrichetti *et al.* 2019; Ferrigno *et al.*, 2021; Angiolillo *et al.*, 2023),
- fishing activities (e.g. Ferrigno *et al.*, 2018),
- diving activities (Betti *et al.*, 2023),
- various climate change impacts (i.e. increase in sea temperature, acidification (Zunino *et al.*, 2019), Marine Heat Waves (MHW) (Garrabou *et al.*, 2022; Martínez *et al.*, 2023), instalment of Non-Indigenous Species (NIS), development of mucilaginous blooms (e.g. Piazzi *et al.*, 2018)), and
- cumulative effects (e.g. Bevilacqua *et al.*, 2018).

41. It is possible to assess the impact of each pressure using different metrics (see the stressor metrics listed by Di Camillo *et al.* (2023)) and this may be of interest. However, it is essential for MPAs and stakeholders to be able to easily assess the overall condition of coralligenous assemblages.

42. Several rapid methods have been developed to assess the state of conspicuous species, such as the Mortality Rapid Assessment Method proposed by Figuerola-Ferrando *et al.* (2024). This method, applicable to several marine habitat-forming species, was applied to Para*muricea clavata* colonies. Although such methods only provide information on the status of a selected species population within CAs, they can serve as a first assessment for stakeholders to identify vulnerable coralligenous assemblages.

43. A cumulative pressure and impact assessment (CPIA) approach was applied to coralligenous outcrops in Italy (Bevilacqua *et al.*, 2018). This approach mapped the expected cumulative pressures and impacts on CAs in six categories, but research has shown that the CPIA model needs refinement.

44. Three-dimensional structuring species of coralligenous assemblages can be severely affected by derelict fishing gear, that becomes entangled in their structures, injuring colonies and causing partial or total necrosis (e.g. as shown in Italy see Ferrigno *et al.*, 2018; Angiolillo & Fortibuoni, 2020; Enrichetti *et al.*, 2019; Giménez *et al.*, 2022b; Angiolillo *et al.*, 2023). In other cases, trawling activities may indirectly impact red coral populations by increasing turbidity (Ferrigno *et al.*, 2020).

45. However, recent scientific publications have mainly focused on the effects of climate change, such as increasing Sea Surface Temperature (SST), but especially on the effects of Marine Heat Waves (MHWs) and associated Mass Mortality Events (MMEs). These sudden events result in large-scale mortality of key species and alter the underwater landscape, particularly of coralligenous assemblages.

46. The loss of structural coralligenous species can (i) trigger a reduction in the resilience of the entire assemblages, especially at shallow depths, (ii) simplify habitat complexity, and (iii) increase vulnerability to colonisation by invasive species (Gómez-Gras *et al.*, 2021; Verdura *et al.*, 2019). The role of Marine Protected Areas in this context is crucial and should focus on mitigating local pressures, such as fishing and diving impacts (Zentner *et al.*, 2023), to reduce the vulnerability of these structural species.

47. Future scenarios of acidification impact on coralligenous and their ecosystem services have been modelled by Zunino *et al.* (2019), predicting significant changes in the near future.

48. Regarding the impact of MHWs and MMEs on coralligenous assemblages, it is important to work at sub-regional scale as highlighted by the studies of Crisci *et al.* (2017), Gómez-Gras *et al.* (2022), and Bramanti *et al.* (2023). However, agreement on definitions and common references as well as on how to determine threshold values and indices are essential at the Mediterranean scale to ensure comparability (see Hobday *et al.*, 2016; Amaya *et al.*, 2023; Martínez *et al.*, 2023). Hobday *et al.* (2016) proposed a quantitative definition of MHW[39] based on a 30-year baseline value, which facilitates comparisons between different datasets across regions and seasons. However, other authors,

[39] Hobday *et al.*, 2016 propose to define MHW with the use of the threshold of the 90th percentile based on a 30-year historical baseline period and that lasts at least five continuous days above the threshold.

such as Amaya *et al.* (2023), and Martínez *et al.* (2023) consider that while this approach is informative and appropriate for certain analyses, it is also necessary to use shifting baselines or detrended data.

49. TMEDNet is an initiative to develop an observational network of climate change impacts on coastal marine ecosystems through the widespread adoption of standard monitoring protocols for seawater temperature and biological indicators over large areas and long periods of time. The site provides guidance on monitoring mortality, temperature, and climate on fish. Data can be uploaded once logged in and visualized in different ways. Such initiatives at Mediterranean scale should be supported at the Mediterranean scale and could contribute to the Coralligenous Conservation Action Plan through collaboration between UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC and TMEDNet.

50. Rhodolith/Maerl Beds are particularly vulnerable to several pressures, particularly trawling. Although they show recovery capacities (Farriols *et al.*, 2021, 2024), their resilience appears to be limited. Several studies have focused on the impacts of benthic trawling on RMBs in the Mediterranean Sea (e.g. Barberá *et al.*, 2017; Farriols *et al.*, 2021). Fragkopoulou *et al.* (2021) provide a global study of rhodolith distribution and threats, highlighting the combined impacts of climate change and benthic trawling on the distribution of rhodolith beds. Aquaculture activities have also been identified as a potential threat for RMBs off southern Iberian Peninsula (Aguado-Giménez & Ruiz-Fernández, 2012).

Assessment and monitoring

51. CAs and RMBs are elements for MSFD GES criteria D6 (seafloor integrity) and are requested to be assessed under descriptor 6 criteria D6C3, D6C4 and D6C5. However, few EU countries have reported on the extent and other parameters for these habitats (see Tornero Alvarez *et al.*, 2023).

52. CAs and RMBs are requested to assess against IMAP EO1 Biodiversity CI1 (Habitat distribution range to include habitat extent as a relevant attribute) and CI2 (Condition of typical habitat's species and communities). However, very few CPs have reported on these indicators for CAs and RMBs.

53. Surveys to map CAs and other calcareous bioconstructions generally use a variety of remote sensing techniques based on acoustic means coupled with ground truthing by means of photographs, videos or samples. Images are often acquired using Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) (e.g. Pierdomenico *et al.*, 2021). The integration of multibeam and side-scan sonar data with ROV observations allows the identification of coralligenous reefs based on geomorphological and acoustic components and the characterisation of the coralligenous assemblages. Such approaches are used for example in Italy (e.g. Pierdomenico *et al.*, 2021) for MSFD assessment.

54. The spatial distribution of coralligenous cliffs appears to be more difficult to determine because cliffs are more difficult to identify from acoustic data (see Piazzi *et al.*, 2023).

55. Side scan sonar (SSS) and multibeam echosounder (MBES) are the most frequently used techniques to detect coralligenous outcrops (see Dimas *et al.*, 2022). Together with ground truthing acoustic data are processed and interpreted and classified to produce habitat maps. The use of other acoustic data such as sub-bottom profilers (SBP) has also been reported as being successful (Dimas *et al.*, 2022). These authors propose a classification scheme that may be useful for other CA spatial distribution surveys.

56. Similar methods are used for the spatial and bathymetric delineation of RMBs (UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA, 2015; Ingrassia *et al.*, 2019). A two-step approach for the definition, identification, delimitation, description and monitoring of RMBs is proposed by Basso *et al.* (2016b). Since then, it is recognized that the use of dredges for sampling RMBs should be discouraged. However, this sampling method can be necessary to characterize this habitat and hence to estimate condition (e.g. density of rhodoliths, species composition and biodiversity, rhodoliths size and shape) in the CI2 indicator.

57.The main methods used in the Mediterranean for inventory and monitoring coralligenous and maerl habitats have been developed in several documents:

- RAC/SPA - MedMPAnet Project (Ed.) 2014. Monitoring Protocol for Reefs - Coralligenous Community. By Garrabou J, Kipson S, Kaleb S, Kruzic P, Jaklin A, Zuljevic A, Rajkovic Z, Rodic P, Jelic K, and Zupan D. Tunis. 35 pp.+Annexes pp.
- UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC. 2019. Monitoring Protocols for the Ecosystem Approach Common Indicators 1 and 2 related to marine benthic habitats. Guidelines for monitoring coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions (UNEP/MED WG.474/3, p51-98). UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, Tunis.
- UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC. 2021c. Guidelines for the assessment of environmental impact on coralligenous and maerl assemblages. UNEP/MED WG.502/Inf.3. UNEP/MAP SPA/RAC, Tunis.
- SNPA 2024, Methodology sheets used in the second cycle of MSFD monitoring programmes in Italian marine waters. In fact, Italy has adopted specific standards applied on a national scale for monitoring coralligenous and rhodoliths/maerl within the MSFD and functional to the EcAp process.
- Other practical guidelines with **standard protocols** are available on the TMEDNet website for monitoring temperature conditions, mass mortality events, fish visual fish census in relation to climate change, urchin population assessment, rapid assessment of benthic habitat, rapid assessment of *Posidonia oceanica* and *Pinna nobilis*, photogrammetry tool for monitoring benthic habitat structure and dynamics. These simple protocols are available in Garrabou *et al.* (2022).

58.Furthermore, in order to assess the ecological status of coralligenous assemblages and the anthropogenic impacts on them, more than 16 indexes have been defined for the Mediterranean Sea since 2009. Di Camillo *et al.* (2023) have published a comprehensive review and comparison of these indexes, with the aim of proposing a framework to support the development of a cost-effective and practical index to assess the status of CAs.

59.Few specific indices have been developed and published to assess the status of the RMBs in the Mediterranean Sea. However, an attempt to define an ecosystem-based assessment of the RMBs has been published by Astruch *et al.* (2023). Yet, the method proposed by these authors seems complex to be applied over large areas and at many sampling sites. Another potential problem is its use deeper than 80 m depth, with moderate currents.

60.Assessment and monitoring of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds should be improved at national level and based on IMAP indicators, criteria and existing protocols.

NEEDS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Scientific knowledge on spatial distribution

61.Knowledge of the spatial distribution of the two habitats has progressed. However, no data were found on the spatial distribution of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds for Bosnia & Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Libya, Slovenia, and Syria.

62.There may be no coralligenous assemblages in Israel as suggested by RAC/SPA (2003) and Laborel (1987) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the absence of these assemblages should be clearly stated. It is important to know whether the habitats are present or not and to complete the information on spatial distribution at national level for countries without available data. The comparison between the table of available data and the EMODnet modelled spatial distribution of coralligenous suggests that further data collection is needed around Cyprus, along the western coast of the Peloponnese (Greece), in front of the Nile Delta (Egypt) and along the eastern coast of Libya. Efforts are also needed to collect existing spatial data in other countries (e.g. Spain, Türkiye).

63.Several studies show the presence of coralligenous and maerl beds along the Spanish coast, but no document or large-scale map that summarises the available data for Spain. In particular, mapping of

RMBs is needed along the whole continental shelf of the Iberian Peninsula and especially in the Balearic Islands where these beds are widely distributed.

64.Several studies refer to the presence of coralligenous assemblages along the Turkish coast, but no synthetic document or map was found collating spatial data on coralligenous assemblages or rhodolith/maerl beds for Türkiye.

65.Where data are lacking at national level, efforts to collect data on the distribution of CA and RMB habitats should be intensified. Comparison of current knowledge of spatial distribution with modelled spatial distribution (e.g. EMODnet) to identify areas of interest for assessment. Information on the non-existence of these habitats is also important to improve spatial distribution models. Efforts could also be made to collate existing data at national level.

Composition and structure

66.Coralligenous and maerl assemblages are variable throughout the Mediterranean Sea. Knowledge of the composition and structure of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds has increased mainly in the north-western Mediterranean and some knowledge has also been acquired through programmes in MPAs of the south-eastern Mediterranean. However, a synthetic view of the composition and structure of these habitats at a regional scale with sub-regional/national characteristics is still not possible. National factsheets based on the habitats and facies of the Classification of the Benthic Marine Habitat Types, containing information on their known spatial distribution, bathymetric distribution, further characterisation of the assemblages as well as specific threats and perhaps socio-economic values could greatly contribute to a regional view of these assemblages.

67.Knowledge acquisition on composition and structure of coralligenous and maerl assemblages is still necessary at national level together with an effort to collate available information at regional scale.

Conservation issues

68.Local anthropogenic threats to coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds are known and their impacts on these habitats relatively well identified. However, the long-term effects of climate change and cumulative impacts on these habitats and their key species are less well understood. In particular, repeated Mass Mortality Events due to intense Marine Heat Waves, represent currently one of the main threats to these habitats in certain areas of the Mediterranean.

69.Taking into account the rather weak international protection of the Mediterranean coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds, the vulnerability of these habitats, the slow growth rate of their key species, the multiple threats to which they are exposed as well as their socio-economic importance, it should be considered a priority to implement effective conservation measures at national, sub-regional and regional levels scale. The absence of complete mapping of these habitats, of coherent assessment approach and of coordinated management in the region hinders considerably the conservation efforts.

70.Contracting Parties may integrate these habitats into Marine Protected Areas by extending MPAs to include nearby coralligenous habitats, establishing new MPAs or using of FRAs (Fisheries Restricted Areas) to provide adequate protection for these habitats. In addition, national plans should be developed and improved to help reduce anthropogenic impacts on the habitats and to increase scientific knowledge and awareness. The specific inclusion of these habitats in national Environmental Impact Assessments could also contribute to a better conservation of these habitats.

71.Protection of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds needs to be increased at Mediterranean and national scale.

Action Plan connexions with other policies and management tools

72. The assessment and monitoring required to better understand the habitats for an effective conservation should be carried out at national level using IMAP indicators. Existing, recognised protocols should be adopted, preferably common at least within a sub-region. The establishment of sub-regional working groups could help to homogenise protocols used and set up intercalibration exercises.
73. The data produced should be reported through the IMAP Info system. CP Reporting for the Action Plan could include a summary document on evaluation and monitoring, which could also be useful for future MED QSRs.

74. Further links could be sought with the assessment and monitoring of other benthic habitats such as Posidonia oceanica meadows and marine caves.

Cooperation at sub-regional scale

75. The sub-regional scale is important for the population dynamics of key species in coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds and for establishing a network of representative sites. In addition, assessment and monitoring methods should be similar enough to compare the status of these habitats at the sub-regional scale.

76. The development of subregional working groups could contribute to further cooperation between States on this issue, initiate international research programmes and conservation actions, and increase the interoperability of assessments through the organisation of calibration workshops.

Challenges

77. Coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds thrive mainly at depths between 50 and 150 meters. Therefore, access to these habitats is difficult and costly, often requiring remote acoustic sensing techniques coupled with ground-truthing methods either by diving or ROV. In general, CPs lack the resources and means to carry out such assessments effectively.

78. As these habitats exhibit considerable spatial variability in their composition and structure, the definition of baseline values or Good Environmental State (GES) at the Mediterranean or even sub-regional scale is challenging.

79. Geographical assessment data are often difficult to consolidate due to the use of heterogeneous references, scales and data quality. In addition, monitoring data are extensive and require considerable classification, organisation and storage capacity at national level and even more so at regional level. IMAP data submission, processing and analysis capacities need to be strengthened to better support the scientific knowledge required by all Action Programmes, including those for the conservation of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions.

80. The integrity of benthic habitats can be affected by various local anthropogenic impacts. However, in recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the Mediterranean Sea through rising sea temperatures, increased frequency and intensity of Marine Heat Waves causing Mass Mortality events, increased acidification and increased intensity and frequency of extreme events including flooding, affecting marine habitats even at greater depths. For vulnerable benthic habitats, such as coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds, which are already subject to local anthropogenic pressures, he effects of climate change may be irreversible.

VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, PRIORTIES AND ACTIONS TIMETABLE

81. Following the structure of the Post-2020 SAPBIO and taking into account the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp)[40], the following long-term vision, strategic goals, objectives, priorities and actions are proposed to be led by SPA/RAC and GFCM at regional/sub-regional scale and by Contracting Parties at national and sub-regional level. The proposed actions are, to the extent possible, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

[40] See UNEP/MAP COP Decision IG.17/6 and Decision IG.22/7 for IMAP

Proposed long-term Vision (2050)

82.By 2050, the distribution, diversity, composition, structure and functions of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions are sufficiently maintained to ensure the long-term conservation of these assemblages where they occur naturally in the Mediterranean.

Proposed strategic Goals (to 2030)

- **Goal 1.** To acquire sufficient scientific knowledge of these assemblages (spatial and bathymetric distribution, composition and structure, dynamics of key species…) to be able to act efficiently, adequately and effectively for their conservation and restoration.
- **Goal 2.** To share knowledge and resources on assessment and monitoring methods and to contribute to overcoming difficulties in the national implementation of the Action Plan on coralligenous/maerl assemblages.
- **Goal 3.** To reduce, prevent and manage the vulnerability of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions to local and regional risks induced by human activities and natural events (close to strategic goals 3 of EcAp) in order to allow them to recover, function fully and maintain their resilience capacities.
- **Goal 4.** Increase awareness and communication on the distribution and the importance of these habitats and develop communication actions for targeted audiences.

Proposed objectives

The proposed objectives of the *Action Plan for the Conservation of Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bioconcretions in the Mediterranean Sea* are:

i) To improving knowledge of these assemblages (Goals 1 and 2), in particular, but not only, in relation to the impacts of climate change;
ii) To support and enhance national and cooperative sub-regional monitoring based on IMAP (Goals 1 and 2);
iii) To promote solidarity and scientific cooperation among Member States (Goal 2);
iv) To support the national implementation of action plans on coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions (Goal 3);
v) To increase, strengthen and improve the effectiveness of conservation actions for coralligenous and others calcareous bioconcretions in the Mediterranean Sea (Goal 3);
vi) To increase the number and the effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas focused on the conservation of coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions (Goal 3);
vii) To advocate for the extension of existing MPAs to include neighbouring coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl assemblages (Goal 3);
viii) To consolidate available data on spatial distribution and human-induced impacts at the regional level (Goal 4).

Priorities

National level

83.Given the lack of scientific knowledge and the significant anthropogenic pressures that threaten the integrity of coralligenous assemblages and other calcareous bioconstructions, national priorities should be to:

- **Improve scientific knowledge**: Improve understanding of the geographical distribution, composition, structure and population dynamics of key species of these habitats considering current climate change conditions.
- **Conduct baseline studies and monitoring:** Establishing baseline studies and conducting continuous monitoring of a network of sites, including affected and less affected sites, and collecting data by using IMAP indicators and existing standardised protocols.
- **Centralise data collection and sharing:** Develop centralised data collection systems to facilitate data sharing and accessibility among stakeholders.
- **Strengthen habitat protection:** Strengthen habitat protection through spatial and/or management actions to mitigate natural and anthropogenic pressures.

- **Raise awareness:** Communicating the vulnerability of these habitats to target audiences (e.g. small-scale fishermen, recreational fishermen, etc.), to raise awareness and promote sustainable practices.

Regional level

84.Considering the scattered information available across the Mediterranean, the diversity of the habitat composition, the number of states surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, and the need to harmonise assessment methods, regional priorities should be set:

- **Coordination of exchanges and working groups:** Facilitating exchanges and organising working groups to address habitat-related challenges. A sub-regional level is recommended as an appropriate level for coordination efforts.
- **Strengthen cooperation:** Pursue further collaboration with other Mediterranean entities and policy instruments that can enhance the management of anthropogenic threats affecting these habitats at the Mediterranean level (e.g. GFCM).
- **Develop a centralised platform:** Create a platform for sharing and centralising key documents, which should be regularly updated. Cooperation with existing platforms should also be sought.
- **Support to Member States:** Assisting Member States to integrate this Action Plan at the national level by securing funding, promoting scientific exchanges, intercalibrating methods and protocols, and providing other appropriate support.

Proposed Actions for 2025-2030

Table 4 Proposed actions (2025-2030) for the Regional Action Plan for the conservation of coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions in the Mediterranean Sea

	Action	Deadline	Actors
Acquiring scientific knowledge			
1	Contribute to the development of research programmes on coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions, particularly in relation to an ecosystem approach and/or climate change impacts.	Continuously to 2050	CPs
2	Establish or develop a network of representative sites (protected/unprotected, impacted/unimpacted, deep/shallow, etc.) for monitoring coralligenous assemblages and maerl beds, and produce a fact sheet on the network and the state of these habitats.	By end of 2027	CPs
3	Assess and monitor coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds based on IMAP indicators EO1 and EO6 or MSFD criteria, using existing standard protocols	Continuously	CPs
Improve Knowledge Sharing and Implementation			
4	Organisation of the 5th Mediterranean Symposium on the Conservation of Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bioconcretions	By 2026	SPA/RAC Contribution by the CPs is expected
5	Establishment of four (4) sub-regional working groups on the conservation and assessment of benthic habitats at sub-regional scale (coralligenous and maerl beds, possibly together with *Posidonia oceanica* beds). Synthesised results of meetings should be shared with National Focal Points.	By 2027 initially	SPA/RAC organise online meetings. CPs participation to WG
6	Compile and share a list of MPAs hosting coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl assemblages.	2026	CPs
Reducing Vulnerability and Building Resilience			
7	Work towards a ban on the use of harmful fishing gear (trawl nets, dredges, shore(bottom) seines or similar nets) over coralligenous and rhodolith/maerl beds in MPAs (including all Natura 2000 sites), all Special Protected Areas and all Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Interest (SPAMI) throughout the Mediterranean Sea.	By 2030	SPA/RAC and GFCM to consider elaborating a GFCM decision. CPs to integrate in national Action Plan or fisheries regulation.
8	Increase the representativeness of coralligenous assemblages and rhodolith/maerl beds in Marine Protected Areas and/or FRAs (Fisheries Restricted Areas)	By 2030	CPs
9	Identify (i) sites with impacted coralligenous assemblages and (ii) sites with impacted rhodolith/maerl beds where identified threats could be reduced, and restoration (passive or active) could be considered.	By end of 2027	CPs
Awareness and communication building			
10	Development of a coordination platform: Collect, make available and regularly update spatial data; bring together and update available reports, guidelines, programmes initiatives and publications on coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions.	By end of 2027	SPA/RAC

ACTION PLAN PARTNERS

85. Implementing the present action plan is the province of the national authorities of the Contracting Parties. Relevant international organisations, NGOs, laboratories, and any other entities are invited to join in the efforts necessary for the successful implementation of the Action plan. During their ordinary meetings, the Contracting Parties may, upon the recommendation of the meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs/BD, grant the status of «Action Plan Partner» to any organization or laboratory that requests it. This status will be awarded to those that carry out, or support (financially or otherwise), concrete actions (such as conservation, research, etc.) That contribute to the implementation of the present action plan, in line with its priorities. The conditions and criteria for the award of the regional action plan partner title are outlined in Annex VI to the decision IG.26/5.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE REPORTING FORMAT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CORALLIGENOUS AND OTHER CALCAREOUS BIO-CONCRETIONS

86.The following questionnaire is based and may need to be updated once the Action Plan has been approved by the Focal Points. It should be updated in the in the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS).

RAP for the conservation of coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions (COP Decision IG 22/12).

CAs: coralligenous assemblages, **RMBs:** rhodolith/maerl beds

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="3">**Regional Plan requirements: measures and actions taken**</th><th colspan="2">**Changes in the information provided in the previous report** (Please tick the box that applies)</th><th colspan="8">**Status of implementation** (Please tick the box that applies with an "**X**")</th><th colspan="5">**Difficulties/Challenges** (Please tick "X" to all that apply)</th></tr>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Yes</th><th rowspan="2">No</th><th rowspan="2">Not implemented</th><th rowspan="2">In project</th><th colspan="4">Implemented at:</th><th rowspan="2">Not applicable</th><th rowspan="2">Policy framework</th><th rowspan="2">Regulatory framework</th><th rowspan="2">Financial resources</th><th rowspan="2">Administrative management</th><th rowspan="2">Technical guidance capacities</th></tr>
<tr><th>1-25%</th><th>26-50%</th><th>51-75%</th><th>76-100%</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Contribute to the development of research programmes on coralligenous assemblages (CAs) and rhodolith/maerl beds (RMBs), particularly in relation to an ecosystem approach and/or climate change impacts. <u>Timeline</u>: Continuously</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly
If your answer is "No", please go to next question</td><td colspan="8">If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide further information (Indicate website/URL link or other reference)
If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply</td><td colspan="5">On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required</td></tr>
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<tr><td rowspan="3">Establish a network of representative sites (protected/unprotected, impacted/unimpacted, deep/shallow, etc.) for monitoring CAs and RMBs. Timeline: Year 3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
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If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply</td><td colspan="5">On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required</td></tr>
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<tr><td rowspan="3">Produce a fact sheet on the network of CAs and RMBs and the state of these habitats. Timeline: Year 3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly
If your answer is "No", please go to next question</td><td colspan="8">If your answer is "Yes", on a voluntary basis please provide further information (Indicate website/URL link or other reference)
If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply</td><td colspan="5">On a voluntary basis, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required</td></tr>
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</table>

Regional Plan requirements: measures and actions taken	**Changes in the information provided in the previous report** (Please tick the box that applies)		**Status of implementation** (Please tick the box that applies with an "**X**")							**Difficulties/Challenges** (Please tick "X" to all that apply)				
	Yes	No	Not implemented	In project	Implemented at: 1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Not applicable	Policy framework	Regulatory framework	Financial resources	Administrative management	Technical guidance capacities
Assess and monitor CAs and RMBs based on IMAP indicators EO1 and EO6 or MSFD criteria, using existing standard protocols	If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly If your answer is "No", please go to next question		If your answer is "Yes", **on a voluntary basis** please provide further information ***(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*** If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply							**On a voluntary basis**, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				
Compile and share a list of MPAs hosting CAs and RMBs. Timeline: Year 2														
	If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly If your answer is "No", please go to next question		If your answer is "Yes", **on a voluntary basis** please provide further information ***(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*** If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply							**On a voluntary basis**, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				
Work towards a ban on the use of harmful fishing gear (trawl nets, dredges, shore(bottom) seines or similar nets*)* over CAs and RMBs in MPAs (including all Natura 2000 sites), all Special Protected Areas and all Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Interest (SPAMI) throughout the Mediterranean Sea. Timeline: Year 5														
	If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly If your answer is "No", please go to next question		If your answer is "Yes", **on a voluntary basis** please provide further information ***(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)*** If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply							**On a voluntary basis**, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				
Increase the representativeness of CAs and RMBs in Marine Protected														
	If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly		If your answer is "Yes", **on a voluntary basis** please provide further information ***(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)***							**On a voluntary basis**, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				

Regional Plan requirements: measures and actions taken	**Changes in the information provided in the previous report** (Please tick the box that applies)		**Status of implementation** (Please tick the box that applies with an "**X**")							**Difficulties/Challenges** (Please tick "X" to all that apply)				
	Yes	No	Not implemented	In project	Implemented at: 1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Not applicable	Policy framework	Regulatory framework	Financial resources	Administrative management	Technical guidance capacities
Areas and/or FRAs (Fisheries Restricted Areas). Timeline: Year 5	If your answer is "No", please go to next question		If your answer is "No", please in the column difficulties/challenges, tick all that apply											
Identify (i) sites with impacted CAs and (ii) sites with impacted RMBs where identified threats could be reduced and restoration could be considered. Timeline: Year 3	If your answer is "Yes", please update accordingly If your answer is "No", please go to next question		If your answer is "Yes", **on a voluntary basis** please provide further information ***(Indicate website/URL link or other reference)***							**On a voluntary basis**, please briefly describe difficulties/challenges and the type of attention or assistance that is required				

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Annex V

Recommendations for the way forward for the Regional Action Plans approach for selected species and habitats adopted under the SPA/BD Protocol

Introduction

1. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan, give priority to the conservation of the marine environment and to the components of its biological diversity. This was confirmed by the adoption of the new 1995 Barcelona Convention Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) and of its annexes, among them a list of endangered or threatened species.

2. The Protocol sets out very detailed requirements for endangered or threatened species listed in Annex II and III to the Protocol.

3. Elaborating and implementing action plans to conserve one species or group of species is an effective way of guiding, coordinating and strengthening the efforts that the Mediterranean countries are making to safeguard the natural heritage of the region.

4. All the Regional Action Plans (RAPs) adopted[41] under the SPA/BD Protocol are meant to contribute to the conservation of Mediterranean Sea biodiversity and ecosystems. Three concern benthic habitats (marine vegetation, coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions, dark habitats), five concern the conservation of species or groups of species (monk seal, marine turtles, cetaceans, cartilaginous fish, birds of the Protocol's Annex II), one is relative to the assessment and management of invasive species, and one is a restoration programme of a species threatened by extinction *Pinna nobilis*.

5. Although they do not have a binding legal character, these action plans were adopted by the Contracting Parties as regional strategies setting priorities and activities to be undertaken. In particular, they call for greater solidarity between the States of the region, and for coordination of efforts to protect the species in question. This approach has been proved to be necessary to ensure conservation and sustainable management of the concerned species in every Mediterranean area of their distribution.

6. These Action Plans, strategies and Programme constitute midterm regional strategies which are planned to be updated generally each five-year, based on an evaluation of their implementation at regional and national levels.

7. For the biennium 2024-2025, the Contracting Parties to Barcelona Convention requested SPA/RAC during the COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) to evaluate the Regional Action Plans Approach for selected species and habitats adopted under the SPA/BD Protocol and to identify recommendations for the way forward, in the light of the new Global Biodiversity Framework, POST-2020 SPABIO and the EcAp/IMAP processes of the Barcelona convention and submit them for consideration of CoP 24.

8. The recommendations suggested hereafter derive from the assessment of Regional Action Plans (RAPs) under the SPA/BD Protocol, the comparison of their approaches and structure as well as from the feedback from national SPA/BD Focal Points and resource experts on the RAPs' strengths and weaknesses. A SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was conducted, incorporating questionnaire responses, RAP assessments, identified gaps, and other regional/international strategies and policies .

[41] Regional strategy for the conservation of Monk Seal in the Mediterranean, Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles, Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans, Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation, Action Plan for the conservation of bird species listed in annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol, Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichtyans) in the Mediterranean Sea, Action Plan concerning species introduction and invasive species, Action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea, Action Plan for the conservation of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark habitats Action Plan) and, Restoration Programme of *Pinna nobilis*

Recommendations for the way forward for the Regional Action Plans approach for selected species and habitats adopted under the SPA/BD Protocol

General points:

1. The recommendations hereinafter take in account the Ecosystem Approach (decision IG.17/6 adopted by COP 15), the associated IMAP (Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related assessment criteria; decision IG.22/7 adopted by COP 19) and the Post-2020 SAPBIO (Post-2020 Strategic Action Plan for the Biodiversity and sustainable management of Natural resources in the Mediterranean region; Decision IG.25/11 adopted by COP 22).

2. Appendix I presents a diagram proposed for the evaluation and updates of future Regional Action Plan (RAP) taking in account several propositions/recommendations including the creation of a RAP Working Group. It is based on the current updating process of the RAPs.

3. Appendix II details what could be included in the proposed two parts of future RAPs and which could be taken in consideration for future updates.

4. The 10 RAPs which have been developed concern the main emblematic vulnerable species, groups of species, habitats and the NIS. For the following years, it is recommended to focus on the implementation and efficiency of the current RAPs at national and regional level, before developing new RAPs on other species or habitats.

5. The fact that RAPs are not legally binding reduces the action implementation at national scale. However, if they were binding, RAPs would be adopted with more difficulty. The role of RAPs is to define an action plan and request participation of CPs to contribute as much as possible. Therefore, it is recommended that the actions requested in the RAPs remain not legally binding. However, these should be considered by the CPs as high priority conservation actions to be implemented.

6. It is recommended to persist in enforcing knowledge acquisition on species and habitats concerned throughout all RAPs, starting with geographic distribution and continuing with composition, structure and ecosystem functioning

1. CREATING A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN (RAP) WORKING GROUP

7. It has been suggested by several questioned people but also within certain RAPs, to create a working group, advisory committee or task force for the RAP. It is recommended to consider creating a RAP Working Group (which would be the same for all RAPs), which could have an overall view of the RAPs and their difficulties and handle several points including (but not only): necessity to review or not RAPs, increase collaboration between RAPs and between RAPs and other organisations etc. The RAP Working Group should include at least one representative of each RAP expert and/or stakeholder. The frequency of meeting is to be define but once a year starting by online meetings could seem appropriate.

2. RAP STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

8. When updating a RAP, it is recommended to take in consideration the Post-2020 SAPBIO requested actions and expected results for 2027 and 2030.

9. RAPs concern very different species and habitats, and it is normal to find differences between RAPs. However, it is recommended to suggest a common plan/structure when RAPs will be updated so that same type of content can be found in each RAP.

10. Further, it is recommended to consider dividing the structure of RAPs in two parts: one general part including a clear list of species or habitats concerned, a state of knowledge and related policies, threats, methods of assessment as well as vision/goals and targets etc. (see Appendix II). This part

could be reviewed less frequently. A second part containing mainly the short-term action plan would be evaluated and updated more frequently than the first part

11. If the proposition of RAP format in two parts as suggested is adopted, the first part needs to be updated less frequently than the second part is evaluated. If a RAP Working Group is created, it could decide when these parts need to be evaluated and/or updated. Otherwise, it is suggested to update Part 1 every 10 year, and that Part 2 (action plan table) be evaluated and updated every 5 years.

12. When defining the short-term actions to be implemented, it is recommended to propose as much as possible actions which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART). This will facilitate their implementation as well as their evaluation.

13. The more a RAP is specific, the easiest it is to implement at national level because the object of conservation is clear. Also, species or habitats can be grouped under a same RAP if they have numerous common points and threats or are found in same ecosystems. This is not the case of deep-sea habitats and caves. Therefor it is recommended that these two types of habitats be separated in two RAPs.

14. If a RAP Working Group is created, it is recommended to discuss the creation of a RAP only on rhodolith/mäerl beds (currently this habitat is regrouped with the coralligenous habitats).

3. NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAPS

15. It is recommended to suggest a list of priority RAPs for each CP (the most relevant species/habitats for the CP) in collaboration with the SPA/BD Focal Points and taking in account scientific knowledge.

16. At national level, it is recommended to search for further integration and connections with other relevant policies e.g. Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Zone Management ICZM.

17. Actions requested by RAPs are more likely to be implemented at national scale if supported by a project. It is recommended to pursue support through projects for RAP implementation at national scale.

4. REGIONAL ASPECTS

18. For each species or habitat considered, it is recommended to spatially identify a regional network of MCPAs which contribute effectively to their conservation. This could contribute to identify spatial/functional gaps in conservation of the species or habitat at regional scale (for reproduction, gene flow, feeding etc.). This could be a task for the RAP Working Group.

5. CONNECTING AND COOPERATING

19. It is recommended to :

- maintain and develop relations between CPs and international organisations. Further, developing connections with other Protocols such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol would be fruitful for the RAPs implementation.
- elaborate a list of regional/international collaborators and indicate to which RAP they contribute and in what way (simple table).
- make clear reference to relevant IMAP indicators in all RAPs.

20. The creation of a RAPs Working Group could also be in charge of enforcing the relations RAPs-IMAP also by identifying RAP needs in terms of assessment and monitoring which could be covered by IMAP indicators.

6. EVALUATION AND UPDATING PROCESS (SEE APPENDIX I)

21. It is recommended to:

- suggest a common structure for the evaluations especially in the presentation of the national implementation evaluation.

- inform whether results of the national implementation should be presented by CP or more globally to assess the global implementation of the action evaluated.

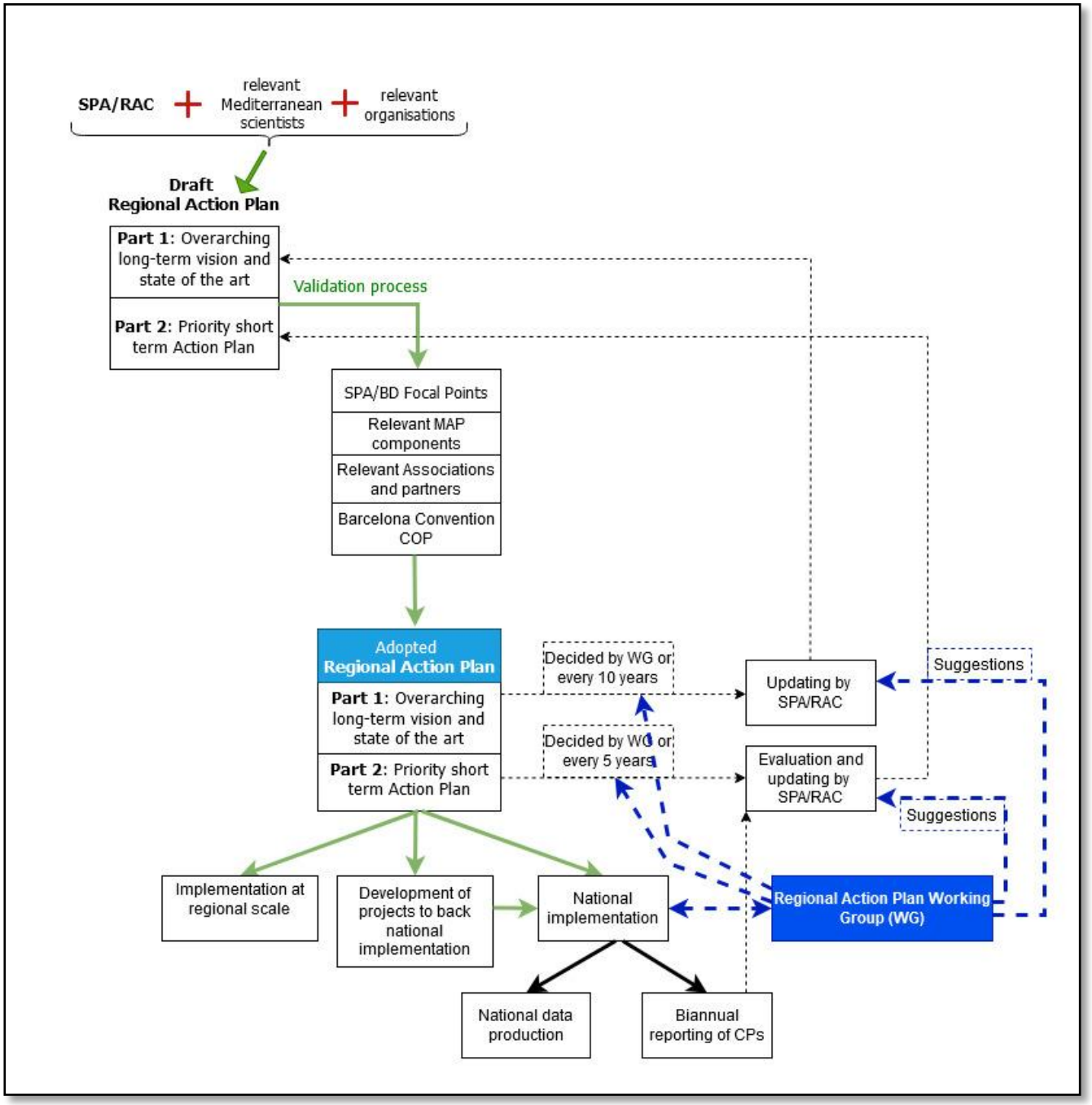
- keep the format of reporting which is well known and accepted by CPs. However, reporting needs to be more systematic and enhanced.

- consider replacing in the reporting format, “under development” by more precise choice such as “under project”, “implemented at 1-25%”, “26-50%”, “51-75%”, “76-100%”.

- integrate a RAP expert Working Group (WG) in the updating process as presented in Annex B which could contribute e.g. to increase relations between RAPs, evaluate the need to update and/or evaluate a RAP, suggest priorities to the updating RAP process, identify the network of MCPAs contributing to the conservation of species/habitats for each RAP, and identify spatial gaps by sub-region for an efficient network of MCPAs to conserve the species/habitat within its distributional range

Appendix I

RAP evaluation and update process including a RAP Working Group and a RAP format in two parts


SPA/RAC
relevant Mediterranean scientists
relevant organisations
Draft Regional Action Plan
Part 1: Overarching long-term vision and state of the art
Part 2: Priority short term Action Plan
Validation process
SPA/BD Focal Points
Relevant MAP components
Relevant Associations and partners
Barcelona Convention COP
Adopted Regional Action Plan
Part 1: Overarching long-term vision and state of the art
Part 2: Priority short term Action Plan
Decided by WG or every 10 years
Decided by WG or every 5 years
Updating by SPA/RAC
Evaluation and updating by SPA/RAC
Suggestions
Suggestions
Implementation at regional scale
Development of projects to back national implementation
National implementation
Regional Action Plan Working Group (WG)
National data production
Biannual reporting of CPs

Appendix II

Proposed common format/pattern for Regional Action Plans on selected species and habitats under the SPA/BD Protocol

Regional Action Plan document

Part 1

I. Introduction
   a. UNEP/MAP policy context
   b. RAP history

II. Definition of the conservation object
   a. List of habitats concerned using UNEP-SPA/RAC reference list of habitats (see Interpretation manual of Marine Habitat types in the Mediterranean Sea)
   b. List of species concerned exhaustive in the case of RAPs on species or list of key taxa in the case of RAPs on habitat.

III. Relevant international, European, regional policies and legislation presented in a table emphasising the appropriate elements.

IV. Current state of the art in terms of knowledge on species or habitats
   a. Geographic distribution. Summarise knowledge from previous RAP and list with references the knowledge acquired since then.
   b. Composition and structure
   c. Population dynamics of typical/key species

V. Main anthropogenic threats

Describe the impact of each main threat on species or habitat.

VI. Methods and indices used and eventual "best practices" with a list of relevant documents

VII. Needs, gaps and challenges
   a. In knowledge
   b. Relative to specific or new anthropogenic threats

VIII. Long-term vision, goals and targets

The Post-2020 SAPBIO hierarchical pattern and terminology can be used as a model.

IX. Priorities at regional, sub-regional and national scales

X. Action Plan active partners

A list of key Mediterranean organisms contributing to the implementation of the RAP and their contribution could be useful.

XI. Evaluation and update process

Short paragraph on the process which can be common to all RAPs or not.

Part 2

- Present Vision, goals, targets and actions in a diagram.
- Role of each partner and of CPs should be clearly defined for the implementation of the RAP.
- Any sub-regional specificities for the implementation of the actions should be specified.
- Table of actions requested. Actions should be limited in number (e.g. no more than 15) and as much as possible Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Time-based (SMART).

[Draft Decision IG.27/9[1]

Mandate of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change and Terms of Reference of its Focal Points

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Recalling also Decision IG.17/5 "Governance Paper" adopted at the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008) and in particular Section 8 on "Role of Focal Points", as well as Decision IG.19/5 "Mandates of the Components of MAP" adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 26, Marrakesh, Morocco, 3-5 November 2009),

Recalling further Decision IG.26/12 adopted at COP23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) on the establishment the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre (CC/RAC) within the framework of UNEP/MAP, as a strategic step to further strengthen the UNEP/MAP system by enhancing institutional coherence in its responses to climate change, and recognizing the Centre's role in actively engaging in regional climate initiatives, promoting synergies, and fostering coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders,

Acknowledging the pressing need to reinforce institutional coherence and cross-sectoral coordination in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change in the Mediterranean region, including through strengthened integration of climate considerations into national and regional policy frameworks and planning processes as well as to maximize coordinated support to RACs,

Noting with concern that due to anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases, the rate of climate change in the Mediterranean basin, both historical and projected, is faster than global trends and *deeply concerned* that 2024 was the hottest year on record according to the World Meteorological Organization,

Recalling the commitments under the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and *emphasizing* the importance of regional governance frameworks, such as the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, in contributing to the achievement of global climate objectives,

Recognizing the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF) 2026-2035 as a key policy instrument under UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and its ICZM Protocol to guide and support climate resilience efforts in the Mediterranean and *emphasizing the need* for its effective implementation in line with the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and the

[1] Reservation by Israel on decision IG.27/9

region’s evolving climate challenges, to ensure coordinated and science-based climate action across marine and coastal areas,

Taking note of the outcome of the Independent Mapping Exercise with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system (UNEP/MAP WG.620/Inf.18);

1. *Adopt* the Mandate of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change, set out in Annex I to this Decision;

2. *Approve* the Terms of Reference for the Focal Points of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change, set out in the Annex II to this Decision;

3. *Request* the Contracting Parties to appoint Focal Points to the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change, *encouraging* them to appoint as appropriate experts with competence in the field of CC/RAC mandate, depending on the Contracting Parties’ priorities;

4. *Invite* the Government of Türkiye to take as soon as possible the necessary institutional, structural and budgetary measures to ensure a smooth operation of CC/RAC;

5. *Request* the Secretariat to support the Host Country and CC/RAC, and to follow up the implementation of this Decision and report to the Bureau meetings in 2026 and 2027 and to next COP25 on its progress.

6. *Request* the Secretariat to report to the Bureau meetings, to the MAP Focal Points and to the COP 25, on the efforts made to maximise synergies and complementarities with other MAP Components - in delivering the CC/RAC mandate.

]

Annex I

Mandate of the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre

Background

The adverse and worsening climate change context for the Mediterranean Region requires urgent and ambitious remedial action. A series of landmark scientific reports (IPCC 2020, PB/RAC 2020, MedECC 2020 and 2023) have confirmed the climate change fragility of the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean region is warming 20 percent faster than the global average, confirming its "hot spot" reputation. Climate change impacts will exert further pressure on already strained ecosystems and on vulnerable economies and societies. And coastal zones face heightened disaster risks, including flooding and erosion, and the salinization of river deltas and aquifers that sustain food security and livelihoods.

The 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP23, Portoroz, Slovenia, December 2023) committed to "advance decarbonisation" and "enhance actions to address climate change in the Mediterranean and increase protection of the marine ecosystems against the detrimental impacts from climate change, and strengthen scientific knowledge and expertise in this area such as through the Network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)" (UNEP/MED IG.26/22). The Contracting Parties at the same meeting confirmed the establishment of the MAP Climate Change Regional Activity Centre (CC/RAC) in Istanbul by Decision IG.26/12.

In this context, the CC/RAC is expected to play a central role in supporting the implementation of the 2026-2035 Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF), in alignment with the 2026-2035 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD).

Objective and mission statement

The objective of the CC/RAC is to support the Mediterranean countries to substantially increase their resilience to the adverse impacts of climate variability and change and enhance decarbonization efforts. This will be achieved through the application of co-working and cooperation, transparency, accountability, participatory governance and considerations of solidarity and equity.

The mission of CC/RAC is to provide the services which enable Contracting Parties to strengthen their climate-resilient and adaptation capabilities to withstand the adverse effects of climate change on human and marine life and health as well as to accelerate efforts towards climate neutrality~~.~~

In pursuing its mandate, the CC/RAC will enhance cooperation with other MAP Components in relation to climate change in a complementary manner with existing actions and activities,..

Scope of action and key issues

1. Facilitate and assist the implementation of the RCCAF including through an efficient monitoring and evaluation framework using indicator-based approaches, ensuring harmonization with IMAP.

2. Support Contracting Parties in testing, piloting and demonstrating adaptation and mitigation solutions

- *Support collecting relevant information at national level, considering these processes are key enablers for scaling up actions especially for livelihoods adaptation.*
- *Support Contracting Parties in identifying and exchanging experiences on the application of Nature-based Solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation.*

3. Mobilise climate finance opportunities for adaptation and mitigation

- *Assess the international climate finance landscape and support Contracting Parties with guidelines and practical support where needed to access regional and international climate finance opportunities.*
- *Promote the formulation of MAP project proposals for funding in collaboration with Contracting Parties and other MAP Components with a particular focus for the implementation of the RCCAF 2026-2035.*
- *Develop a financing strategy for the CC/RAC, identifying innovative and diversified sources of funding.*

4.Contribute to strengthening the regional scientific climate knowledge base

- *Synergise joint working with MedECC, and provide support to MedECC in its delivery, in collaboration with Plan Bleu/RAC.*
- *Draft and prepare recommendation and guidance based on findings of MedECC reports and other scientific reports at the global and regional levels, in particular on technical solutions, in collaboration with other MAP components.*

5.Support Contracting Parties to strengthen the integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, policies and programmes into national planning and budgeting systems

- *Assist the Contracting Parties upon request, in the preparation and implementation of national climate change planning and management guidelines for National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); and for integrating climate change into national development planning and budgeting processes, including in the marine and coastal environment.*
- *Collaborate with relevant national authorities of Contracting Parties, INFO/RAC, other MAP Components and relevant regional partners to increase awareness, education and engagement on climate change.*
- *Undertake activities including capacity building and exchanges of best practices to reinforce national adaptation and mitigation policy responses to climate change by providing the interface with scientific evidence for relevant stakeholder bodies.*

6. Harness regional opportunities for climate change collaboration and partnering using coordination approaches and in consultation with the Secretariat

- *Identify potential synergies with regional climate-change related activities and programmes such as under the UfM, IUCN, WWF, GWP and their Mediterranean Offices as well as with UNEP.*
- *Follow up from a technical point of view the work of UNFCCC and UNEP to recommend as appropriate relevant actions to be taken under the MAP- Barcelona Convention system.*

Annex II

Terms of Reference for the CC/RAC Focal Points

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CC/RAC FOCAL POINTS

Designation

The CC/RAC Focal Point shall be designated by the competent Ministry/body of the Contracting Party, in consultation with the MAP Focal Point.
The CC/RAC Focal Point shall be an appropriately empowered person appointed by the governmental/administrative body responsible for broader policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation for the support of sustainable development.
The name and functions of the designated Focal Point shall be communicated by the MAP Focal Point to the MAP Secretariat and CC/RAC Director, as well as to concerned bodies in the Contracting Party.

Tasks

CC/RAC Focal Points shall be responsible for:

• Facilitating the sharing of experiences, best practices and approaches between Contracting Parties, with a view to building capacity and enhancing mutual learning;
Maintaining the relationship between CC/RAC and governmental/administrative bodies;
• Contributing to the preparation of CC/RAC Focal Point meetings through comments and proposals either made on their own initiative or relating to documents prepared by CC/RAC, after consultation with Contracting Party bodies as required;
• Attending the CC/RAC Focal Points meetings and reporting on their conclusions to governmental/administrative bodies and MAP Focal Points;
• Disseminating CC/RAC technical and information documents, guidelines, studies, etc., to concerned bodies;
• Following, in consultation with MAP Focal Points, the implementation of relevant decisions and recommendations of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties;
• Liaising with NGOs, the academic and scientific community and socioeconomic actors concerned with CC/RAC activities;
• Communicating to MAP Focal Points all information and documents needed for the execution of their tasks;
• Liaising with local representatives of international financial facilities, institutions and programmes for the support of projects related to the implementation of CC/RAC activities;
• Disseminating and promoting CC/RAC documents and publications among concerned governmental/administrative bodies, along with public and private institutions and interested individuals;
• Organizing, where necessary, presentations and discussions with partners and experts, with the participation of CC/RAC, to promote the Centre's activities;
• Coordinating the provision of relevant climate mitigation and adaptation information to CC/RAC, from available sources
• Contributing to the preparation of MCSD meetings through comments and proposals
Related to climate change, either made on their own initiative or relating to documents prepared by CC/RAC, after consultation with national bodies;
• Contributing to the production, where necessary, of publications in the CC/RAC context;
• Assisting CC/RAC in the identification of relevant experts for specific initiatives or Consultations;
• Following activities in relation to the obligations of global and regional instruments

related to climate change.

Support measures

In order to fulfil their tasks, it is advisable for CC/RAC Focal Points to receive the following support as appropriate:

Contracting Party bodies shall:

• Transmit to CC/RAC Focal Points all necessary information, in particular for following up relevant decisions and recommendations of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties;
• Provide CC/RAC Focal Points with adequate resources as required for the execution of their tasks, within the context of the broader fiscal and staffing policies and priorities of the Contracting Party.

CC/RAC shall:

• Provide Focal Points with all information needed for the execution of their tasks including technical details considered useful for proper understanding and evaluation;
• Provide support, including appropriate training, to CC/RAC Focal Points to enable them to carry out their tasks.
• Consult and inform the CC/RAC Focal Points on the programme of work and its implementation at the occasion of thematic focal point meetings.

[Draft Decision IG.27/10

Assessment Studies: Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the MedECC Special Report on interlinking climate change with the Water - Energy - Food - Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in the Mediterranean Basin (MedECC Special WEFE Report)

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of 21 July 2022, entitled "Our ocean, our future, our responsibility",

Recognizing the work undertaken by the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System to promote the Source to Sea continuum approach, including the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus national assessments and multi stakeholders consultations conducted in priority coastal areas in the framework of MAP GEF-funded MedProgramme, as well as the new flagship on WEFE Nexus of the 2026-2035 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD),

Recognizing that, in the context of interconnected challenges related to water, energy, food, and ecosystems - which threaten livelihoods, economies, and natural systems - the WEFE Nexus approach provides a comprehensive framework to address these challenges by developing sustainable solutions and preventing cascading effects that could further harm the region's communities and ecosystems,

Thanking with appreciation MedECC for the work undertaken in delivering several assessment reports in the last 5 years, including the WEFE Nexus Special Report,

Having considered the Report of the Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points Meeting (Marseille, France, 27-28 May 2025), and the Report of the 21st Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (Corinth, Greece, 24-26 June 2025),

1. *Endorse* the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the MedECC WEFE Nexus Special Report as set out in the Annex to the present Decision;

2. *Invite* the Contracting Parties to make all possible efforts to overcome the knowledge gaps that are identified in MedECC WEFE Nexus Special Report;

3. *Encourage* the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and all relevant partners to properly disseminate, raise awareness and streamline the findings of the MedECC WEFE Nexus Special Report at all levels of policy- and decision-making, and in all relevant national and international fora within and beyond the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system;

4. *Encourage* the Secretariat to work closely with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and other stakeholders in view of raising awareness and supporting the implementation of the Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus (WEFE Nexus) in the Mediterranean-Source to Sea continuum, and being a flagship initiative of the 2026-2035 MSSD;

5. *Invite* the Contracting Parties and Partners to provide adequate and sustained support to MedECC and its science-policy-society interface within the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system and *encourage* larger participation from all the shores of the Mediterranean and in particular women scientists, as well as to make the necessary efforts, in cooperation with the other funding institutions, to ensure the adequate delivery of MedECC.]

Annex

Summary for Policymakers of the MedECC Special Report on interlinking climate change with the Water - Energy - Food - Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in the Mediterranean Basin

Interlinking climate change with the Water - Energy - Food - Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin
Summary for Policymakers

By (logos)

MEDITERRANEAN EXPERTS ON CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

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Special Report

Interlinking climate change with the Water - Energy - Food - Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin

Summary for Policymakers

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Interlinking climate change with the Water - Energy - Food - Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean Basin

Summary for Policymakers (SPM)

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Text as approved during Plenary Session of MedECC Stakeholders on April 29, 2024

Notes

● In the SPM, **references for material contained in the full Special Report** are given in **curly brackets {}**.

● **The SDG Index**: in the SPM, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index is used. This assesses each country's overall performance with regard to the 17 SDGs, giving equal weight to each goal. The score signifies a country's position between the worst possible outcome (score of 0) and the target (score of 100). The 2023 edition of the SDG Index includes 97 global indicators. Two-thirds of the data come from official statistics (typically United Nations custodian agencies) with one third from non-traditional statistics (e.g. derived from large-scale collection of passive data or remote sensing, produced by research centres, universities, and non-governmental organisations). Published since 2015, the SDG Index and dashboard has been peer-reviewed and the global edition was statistically audited by the European Commission in 2019. More detailed information is available on the website www.sdgindex.org.

● Each assessment finding is based on an evaluation of underlying evidence and agreement. A level of confidence is expressed using five qualifiers: very low, low, medium, high and very high, and typeset in italics, for example, *medium confidence*. The following terms have been used to indicate the assessed likelihood of an outcome or result: virtually certain (99–100% probability); very likely (90–100%); likely (66–100%); about as likely as not (33–66%); unlikely (0–33%); very unlikely (0–10%); and exceptionally unlikely (0–1%). Additional terms (extremely likely (95–100%); more likely than not (>50–100%); and extremely unlikely (0–5%) are also used when appropriate. Assessed likelihood is typeset in italics, for example, *very likely*.

● In the SPM, the Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES) defined in IPCC AR4 and Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) defined in IPCC AR5 are cited. RCPs are greenhouse gas concentration trajectories (not emissions) used for the 5th phase of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP5) and labelled in line with a possible range of radiative forcing values in the year 2100: 2.6, 4.5, 6.0, and 8.5 W m^{-2} respectively. These correspond to one stringent mitigation scenario (RCP2.6), two intermediate scenarios (RCP4.5 and RCP6.0) and one scenario with very high GHG emissions (RCP8.5). SRES scenarios are organised into four socio-economic families (A1, A2, B1 and B2), translated in terms of greenhouse gas and aerosol emissions. SRES scenario B1 is similar to RCP4.5, scenarios B2 and A1B1 are similar to RCP6.0, and scenario A2 is similar to RCP8.5. In the report, low-emissions scenario refers to RCP2.6, intermediate emissions scenarios refer to SRES scenario B1, B2, A1B1 or RCP4.5 and RCP6.0, and high-emissions scenario refers to SRES scenario A2 or RCP8.5.

Executive Summary: Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Basin, cradle of an ancient cultural heritage, culinary traditions, indigenous knowledge of agricultural practices and biodiversity, is often referred to as a "climate change hotspot", as the regional projections of global climate change are exacerbated with higher rates than globally. It also has highly vulnerable specific critical resources (water, agriculture, etc.) and socio-economic elements (adaptive capacity, human population growth, etc.). Population and economic growth, agricultural intensification, urbanisation, high pollution levels in air, land, seawater, and freshwater, tourism and increasing resource demand and inequality, all increase the vulnerability of local communities, the impacts on human health and the level of insecurity for water, energy, food and ecosystems (WEFE). Resource overexploitation is contributing to their rapid depletion and consequent environmental degradation, putting the capacity of Mediterranean countries to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda at risk. The unsustainability of WEFE elements is not only characterised by insecurity but also by large disparities across countries (North-South divide mainly) and across territories (rural and urban areas), and by the multiple interlinkages (nexus), including synergies and trade-offs, between the four WEFE nexus components.

Among the key challenges faced by Mediterranean countries are water scarcity issues and strong dependency on energy and food imports. Three main pathways for action are currently being implemented to promote synergies between water, energy, food and ecosystems: (1) implementation of innovative technological solutions often relying on renewable energy and enhanced efficiency; (2) ecosystem-based solutions, including agroecology and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) such as green infrastructure and wetlands restoration; and (3) social approaches to reduce or modify consumption patterns, such as promoting restrained consumption and sufficiency, and adoption of the Mediterranean diet.

However, despite these actions, the current situation is not satisfactory for these four components with regard to the expectations of the nexus approach, and shows a concept-to-implementation gap. This gap is due to (1) the lack of accessible and reliable data on key indicators and variables; (2) insufficient knowledge, understanding and awareness of nexus synergies and trade-offs; (3) insufficient incentives and investments; (4) higher costs of nexus approaches in the short term as compared to silo approaches; and (5) the lack of adequate governance, which include the lack of inter-sectoral and multi-level coordination.

Despite existing platforms for exchanging and consolidating know-how and experiences in the Mediterranean, actions and interventions need to be enhanced to build institutional capacities which include (1) a science-policy interface as one way of reinforcing coherence; (2) enhanced funding mechanisms; (3) intra-regional dialogue; (4) deliberative approaches; and (5) pilot nexus approaches through modelling and assessment for more coordinated WEFE actions in the Mediterranean.

A. Interconnected water, energy, food and ecosystem security challenges

A.1. Background for the assessment

A.1.1. All recent assessments of anthropogenic climate change for the Mediterranean Basin, including the IPCC AR6 and MedECC assessment reports, indicate ongoing warming, exceeding global average rates, of the atmosphere (+1.5°C above the pre-industrial level) and the sea (0.29°C–0.44°C per decade since the early 1980s), changes in rainfall distribution (10 to 30% drop on average) and continuous sea level rise (1.4±0.2 mm yr^{-1} during the 20th century). The combination of observed and projected increases in climate hazards, coupled with high regional vulnerability and exposure, make the Mediterranean area a 'climate change hotspot' (*high confidence*) {1.2}. High temperatures cause direct damage to humans and ecosystems. Among the main risk factors identified in the Mediterranean are drought (meteorological, hydrological, agricultural, and socio-economic droughts), due to trends characterised by a widespread increase in evaporative demand resulting from temperature increase, and a decrease in precipitation, leading to an increase in the duration and intensity of meteorological and hydrological droughts {1.2}. Drier conditions and increasing water scarcity are significant threats to agriculture and ecosystems, and to a lesser extent energy, through hydropower and thermoelectric plants (*medium confidence*) {2.2.2}. At sea, the impacts of climate change include the increasing acidification of seawater *likely* reducing marine productivity, affecting species distribution and triggering local extinction, as well as the rise in mean sea level, which has already increased by 6 cm over the past 20 years (*high confidence*). It could reach between 40 cm for the lowest greenhouse gas emissions scenario and 100 cm for the highest emissions scenario by 2100[1], increasing the risk of coastal flooding (*high confidence*) {1.2}.

A.1.2. Greenhouse gas emissions in the Mediterranean Basin account for 6% of global emissions, equally distributed between northern and southern regions, corresponding to an equivalent proportion of the global population, with fossil energy accounting for 76% of the energy mix and significant variation between countries. The power production sector represents 30% of the total, while industry represents 14%, the building sector 16%, the transport sector 28%, and other sectors 12%, including industrial process emissions, indirect emissions (for nitrous oxide only), agriculture (agricultural soils, agricultural waste burning, enteric fermentation, manure management), and waste. Mediterranean countries have significant potential to mitigate climate change with high potential for renewable energy, particularly in the South and East. Adverse effects of climate change on thermo-electric production and hydropower, and to a lesser extent solar and wind energy production, should be accounted for to meet energy demand, expected to decrease in the north of the basin and increase in the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries {1.2}.

A.1.3. The Mediterranean Basin has a long history of adaptation to harsh environmental conditions, such as dry and hot climates, and often poor soils. This has resulted in landscapes and agricultural practices that have been developed over millennia of human presence in this region {1.2; 3.1}. These practices and associated knowledge have been substituted through

[1] Refer to "Notes" for the explanations on the emission scenarios.

industrialisation and lifestyle changes that have not been adapted to Mediterranean conditions, with impacts on WEFE components {2.1.1.2}.

A.2. Current status of the WEFE nexus in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Insecurity for all nexus components (water, energy, food, and ecosystems) is the rule rather than the exception in many countries of the Mediterranean Basin, and this has far-reaching implications in terms of sustainability. The region faces pressing challenges of water insecurity (e.g. water stress), energy insecurity (with heavy dependence on mostly imported fossil fuels), food insecurity (comprising the triple burden of nutrition) as well as ecosystem insecurity (e.g. fast rate of biodiversity loss, on land and in the ocean) (Figure SPM1). However, unsustainability in all WEFE components is not only characterised by insecurity, but also by the existence of large disparities between countries, as well as by the multiple interlinkages between the four nexus elements.

A.2.1. Mediterranean countries are facing numerous interrelated challenges in terms of access to and availability of water, energy, food and fertile land, as well as with regard to how these elements depend on and potentially impact ecosystems. Mediterranean countries face several challenges in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are not on track to achieve many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is particularly relevant for SDGs relating to WEFE components, such as food (SDG 2), water (SDG 6), energy (SDG 7), and ecosystems (SDGs 14 and 15). The Mediterranean region has a general SDG Index score of 73.5 but there are huge differences between the sub-regions; the SDG Index shows better performance in Western Europe and lower values in Eastern Europe and MENA countries. The SDG scores of Mediterranean countries in 2022 ranged from 81.1 in France (ranked 4th globally) to 59.3 in Syria (global rank: 126) {4.1}.

A.2.2. Water insecurity originates from water scarcity due to droughts, flood-induced risk to infrastructure, degradation of water quality, and unequal access {1.2; 2.1.1.3}. Water plays a critical role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, reducing global disease, empowering women, enhancing the welfare and productivity of populations, adapting to climate change, and fostering peace, acting as a vital connection between the climate system, human society and the environment. Achieving SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) is therefore essential to attaining all other SDGs, which is of particular importance in the Mediterranean Basin {1.1}. **From the perspective of SDG 6, there are significant disparities between countries and most of the countries have significant challenges to address {4.1}.** Already, 180 million people suffer from water scarcity in the Mediterranean, but the quality of water is also decreasing with the increase in water salinity due to groundwater overexploitation and the presence of pollutants (e.g. nutrients and heavy metals) {1.2; 2.2; 2.3.1}. The key challenge for all MENA countries is water availability – due to frequent droughts leading to water scarcity and unsustainable use of limited water resources and overconsumption {4.1}. Challenges related to overexploitation of water resources and unsustainable water use leading to water shortages are due to a lack of sound water governance and in particular, of proper implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) {1.2}. Water shortage can lead to competition between sectors, including agriculture, industry, drinking water supply and tourism {1.2}. It can also lead to conflicts when combined with socio-political, economic, and environmental factors {2.3.1.3}.

A.2.3. Food insecurity in the Mediterranean is significant and it is characterised by the triple burden of malnutrition: undernutrition, overnutrition and hidden hunger. The worst cases are found in North Africa, where all countries face major challenges. Achieving SDG 2 (zero hunger) presents one of the most critical challenges of all WEFE components. Statistics on the prevalence of undernourishment are not accessible for countries such as Palestine and Syria. None of the Mediterranean countries achieved the targets by 2020 and for all of them, either significant or major challenges remain, with disparities between countries {4.1}. High dependency on food imports, particularly for MENA countries, makes the region highly vulnerable to external uncertainties and variability outside the Mediterranean region. A dietary shift away from the traditional Mediterranean diet among the population, particularly children and adolescents, is mainly accompanied by increased malnutrition trends in the form of overweight and obesity, as well as degradation of ecosystems and greenhouse gas emissions (*high confidence*) {2.3.1.3; 3.2.6; 4.1}.

A.2.4. The region faces challenges in securing its energy supply and matching demand. For most Mediterranean countries, achieving SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) is still a challenge despite variable progress over time in some of them. Access to electricity in urban areas is universal in most Mediterranean countries (i.e. 100% of the urban population has access to electricity). Access to electricity is lower in rural areas {4.1}. The challenge for nearly all Mediterranean countries, except Algeria, Egypt, and Libya, is their strong energy dependence on imports. Energy insecurity in the region is also increased by the existence of political conflicts between countries {4.1}. The share of electricity produced from oil, gas and coal sources ranges from less than 10% in France to more than 90% in Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Syria, and Tunisia. In general, Mediterranean countries are still highly dependent on fossil fuels to produce electricity {3.2; 4.1}. Renewable energy consumption only accounted for 11% of total energy consumption in 2020, about nine percentage points lower than the European Union (EU) and three percentage points lower than the global level {1.2}. Reducing energy demand, including increased energy efficiency and energy sufficiency, is necessary to reduce environmental degradation. It is also advantageous for the region to explore alternatives for ensuring energy security, particularly in light of the limited presence of established policies to reduce energy demand. Mediterranean countries have significant potential to mitigate climate change through an accelerated energy transition, including renewable energies deployment that requires effective land and sea use planning to avoid conflicts with other uses {1.2; 2.2.4}.

A.2.5. Marine and terrestrial ecosystems are under acute pressure in the Mediterranean region. Biodiversity loss, deforestation, wildfires, land use changes, and pollution are widely reported trends that are severely undermining Mediterranean ecosystems {1.2; 4.1}. Both marine and terrestrial ecosystems face significant challenges in the Mediterranean, where most countries are not on track to achieve SDGs 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land). Forest degradation is expanding, and some polluting sectors are undergoing rapid growth, such as coastal mass tourism and land and maritime transport {1.2; 4.1}. With regard to marine ecosystems, unsustainable fishing, warmer temperatures, acidification and water pollution, including underwater noise, all reduce marine productivity, affect species distribution and trigger local extinctions {1.2}. Twelve Mediterranean countries still face major challenges with SDG 14, while seven others face significant challenges. The situation improves slightly with terrestrial

ecosystems (SDG 15), but still, ten Mediterranean countries face significant challenges, whereas three countries face major challenges to achieve this SDG {4.1}.

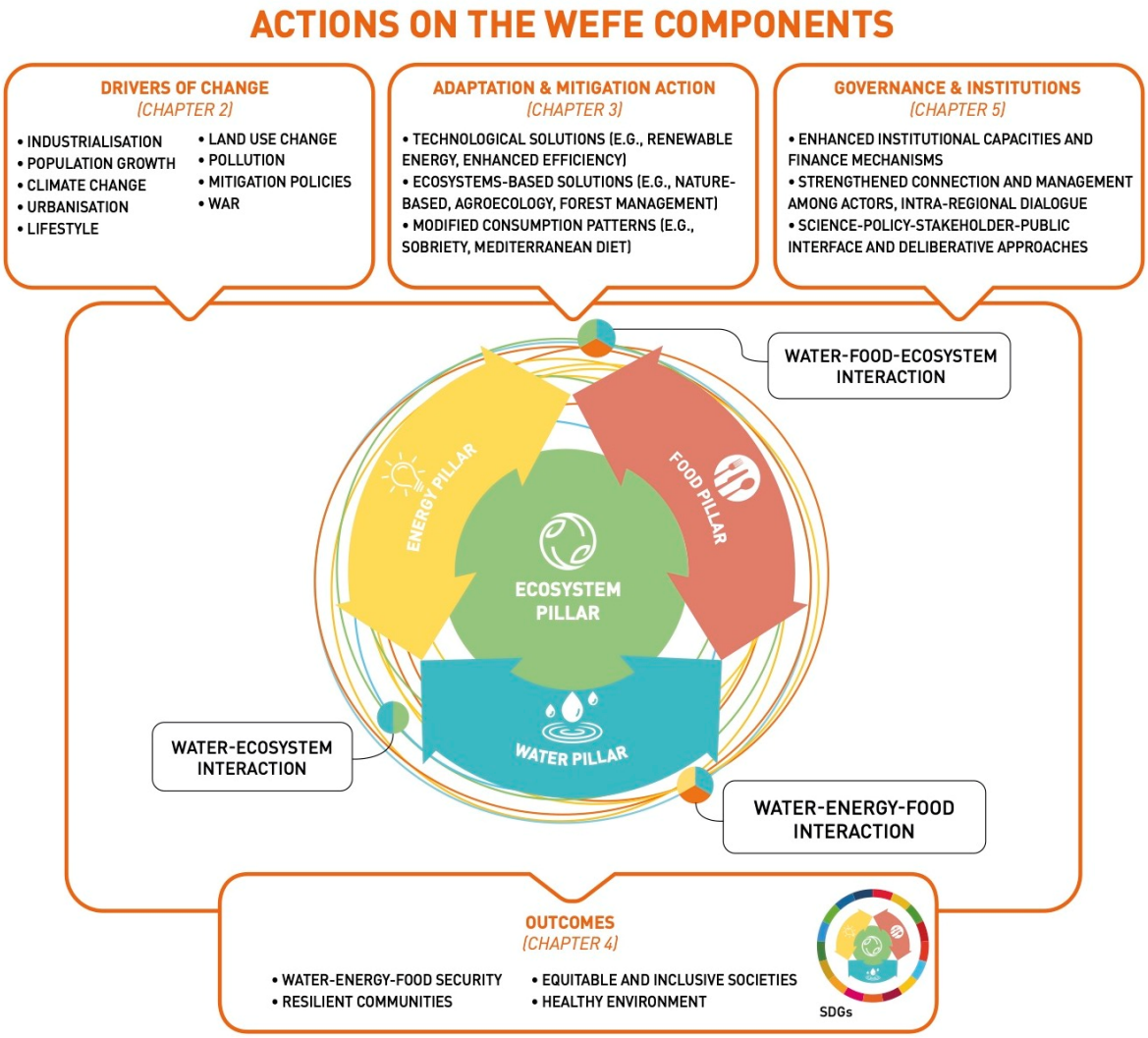


Figure SPM1 | Schematic of the WEFE concept and report outcome for the Mediterranean Basin. A variety of direct and indirect drivers of change impact the WEFE components. WEFE has a series of two, three and higher level interactions that need to be addressed through appropriate governance and institutions capable of developing adaptation and mitigation actions that promote synergies to achieve water, food, energy security and ecosystem health in compliance with the SDGs.

A.3. Impact of the drivers of change on the WEFE nexus

WEFE challenges are amplified by current and future direct and indirect drivers of change that are external to the WEFE nexus, particularly climate change, pollution, land use changes, population growth, lifestyle changes, urbanisation, migration, industrialisation, and conjunctural crises such as pandemics and conflicts.

A.3.1. Water security in the Mediterranean is affected by a combination of factors, including climate change, densely concentrated population growth, pollution, saltwater intrusion, land use practices, and unsustainable resource management, among others {1.2; 2.2.1}. Future mean precipitation projections for the Mediterranean region foresee reductions of approximately 4% per 1°C global warming (*high confidence* for global warming levels above 2°C with a marginal projected increase in winter at the northern boundary of the northern Mediterranean) {1.2; 2.2.1.1}. Under a 2°C warming scenario, the frequency and duration of meteorological droughts are projected to increase in the southern Mediterranean countries, and the frequency of agricultural droughts is projected to be 150 to 200% more likely (*high confidence*) {2.2.1.1}. Population growth, economic development and lifestyle changes have led to increased water demand, resulting in water shortages and depletion of water resources (*high confidence*). The increasing levels of urbanisation, industrialisation, and unsustainable agricultural practices have led to a heightened need for water, which has resulted in unsustainable rates of water consumption {3.1; 3.2}. Inefficient irrigation methods are responsible for the squandering of water resources and the aggravation of water scarcity in the area {3.2} (*high confidence)*. Moreover, unsustainable resource management has resulted in pollution of water resources and groundwater depletion {2.2.1.3}. In addition, inadequate land and resource management practices are also a contributing factor to water insecurity. The water-infiltration and water-holding capacity of soils can be adversely affected by activities such as deforestation, soil erosion, and improper land use practices, which can increase the likelihood of flash floods and reduce water quality {2.2.1}.

A.3.2. Land and environmental degradation, pollution, land use changes, water scarcity, rural exodus and urbanisation, climate change, and dietary change lie behind the current levels of food insecurity in the Mediterranean {2.3.1}. There are large disparities between regions, with a significant gap between the northern, southern and eastern Mediterranean. Population growth and conflict in some countries increase food insecurity. Climate change presents a significant threat to agricultural productivity, especially in arid and semi-arid regions. Decrease in crop yields, caused by reduced water availability and heat stress, is likely to affect staple crops such as olives, grapes, fruits, cereals, and vegetables. Levels of projected changes vary depending on countries, scenarios and crops, ranging from –80% for sunflowers in Spain and +26% for olives across the entire Mediterranean Basin (*medium confidence*). Agricultural land can be lost due to coastal water, soil salinisation and desertification {2.3.2}. The livestock sector is expected to suffer the negative effects of heat stress, limited feed resources, and deteriorating health and productivity. Climate change also impacts fisheries and aquaculture, resulting in the regional eradication of significant aquatic taxa {2.3.1.1} and modification of species distribution {1.2}. Furthermore, industrialisation and urbanisation have significantly transformed the Mediterranean agricultural sector. This transformation has been exacerbated by various factors, including a shift towards modern lifestyles, increased food demand and increased international trade. The region is subject to significant impacts from changes in land

use {2.3.1}. Food security concerns in the region are further aggravated by the compounding challenges arising from conflicts such as the Russo-Ukrainian War, and the region's significant reliance on food imports. The potential consequences of disturbances in the food and fertiliser industries, in conjunction with the impacts of climate change, can be significant in terms of both the availability and accessibility of food {2.3.1.3}.

A.3.3. **The main drivers of change affecting energy production and demand are primarily not climate-related (population growth, lifestyle changes, industrialisation, and mitigation policy planning)** {2.4.1}. Climate change through increased temperatures marginally affects solar energy production (less than 2% decrease for global warming levels up to 3°C) (*low confidence*) {1.2; 2.4.1.1}. Regarding wind energy, projected wind speed decline affects wind energy production (up to 8% decrease for global warming levels of up to 3°C) (*low confidence*) {1.2}. Hydropower and thermo-electric production, including nuclear, is expected to decline due to decreased streamflow and increased water temperature, leading to a 10 to 15% decrease in thermopower by 2050 in the highest emissions scenario (*high confidence*) {1.2; 2.4.1.1}. Nuclear power plants situated along the coast are exposed to the potential impact of rising sea levels and flooding caused by extreme weather events. Quantification of global warming impacts on future energy demand is still highly uncertain but non-climatic drivers (e.g. population growth, urbanisation and modernisation) suggest a decrease of 10 to 23%e by 2040 compared to 2015 in the northern Mediterranean and an increase of 55 to 118% in 2040 compared to 2015 in the MENA countries {1.2; 2.4.1.2; 2.4.1.3; 2.4.1.4}.

A.3.4. **Climate change has major impacts on dryland ecosystems in the Mediterranean region, including vegetation productivity, biodiversity, and the stability and northward expansion of semi-arid regions.** The coupled effect of warming and drought increasing aridity is related to the decrease in the provision of several terrestrial ecosystem services such as soil conservation, water storing capacity, timber, mushrooms and food production, tourism and recreation, biodiversity and carbon storage. Furthermore, climate change increases the vulnerability of ecosystems towards diverse forms of disturbances, such as wildfires, pests, and diseases, etc. {2.5.1.1}.

A.3.5. Conjunctural drivers of change, such as recent conflicts and pandemics have suddenly negatively impacted the WEFE nexus and its hierarchical constituents, as well as the SDG indicators {4.1}.

B. Cascading impact of drivers of change through the nexus components

The change in WEFE components due to climatic and non-climatic drivers can affect the relevance of adaptation and mitigation measures at various temporal and spatial scales. The complex web of interactions between WEFE components can first result in cascading effects through which changes in one element from drivers of change result in changes in the other WEFE components, in turn generating multiple loops and feedback paths. Sustaining healthy ecosystems needs to be at the heart of interventions, since degraded ecosystems cannot provide their associated ecosystem services, hampering water, food and energy security.

B.1. Cascading from the water pillar (**Figure SPM2**)

B.1.1. The generally negative change in the water component causes an almost direct negative change in all food access and availability indicators as the water and food pillars are significantly correlated *(high confidence*) {2.2.2; 2.3.1.1}. Water scarcity reduces agricultural yields, and the agricultural sector, which is a significant water consumer in the region, is facing mounting challenges in obtaining adequate water resources for irrigation purposes {2.2.2; 2.3.1}. Actions seeking to increase water availability for irrigation using groundwater can lead to sea water intrusion and salinisation, reducing water quality and availability and further degrading ecosystems. The energy required to pump this water may contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy available for other purposes. Actions seeking to increase water availability for irrigation using treated wastewater contribute to reducing pollution and can provide fertilisers that increase food availability, but compete with other energy uses {2.2.2}.

B.1.2. The projected declines in streamflow and increases in water temperature may lead to a strong decline in hydropower and thermoelectric power usable capacity in the Mediterranean (–2.5 to –7.0% for hydropower and from –10 to –15% for thermoelectric power in 2050s) (*high confidence*). The potential CO_2 emissions reduction from decreased use of nuclear (low-CO_2 emissions) or fossil fuel (large-CO_2 emissions) thermoelectric production depends on the technologies used {2.2.2; 2.4.1.1}.

B.1.3. Changes in the hydrological cycle and water quality due to pressure from climatic and non-climatic drivers significantly impact the structure and functioning of wetlands and riparian ecosystems, which are recognised as biodiversity hotspots in the Mediterranean (*high confidence*). These changes cause a loss of habitat for aquatic biota, rich and dynamic riparian plant communities, and waterbirds, and impact important migratory corridors and foraging hotspots. {2.2.2; 2.5.1.1}.

B.2. Cascading from the food pillar (**Figure SPM2**)

B.2.1. To address the impacts of the drivers of change on food security, actions aimed at increasing agricultural yield through business-as-usual responses linked to agricultural intensification and industrialisation can negatively impact ecosystem health through salinisation or changes in land use (*high confidence*) {2.3.2; 2.3.3}. Increased irrigation, as the main strategy for boosting crop productivity in the Mediterranean, can have a high cost in terms of water use and water pollution (e.g. nitrate leaching and salinization of over-exploited aquifers) (*high confidence*) {2.3.2.; 2.3.3; 3.2.2}. The contamination of water bodies by industrial and agricultural activities results in a decline in water quality, making it unfit for human consumption and detrimental to the well-being of ecosystems. Additionally, the projected increase in irrigation crop requirements under climate change scenarios can exacerbate existing competition for water resources between sectors (*medium confidence*) {2.3.2}. Industrialisation of agriculture leads to ecological deterioration, characterised by deforestation, amplified emissions of greenhouse gases, escalated energy consumption, and augmented water and fertiliser usage. The implementation of intensification techniques frequently results in agricultural land abandonment and a shift towards the cultivation of annual crops and monocultures, thereby affecting ecological sustainability and posing potential threats to biodiversity and

agrobiodiversity. The decrease in agrobiodiversity poses an additional threat to the robustness of agricultural systems and traditional Mediterranean cuisine (*high confidence*) {2.3.1}.

B.2.2. Increased consumption of animal-based products due to population growth and lifestyle changes is responsible for an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and the disruption of local and regional nitrogen cycles, causing relevant impacts on ecosystem health (*high confidence*). Addressing this challenge by increasing unsustainable production and not targeting consumption behaviour leads to the same cascading effects as further agricultural industrialisation, with impacts on the water and ecosystems components {2.3.3}. The link with the energy component is the growing need for energy for food production, with further detrimental impacts if fossil fuels are the source of energy production, and increasing CO_2 emissions with decreasing adherence to the Mediterranean diet {2.3.2; 2.3.3}.

B.3. Cascading from the energy pillar (**Figure SPM2**)

B.3.1. Promotion of renewable energy to address the impacts of the drivers of change on the energy component can lead to land competition. The land requirements necessary in the Mediterranean region to fulfil 100% of current primary energy use are lower than 10% for hydropower, solar photovoltaics and wind, while for biomass, spatial requirements already exceed 100%. The spatial requirements for nuclear or natural gas never exceed 0.7%. With energy demand in MENA countries expected to double by 2040 compared to 2015, the fraction of land dedicated to energy production could reach over 10% of total land, with risks in terms of land degradation and biodiversity loss, while it could also conflict with food production and negatively impact food availability *(medium confidence)* {2.4.2}. Spatial planning and reduction in demand could help avoid these potential trade-offs.

B.3.2. Increasing energy production involves more water use. In Europe, water withdrawals for energy production are on average similar to those for agricultural irrigation {2.4.2}. In the MENA region, the share dedicated to irrigation is much higher (80%). However, this should be put into perspective with the water scarcity in these countries. Only a small fraction is consumed (6% for EU countries with large disparities between countries), the remainder being returned to the hydrological system. However, the energy sector remains an important part of withdrawals, negatively affecting water availability and competing for water with food {2.4.2}. Impacts on ecosystems due to excessive water withdrawals are also considerable. The Mediterranean region's dependence on power generation methods that require significant amounts of water, such as hydroelectric, thermal, and nuclear plants, therefore exposes it to the risk of reduced water availability and difficulties in managing water resources due to the effects of climate change.

B.3.3. Energy is a crucial input (upstream) in food processing and fertiliser production. If no changes are introduced to agricultural practices, the potential reduction in fertilisers will influence agricultural production by introducing lower yields into current monocropping agricultural systems. Consequently, a smaller quantity of farm products would be available to the food processing industry, leading to a reduction in market supply and a potential increase in prices {5.1.4}. Any increase in energy prices can also result in an increase in food prices, limiting access to food for the poorest populations.

B.4. Cascading from the ecosystem pillar (**Figure SPM2**)

B.4.1. The impact of climate change on ecosystem health can reduce the productivity of ecosystems and diversity at all levels, from intraspecific to landscape level. The degradation or depletion of ecosystems reduces the provisioning (water, food, biomass) and regulating (water quality, storm protection, carbon sequestration) ecosystem services provided by healthy ecosystems. In the case of water, climate and environmental changes combined with heightened concentrations of pollutants in aquatic environments could potentially result in a reduction in the quality of water, and a rise in sediment accumulation. Nevertheless, the effects are intricate and multifaceted, and not all ecosystems are affected equally. It is important to note that certain changes in climatic conditions may even lead to the enhancement of ecosystem services in specific instances {2.5.2}.

B.4.2. The reduction in biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems negatively affects the maintenance of soil structure and fertility, decomposition, remineralisation, and recycling processes, pollination, seed dispersal, and pest and disease control, which subsequently negatively impacts food availability {2.5.2}.

B.4.3. Changes in ecosystems, such as deforestation or alterations in water availability, may impact the accessibility and durability of energy resources, thereby causing potential impacts on the production and provision of renewable energy sources such as biomass and hydropower {2.5.2}.

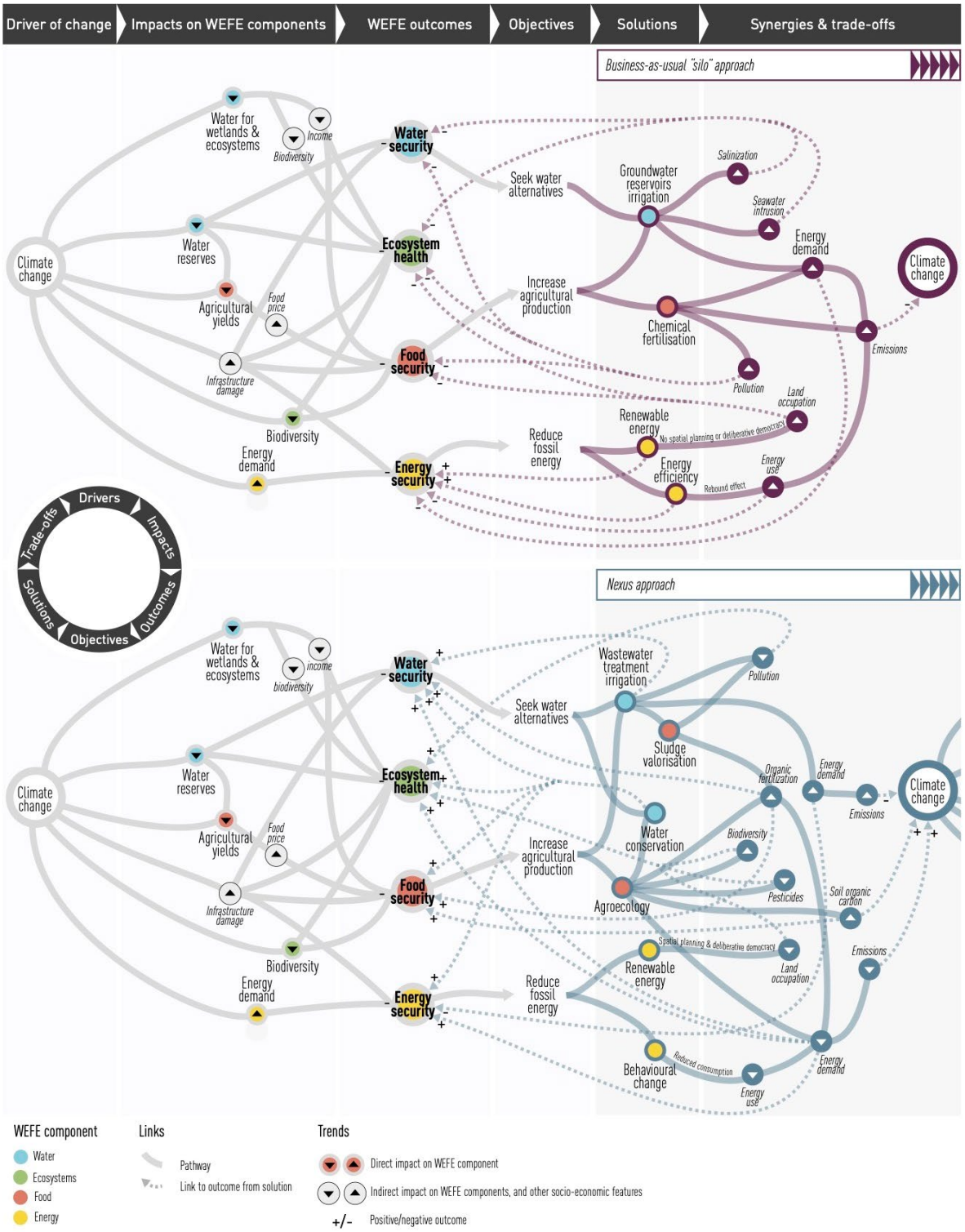


Figure SPM2 |Impacts, interactions and cascading effects on the WEFE outcomes of drivers of change and solutions. Climate change impacts the WEFE components. Policymakers need to find solutions to achieve water, food, energy security, and ecosystem health. Solutions developed following a silo-approach may reinforce the trade-offs, negatively impacting WEFE outcomes and increasing climate change. By integrating complexity, a nexus approach can significantly reduce impacts and promote positive WEFE outcomes.

B.5. Adaptation and mitigation solutions

Adaptation measures focusing on a single societal goal and one WEFE component can result in negative trade-offs, leading to maladaptation. In agricultural systems, this is partly due to adaptation pursuing a single goal, i.e. maximising short-term food production, which often means intensive agriculture, detrimental for soils and biodiversity. In the forestry sector, adaptation focusing on single societal goals, such as the spread of non-native tree species, can lead to higher fire risk (*medium confidence*). Integrated adaptation solutions are needed to address security issues, considering that mitigation consequences of the nexus approach can result from potential synergies and trade-offs derived from the interconnections between WEFE components.

B.5.1. A nexus approach to adaptation and mitigation actions promotes synergies between the WEFE components and minimises potential trade-offs. This is clear in the Mediterranean region as climate and environmental change negatively affects WEFE components both separately and through the cascading impacts of the drivers of change (*high confidence*). Silo approaches include poor and unsustainable irrigation practices leading to increased soil salinity and overall land degradation, or overexploitation of rangelands leading to soil erosion and land degradation (*high confidence*). Nexus approaches can include new irrigation techniques or returning to traditional ones, reuse of treated wastewater or desalinated water using renewable energy, agrivoltaics without land competition, or agroecological practices, such as agroforestry, intercropping and cover crops, which can reduce freshwater consumption, increase water conservation and reduce energy footprint while attempting to maximise local food production and protect ecosystems {3.2.1; 3.2.2}.

B.5.2. Adaptation and mitigation solutions are usually distinguished on a gradient of two main types: incremental and transformative (**Figure SPM3**). They include a variety of options, such as ecosystem-based approaches (including Nature-based Solutions, NbS), and technological and social innovation, including behavioural changes targeting consumption and lifestyle patterns, that can effectively address interrelated WEFE security issues and SDGs {3.2} (**Figure SPM4**). NbS include a set of actions inspired and supported by nature that simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits, and help build resilience {3.2.2.1}. NbS strategies involve the implementation of blue and/or green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs and walls, urban grasslands and meadows, horticultural gardens, vegetated filter strips, swales, constructed and natural (or rewilded) wetlands and ponds). Early warning systems, climate services and risk management approaches have also shown broad applicability across various sectors in the Mediterranean and would benefit from incorporating an integrated nexus approach. Decision support tools, online platforms, and other products co-developed with users can provide information and services to support their decision-making {3.2.3.1}. Policies and actions that operate across the food system can have significant potential to adapt to climate change and reduce emissions, among other benefits (3.2.2; 3.2.3; *high confidence*). These involve promoting sustainable ecosystem and forest management that includes changes in agricultural and livestock systems to increase carbon storage in soils (e.g. agroecological approaches such as agroforestry or well-managed extensive livestock systems) and simultaneously targeting behavioural change, including reducing food loss and waste or influencing dietary choices (e.g. reducing overall meat consumption). They can thereby enable more sustainable land use management, enhance food security, reduce water use, water contamination and soil degradation, and promote biodiversity conservation.

B.5.3 There are a large variety of implemented solutions at various spatial scales, with uneven distribution across the whole Mediterranean basin (**Figure SPM4**). Social options based on behavioural change show the highest positive effect on all four pillars of the nexus, with a robust amount of evidence. In general, green options, such as Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and agroecological management practices, have positive impacts on the four pillars and are the most transformative (**Figure SPM3**), although further evidence is needed to assess specific NbS {3.2.3}. More evidence is required to assess the effect of adaptation options related to governance and institutions, in particular on policies for water pricing and limiting and reducing water use {5.1.4}. Some first attempts have shown solely positive effects on the four pillars. Options related to water use and management are the most complex and controversial, because they can have negative impacts on other pillars, but this negative effect seems low and requires better analysis {3.2.3}.

B.5.4. Drivers of change are evolving at a fast pace with strong impacts WEFE components, potentially jeopardising the resilience of already implemented actions {2.2.1, 2.3.1; 2.4.1; 2.5.1}. A modelling-based nexus assessment based on different climate, socio-economic and demographic change scenarios using different disciplines helps understand the resilience level of sustainable development options and avoid maladaptation and unanticipated effects {1.3.2; 3.3.2}. However, nexus modelling requires access to long-term series of data and open platforms {3.3.2}. It is therefore advisable to consider changes in system variables when designing integrated policies.

B.5.5. Transformative adaptation relies more on social innovation and requires increasing human inputs and system re-organisation, but it can be the most appropriate response to climate change and other drivers of change, when the severity of the expected impacts is particularly high or when current incremental adaptation options are reaching their limits in terms of implementation and functionality {3.1}. Adaptation and mitigation solutions can range from those more related to ecological and consumption-reducing behaviours to those more related to scientific and technological innovation {3.2}. Science and technology are part of the solution but require a broad understanding and societal engagement to achieve transformation through behavioural change. The varying levels of engagement of, and trust in, different stakeholders, including civil society, in the Mediterranean region, hampers the development of a nexus approach that demands a high level of cooperation and mutual trust {3.3}. Implementation of new technologies requires increasing participation and considering social concerns to avoid maladaptation.

B.5.6. Adoption and implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures can be undermined by various financial, scientific, geographic and institutional challenges. The implementation of solutions that take into account the nexus can be more cost-effective and cost-efficient than other solutions, however this requires considerable funds in the initial stages. Financing such approaches can be further hindered since WEFE programmes have many important socially oriented components that are typically of limited commercial value and potential {3.4.1}. Many northern Mediterranean countries are more likely and more financially ready to support such initiatives, whereas southern and eastern Mediterranean countries could require international support and commitment in the form of financial or scientific support to increase the adoption of the new approaches that will lead, in the long term, to the sustainability of the entire

Mediterranean {3.4.4}. Indeed, technology implementation in southern countries still lacks adequate financing and appropriate policies {3.4.4}.

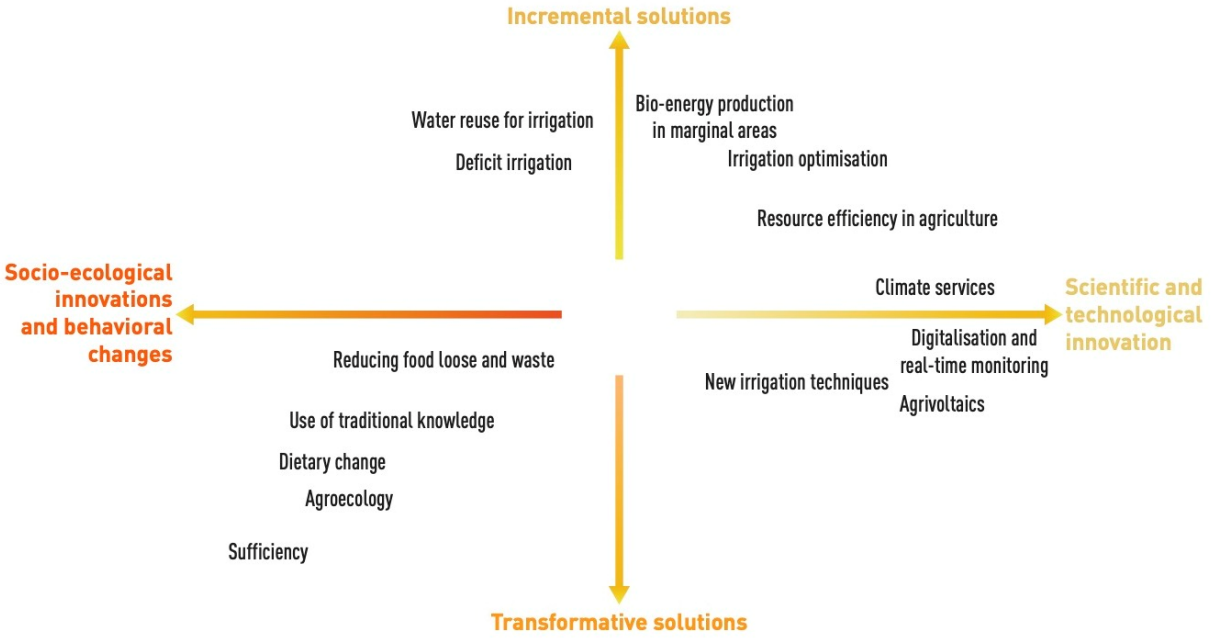


Figure SPM3 | Different gradients of possible adaptation and mitigation solutions for WEFE components used in the Mediterranean region. Adaptation and mitigation solutions range from incremental to transformative, and from scientific and technological innovation to socio-ecological innovations and behavioural change.

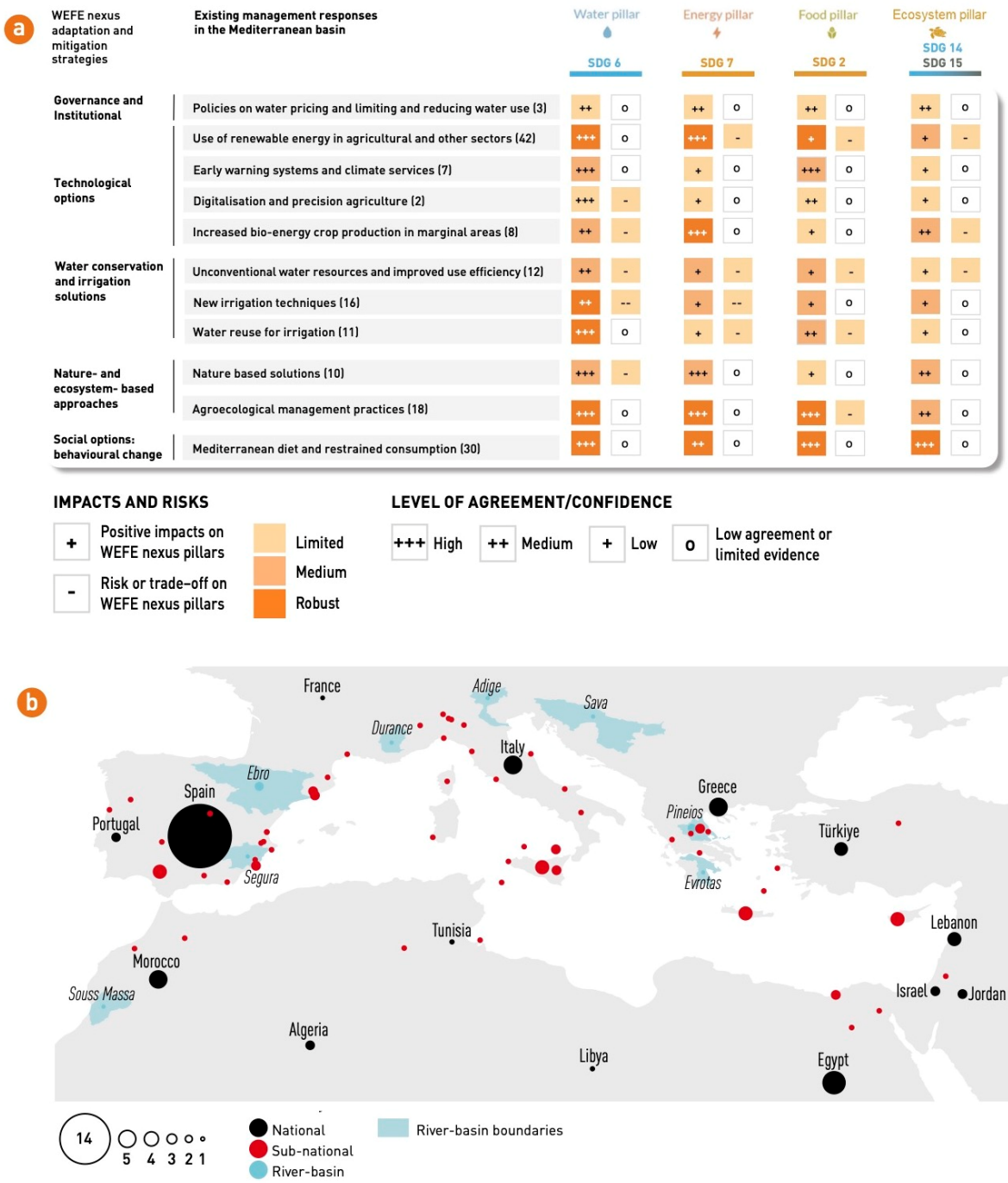


Figure SPM4 | (a) Assessment of the main impacts and trade-offs of the WEFE nexus adaptation and mitigation solutions implemented in the Mediterranean countries. The link is made to the SDGs through the nexus pillars. The numbers in brackets are the number of articles used for assessing each solution. The amount of evidence is quantified by the number of reviewed articles (given by numbers in brackets and categorised as limited in red, medium in orange and robust in green), while the degree of agreement measures the consensus between the articles (o for low agreement or limited evidence, + for low level of agreement/evidence, ++ for medium and +++ for high). This table does not review all possible solutions, but those implemented in the Mediterranean, reported in the scientific literature, and assessed in the report. **(b) Spatial distribution of examined case studies.**

C. From the nexus concept to its implementation for sustainable development

C.1. Data, indicators and assessments

C.1.1. **Existing approaches used to tackle sustainability challenges in the WEFE sectors of the Mediterranean region have adopted fragmented planning and management frameworks that lack sufficient consideration of the intricate interconnections between these resource systems to address sustainability challenges in the Mediterranean *(high confidence)* {4.2}**. The WEFE nexus approach offers an integrated planning, cross-sectoral cooperation, and decision-making framework to analyse the interactions between the WEFE components in the Mediterranean region and identify trade-offs and co-benefits that might be overlooked in single-sector approaches *(high confidence)* {4.2}. The WEFE nexus approach better identifies potential synergies or conflicts between sector policies because it provides a framework in which the role of ecosystem services is more explicit. The sustainable use of ecosystems and conservation of biodiversity are essential pillars for successfully achieving sectoral development goals in the Mediterranean region {4.2}.

C.1.2. **The lack of complete and disaggregated data on the components of the WEFE nexus together with other issues related to data quality and accuracy, and the unwillingness of authorities to make certain types of required data available to researchers and other stakeholders are a major barrier to wider adoption and application of the WEFE nexus in the Mediterranean region** {3.4; 4.2; 4.4}. The complexity and multi-disciplinary nature of the nexus means that the models and methods to assess it and provide results for the full spectrum of its benefits need to cover many different scientific fields. In addition, data are not typically collected or available on a long-term basis, meaning that for many cases, original data is necessary to showcase the benefits of WEFE approaches compared to other solutions {3.4.2}. Nevertheless, currently available data have been key to the creation of indicators for nexus indexes specific to the Mediterranean region. Monitoring tools and spatial indicators, generally related to multiple SDGs, have been developed to describe the national and local characteristics of food-water-energy-ecosystem interdependencies in the Mediterranean region, highlighting their high heterogeneity both within countries and between countries, and making it possible for Mediterranean countries to be ranked {4.3}.

C.2. Governance and stakeholder engagement

C.2.1. **Governance for the WEFE nexus requires strengthened connections and better management through coordination, integration, coherence, deliberation and collaboration between actors and their respective strategies and actions, rather than the creation of new institutions {5.2}.** To effectively utilise the WEFE nexus approach for sustainable development, key principles must be followed, including understanding the interconnections between resources within a system, developing new technologies for innovative solutions and roadmaps for their broad use throughout the region, facilitating social innovation and deliberative approaches, and ensuring coordination across sectors and stakeholders {4.2}. Deliberative processes that work well for: 1) values-driven dilemmas; 2) complex problems that require trade-offs; and 3) long-term issues that go beyond the short-term incentives of electoral cycles can contribute to WEFE nexus management {5.2.5}. WEFE governance is a

polycentric system, with diverse and varying decision centres or actions within sectors, which requires identifying independent and overlapping key state and non-state actors – governments (acting through different ministries and public institutions), subnational (local and regional) authorities, civil society organisations, private sector, citizen groups, funders, multilateral and regional organisations (e.g. FAO, Plan Bleu, UfM, UNECE, etc.), national and international research institutions (AARINENA, CIHEAM, CMI, CNRS, , European Commission's Joint Research Centre, GWP-Med, IRD, etc.), and national and International Development Agencies (e.g. ENABEL, GIZ, USAID, SIDA, etc.) {5.2.1} (**Figure SPM5**).

C.2.2. Policies aimed at achieving sustainable development goals require systemic approaches and flexible forms of governance (i.e. the removal of institutional, technical, regulatory and economic barriers), in order to facilitate interdependencies across sustainability challenges and favour holistic approaches {4.2}. A pioneer of the WEFE concept at policy level is the IWRM framework designed to improve water resources management {4.2.; 5.1.1.}. Involvement of stakeholders from the quadruple helix (public administrations, academia, private sector and civil society) in the development and implementation of nexus approaches is crucial to providing multiple perspectives, ensuring political legitimacy and promoting dialogue on the sustainability of WEFE components {4.2}. Deliberative democracy instruments, such as citizen assemblies, can increase the legitimacy of political decisions and actions, enhance trust, and provide useful information on people's preferences and what trade-offs they are ready to accept {5.2.5}. Involving intra-Mediterranean transnational collaboration is needed to face the climate emergency and promote equitable sharing of the risks and burdens associated with sustainable development {5.3.3}.

C.3. The concept-to-implementation gap

A concept-to-implementation gap has been identified in the Mediterranean context, meaning that the current situation is not satisfactory for the WEFE nexus with regard to nexus approach expectations.

C.3.1. **Political and social conditions within Mediterranean countries involve varying levels of WEFE nexus policy implementation.** The practical implementation of WEFE nexus policies has been limited and lacks coordination among the different levels of managing authorities, between sectoral departments, political actors, and stakeholders. EU countries have a common policy framework, which is not the case for MENA countries. Most policy initiatives on the WEFE nexus in Mediterranean countries have focused on assessments and analyses, reaffirming the importance of the concept. However, the implementation of such an approach is still lacking, and several measures are still designed in "silos" {5.1.1; 4.3} (**Figure SPM5**). Disjointed legal frameworks, marked by diverse and frequently conflicting laws, particularly in relation to transboundary resources, can be seen on both sides of the Mediterranean Basin. When deciding on policies to implement, it is therefore beneficial to thoughtfully consider potential cross-sectoral implications {5.1.1; 5.1.3}.

C.3.2. **The limited effective implementation of WEFE nexus approaches in the region is attributed to an insufficient understanding of nexus trade-offs within science-policy-stakeholder interactions, to insufficient incentives {4.4}, limited vision, knowledge, development and investment, as well as the lack of solid empirical evidence regarding the potential benefits of a WEFE nexus approach {4.2}**. Universities and research organisations serve as knowledge generators and brokers, and could integrate nexus thinking and organise policy dialogue into

their research agendas and curricula {5.2.3}. Another key challenge is related to the costs of nexus approaches, which may be higher in the short term than those of silo approaches, due to the information, expertise, time, coordination and financial resources required {4.2}.

C.3.3. **A series of actions and interventions are needed to build institutional capacities; enhance funding mechanisms; support intra-regional dialogue between implementers of the nexus approach, policymakers, and the general public; and pilot nexus approaches through modelling and assessment {5.3}**. Public-private partnerships are considered effective for funding the WEFE nexus and improving capacity building and awareness of involved partners {5.3.3}. Approaches that integrate both environmental sustainability and considerations of local, regional and global governance, together with economic factors, are more likely to succeed in achieving real-world applicability {4.2}. WEFE nexus governance should promote transparency, participation, and accountability through dialogue and cooperation among Mediterranean countries, supplemented by collaboration with international organisations and deliberative processes involving citizens {5.1.1; 5.1.2; 5.1.5; 5.2.5} (**Figure SPM5**).

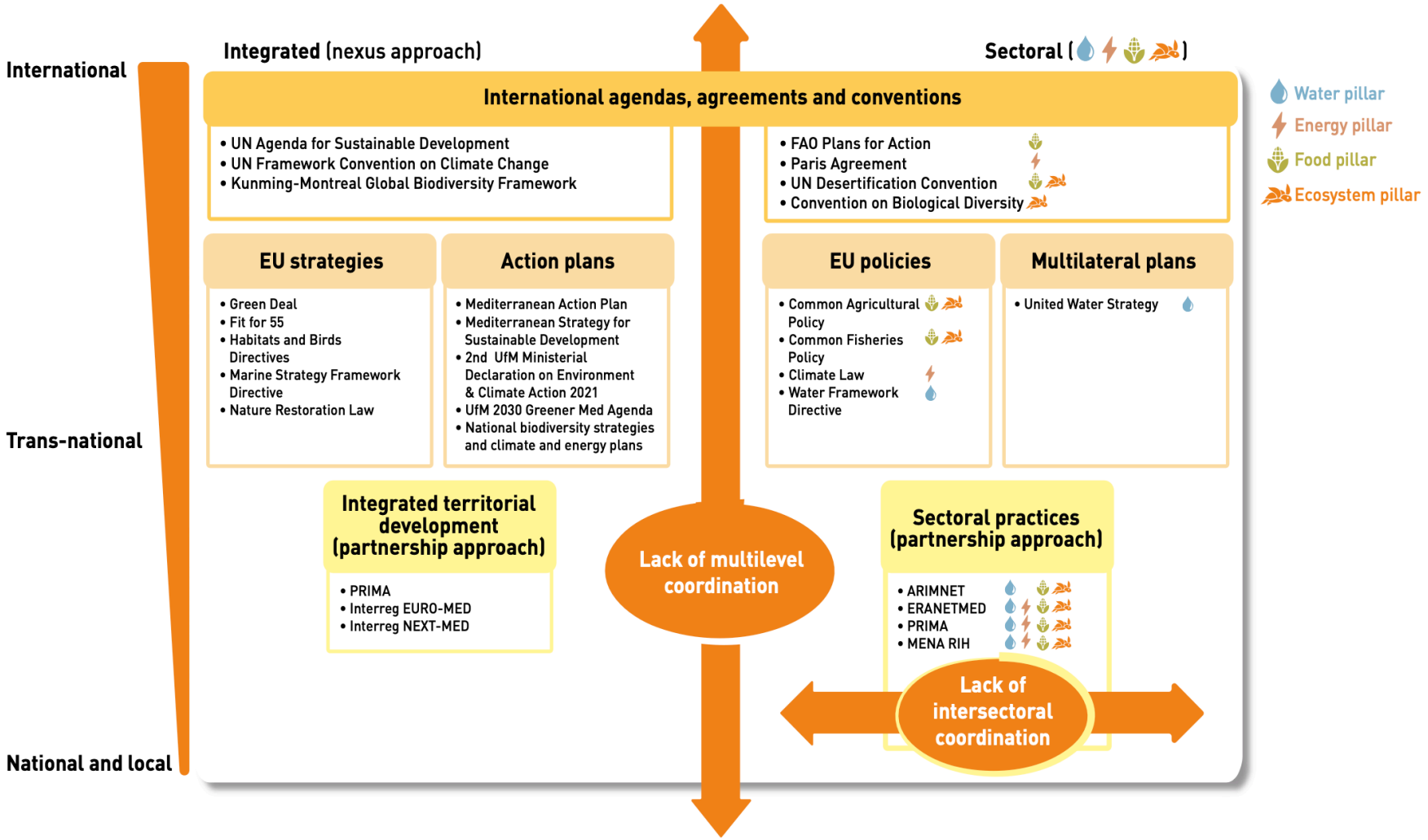


Figure SPM5 | Multi-level integrated and sectoral policies on the WEFE nexus in the Mediterranean (see {5.3.1; 5.3.3} for AIMNET, ERANETMED, MENA RIH and PRIMA programmes description).

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[Draft Decision IG.27/11

Marine Pollution from Ships: Revision of the Terms of Reference of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL in the Mediterranean Sea (MENELAS) and Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea

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

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

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

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Recalling Article 6 and Article 12 of the Barcelona Convention and Article 6 of the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol),

Recalling also Decision IG.21/9 of the 18th Meeting of Contracting Parties (COP18, Istanbul, Türkiye, December 2013), by which the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL in the Mediterranean Sea (MENELAS) was formally established with the aim of facilitating cooperation among law enforcement officials in the region to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the MARPOL Convention,

Recognizing the continued relevance and necessity of MENELAS in supporting regional efforts to combat illicit ship-source pollution and to enhance compliance with international and regional maritime environmental obligations,

Acknowledging the evolving nature of operational challenges, technological developments, and legal frameworks related to the detection, investigation, and prosecution of violations of MARPOL provisions in the Mediterranean Sea,

Taking into account the outcomes and recommendations of the MENELAS meetings held under the auspices of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), as well as the evaluation of the implementation of the MENELAS Terms of Reference,

Appreciating the support provided by REMPEC as the Secretariat of MENELAS and its efforts in fostering cooperation, capacity-building, and information exchange among Contracting Parties,

Recalling further Decision IG.25/16 of the 22nd Meeting of Contracting Parties (COP 22, Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021) on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022–2031),

Noting with appreciation the outcomes of the 16th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, held in Malta from 13 to 15 May 2025, which endorsed the "Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea",

Welcoming the adoption by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, including its targets towards achieving net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping close to 2050,

Recognizing the critical role of the Mediterranean region in global maritime transport and the particular vulnerability of the Mediterranean Sea to climate change impacts,

Acknowledging the urgent need for coordinated action at regional level to support the decarbonization of the maritime sector, reduce air pollution from ships, and contribute to global efforts to address climate change,

Affirming the commitment of the Contracting Parties to support the transition to low-carbon and energy-efficient shipping through the full and timely implementation of MARPOL Annex VI and other relevant international instruments,

1. *Adopt* the revised Terms of Reference of MENELAS, set out in Annex I to the present Decision, superseding the Terms of Reference approved by Decision IG.21/9;

2. *Mandate* REMPEC, as the Secretariat of MENELAS, to facilitate the implementation of the revised Terms of Reference and to continue providing support to the Network, including through the organization of regular meetings, coordination of joint activities, and maintenance of the MENELAS information system;

3. *Encourage* all Contracting Parties to actively participate in MENELAS and to designate appropriate national focal points and law enforcement officials to contribute to the work of the Network;

4. *Invite* Contracting Parties to provide financial and in-kind support for the effective functioning of MENELAS, including for the implementation of joint operational activities and capacity-building initiatives;

5. *Request* the Secretariat (REMPEC) to report on the progress of MENELAS implementation and the application of its revised Terms of Reference to the meetings of the MAP Focal Points and to future Meetings of the Contracting Parties;

6. *Adopt* the "Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea" set out in Annex II to the present Decision and as endorsed by the 16th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC);

7. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures, at the national and regional levels, for the effective and coordinated implementation of the Roadmap, in line with the objectives and priorities of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022–2031);

8. *Request* the Secretariat (REMPEC), in cooperation with the relevant MAP Components and in consultation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), to provide technical support to Contracting Parties, upon their request, for the implementation of the Roadmap, including capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, and transfer of environmentally sound maritime technologies;

9. *Request* the Secretariat (REMPEC) to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Roadmap, and to integrate relevant activities into its biennial Programme of Work, in line with its mandate;

10. *Encourage* the Contracting Parties to report on the implementation of the Roadmap through existing mechanisms under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, including through the Barcelona Convention Reporting System and relevant REMPEC reporting processes;

11. *Invite* relevant regional and international organisations, financial institutions and stakeholders, including the private sector, to support the implementation of the Roadmap through technical assistance, capacity-building, resource mobilisation, and promotion of innovative and environmentally sound maritime technologies;

12. *Request* the Secretariat (REMPEC) to report on the implementation of the "Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea", including progress made, challenges encountered, and recommendations for further action, for consideration by the Meetings of the REMPEC Focal Points and subsequent Meetings of the Contracting Parties.

]

ANNEX I

Revised Terms of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS)

Revised Terms of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention

(MENELAS)

Background

1. The Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL (MENELAS) is a network of representatives of all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

2. The function of MENELAS is to enhance enforcement and prosecution of MARPOL maritime pollution offences aiming to prevent and minimize pollution from ships and installations in the Mediterranean Sea.

3. MENELAS was set up in 2013 through Decision IG.21/9 adopted during the 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to fulfill their commitment to "*-take all necessary measures to make the Mediterranean a clean, healthy, and productive sea with conserved biodiversity and ecosystems (...)*

> *By ensuring, in view of the predicted increase in maritime traffic, the continuous strengthening of capacities and resources to prevent and respond to marine pollution used by shipping, in particular through judicial and operational cooperation*".

Composition

4. Each Contracting Party should nominate a Designated Representative (DR) with professional experience in MARPOL related violations. The DR should be a person who has experience in investigations in case of casualties in terms of the MARPOL Convention and/or investigation bodies established at national level in case of illegal discharges and prosecution of MARPOL violations.

5. It is the duty of the DR to:

a. disseminate the information received through MENELAS to the concerned national competent authorities (e.g.: coast guard function, port State control, customs, jurisdictions, prosecutor office, etc…);

b. forward any request formulated within these Terms of Reference received from another MENELAS member to the appropriate entity or individual in a position to answer the query;

c. update the country page of their country on the MENELAS website.

Scope of work

6. In accordance with article 6 of the Barcelona Convention and article 3 of its Prevention and Emergency Protocol, the overall objective of MENELAS is to facilitate cooperation between its members in order to improve the enforcement of the international regulations regarding discharges at sea from ships as laid down in the MARPOL Convention. Accordingly, its scope of work includes:

a. providing a strong regional platform whereby investigators and prosecutors work together with a view to identifying features, such as detection and investigation which lead to effective enforcement and ways of handling pollution offences from ships in a transboundary context, in accordance with international regulations regarding discharges at sea as laid down in the

MARPOL Convention;

b. enhancing information exchange of best practices and the results of the judicial proceedings on all MARPOL Annexes;

c. maintaining a database with enforcement cases on all MARPOL Annexes;

d. preparing and updating a Manual on Pollution Offences to support the detection of pollution offences, the collection of evidence, and the imposition of penalties;

e. assisting in exchanging information and experience with entities whose work contributes to an effective enforcement of MARPOL regulations (MoU on Port State Control) which could be invited to participate on an ad hoc basis to the meetings of MENELAS;

f. assisting members by addressing their needs for training or in facilitating the adoption of harmonized procedures or documents;

g. while availing of the resources available within the network, assisting with the peer review of the legal and procedural framework in place in a requesting country which will be beneficial not only to the requesting country but will also assist in familiarizing the participating countries with the legal framework in place in the requesting country;

h. considering the provision of technical ad hoc training according to the identified needs, including but not limited to reporting methodology, aerial observation and reporting of oil slicks, and investigation techniques on board a suspected ship;

i. cooperating and facilitating the technical exchange of experience with other similar regional networks; and

j. facilitating the organization of regular coordinated control operations, such as the OSCAR MED (Opération de Surveillance Coordonnée Aérienne des Rejets en Méditerranée).

7. MENELAS whose scope of work, relies on the high responsiveness of its members, shall not replace the official national or international procedures which have to be strictly adhered to in order to successfully conclude violation cases. In that sense MENELAS should act as a precursor to such official requests. Bearing in mind the limited time window during which elements of evidence of a possible violation could be gathered, it is important that the highest level of reactivity is ensured through the network.

Operation and organization of work

8. MENELAS shall hold at least a biannual meeting, provided that, should the need arise, the Chair may request for an extraordinary meeting in the biennium, and provided further that working groups established by MENELAS may carry out duties intersessionally.

9. MENELAS shall maintain a List of Actions for small and short-term tasks to be completed within a meeting cycle, taking especially into account national initiatives or proposals.

10. MENELAS shall consider, discuss and endorse any technical document to be used by the network which has been prepared by the working groups.

11. MENELAS shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair in accordance with the terms stipulated in

paragraph 15.

12. MENELAS shall report to the REMPEC Focal Points Meeting.

13. MENELAS shall ensure there is exchange of information in both directions with other Governing and Subsidiary Bodies of the Barcelona Convention, as required.

MENELAS Information System

14. To ensure prompt reactivity in accordance with paragraph 6, there shall be available direct access to a list of 24/7 contact points in the MENELAS members. The list shall be regularly disseminated to the 24/7 contact points and be available on the restricted area of the MENELAS information system.

15. REMPEC shall be responsible for the updating of the MENELAS information system.

16. This information system will be an online tool comprising of two main parts:

a. a public one where general information will be made available to the public in order to raise awareness on the problem of illicit discharges from ships at sea, the aim of the network, its participating and associate members, its activities and achievements. The public part may also contain an analytic database of the legislative framework and procedural requirements in each participating country related to the prosecution of illicit discharges offenders. Statistical data should be also available.

b. a restricted area used for participating members only, where any request for assistance could be posted. Besides this secured communication link, this area shall also contain relevant information on 24/7 contact points, post cases analysis in order to highlight elements of success or failure, “tips” for investigators such as illustrations of specific techniques/devices found during on board investigations, which could facilitate the identification of similar practices. The restricted area shall also contain the database referred to in paragraph 6(c).

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

17. Pursuant to paragraph 11, MENELAS shall elect among its members a Chair and Vice-Chair who shall hold office for a term of two years. They shall both be eligible for re-election for up to three further consecutive terms of office. In exceptional circumstances they may be re-elected for one additional consecutive term of office.

18. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected at the end of the last regular session in a calendar year and shall assume their functions at the beginning of the following calendar year.

19. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall not hail from the same country.

20. Member countries shall submit to REMPEC, which provides the necessary Secretariat support to MENELAS, communication containing the nomination of their candidate for the position of Chair and Vice-Chair.

21. REMPEC shall share with all members the information regarding nominated candidates for these positions, as and when received.

22. The information regarding nominated candidates shall include a brief summary of the reasons behind such nomination and a curriculum vitae of the nominated candidate.

23. If the Chair is absent from a session, or any part thereof, the Vice-Chair shall preside. If the Chair,

for any reason, is unable to complete the term of office, the Vice-Chair shall act as Chair pending the election of a new Chair.

24. The provisional agenda for each meeting of MENELAS shall be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair. Such an agenda shall be communicated to all members at least two months prior to the meeting.

25. The Chair may declare a meeting open and permit debate to proceed when at least 25% of the members are present, either physically or virtually. The presence of at least 40% of the members shall be required for any decision to be taken.

26. The Chair shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting, direct the discussion and ensure the observance of these terms of reference. The Chair shall accord the right to speak, put questions to vote, and announce decisions resulting from voting.

27. The Chair, or the Vice-Chair acting as Chair, shall not vote.

28. The Chair shall also chair and coordinate any inter-sessional work that will be agreed upon by MENELAS.

ANNEX II

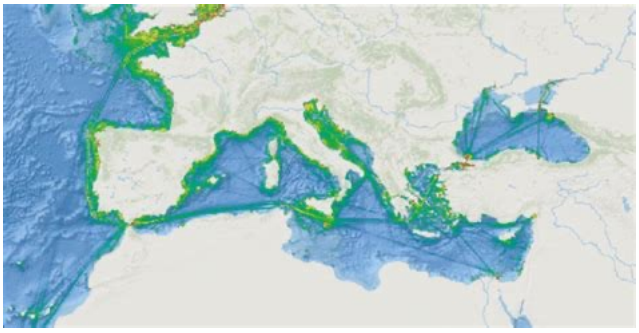
Draft Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea

DRAFT ROADMAP FOR TRANSITIONING TO LOW CARBON SHIPPING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1. The 2013 report[2] from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the Mediterranean as one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to the impacts of global warming. The 2019 Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (SoED)[3] concludes that the Mediterranean basin is affected by climate change at a pace well above global average, in particular, by more rapid warming of ambient air and sea surface in all seasons. Through the application of the Coastal Risk Index[4] (CRI-MED) for the Mediterranean (on 21 Mediterranean countries), coastal hot-spots are found to be predominantly located in the south-eastern Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean Sea is one of the busiest seas in the world, with 24% of the global fleet of ships calling ports or passing through the Mediterranean in 2019, including container ships, gas tankers and oil and chemical tankers representing 36.5%, 32.6%, and 27% of the word fleet, respectively.

2. Moreover, the Mediterranean is the second largest market globally (after the Caribbean) for cruising, accounting for 17.3% of worldwide cruises in 2019. Container port traffic development also shows a clear trend of rapid growth of the sector, which undoubtedly increases the environmental pressure and strengthens the need for a transition to a sustainable maritime sector. Furthermore, maritime traffic is steadily increasing adding environmental pressures, including rising CO_2 emissions.



Density map of ship traffic in the Mediterranean Sea, 2017 (source: www.researchgate.net)

3. Shipping contributes to 2.89% of global GHG emissions (IMO, 2020)[5]. As the regulatory body for international shipping, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is committed to reducing air emissions from the industry. The 2023 IMO GHG Strategy marks a significant milestone in the industry's transition towards zero-emission shipping by approximately 2050. Achieving this target requires a holistic, systematic, and transdisciplinary approach, incorporating a mix of strategies and active collaboration among stakeholders.

4. Adopting and enforcing appropriate regulations are crucial for the decarbonisation of the maritime industry. The IMO is working on adopting regulations for implementing the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy including GHG pricing to incentivise the transition to carbon-neutral energy and zero-emission technologies. Against this background, the EU has already introduced the ambitious “Fit for 55” package aiming for a 55% reduction in GHG emission by 2030 across all industrial sectors including a cap and trade system extended to shipping.

5. The unique characteristics and specificities of the Mediterranean region influence the shift to net-zero emission shipping. Economic and policy disparities between the Mediterranean coastal States that are EU Member States and those that are not EU Member States create challenges for adopting a unified strategy for net zero-emission shipping in the Mediterranean region. Furthermore, geopolitical instability in the Mediterranean region or adjacent regions, obstructs efforts to establish a coordinated approach to the transition. While the region's renewable energy resources hold significant potential to transform it into a green energy hub, working towards resolving geopolitical issues is essential to attract investors and

drive economic growth through job creation. The Mediterranean's strategic importance as a global trade and energy corridor enhances its potential to become a leading energy hub and a pivotal player in the energy transition. However, trying to overcome geopolitical instability and adopting a cohesive approach to maritime industry decarbonization are crucial for realizing this potential.

2 GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

2.1 The area to which the Roadmap applies is the area defined in Article 2 of the Protocol concerning Cooperation in preventing pollution from ships and, in cases of emergency, combatting pollution of the Mediterranean Sea.

3 PRESERVATION OF RIGHTS

3.1 The provisions of the Roadmap shall be without prejudice to stricter provisions regulating the management of GHG emissions from ships contained in other existing or future national, regional or international instruments or programmes, when considering existing best practices for addressing GHG emissions from ships in the Mediterranean region.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 The Roadmap will be guided by:

.1 the work of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, wherever possible towards achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and delivering on the SDGs (especially SDG 5 - Gender Equality, SDG 13 - Climate Action, and SDG 14 – Life Below Water) and the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast, particularly the ecological objectives related to non-indigenous species (EO2), contaminants (EO9), and marine litter (EO10);

.2 the initiatives taken by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention towards achieving Objective 4 – addressing climate change as a priority within the context of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)[6], in its updated version;

.3 the collaboration with all stakeholders of the Mediterranean region, with a specific focus on IMO and, as appropriate on EU, related regulatory instruments and institutions, with a view to encouraging more cohesive working, maximizing synergies and benefits for the Contracting Parties and effectiveness and enhancing impacts on the ground;

.4 the knowledge gained from the studies conducted and the guidelines developed on GHG emissions from ships by REMPEC as well as the achievements and lessons learnt through the implementation of the regional Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships 2022-2031[7];

.5 the prevention and precautionary principles approach when planning and undertaking activities to deliver the objectives of the Roadmap;

.6 the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) to the management of human activities in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment;

.7 the regional and sub-regional initiatives between countries to tackle GHG emissions from ships in the Mediterranean region where possible;

.8 the cooperation among relevant organisations and stakeholders operating within the Mediterranean to maximise synergies, wherever possible, and impacts on the ground, and encourage more cohesive and effective working;

.9 the work to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within the maritime sector; and

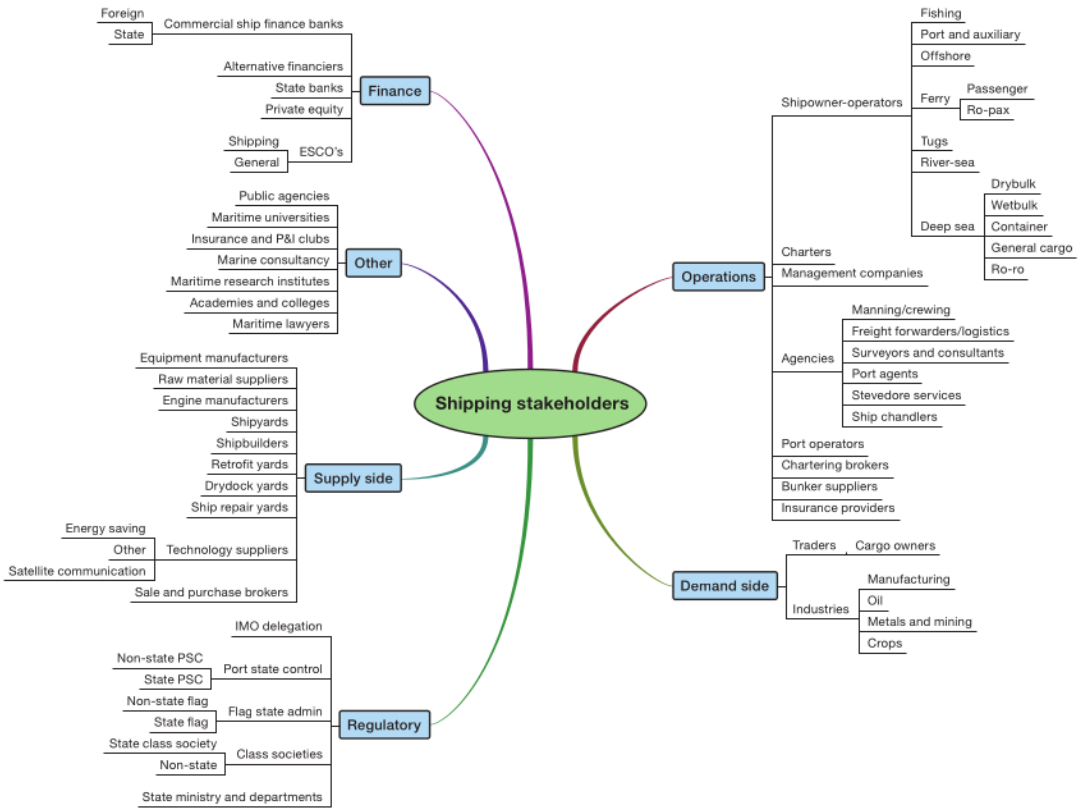
.10 the innovative solutions, wherever possible, to address the objectives of the Roadmap within the framework of any initiatives taken by IMO and UNEP/MAP.

5 APPLICATION

5.1 This Roadmap will address GHG emissions from ships and from the ship-shore interface, as appropriate in compliance with legal regulations aimed at contributing to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from ships and controlling greenhouse gas emissions from ships, in conformity with international law, under the aegis of United Nations specialized agencies, and in particular of the IMO, including but not limited to the international conventions dealing with maritime safety, notably the International Convention for the Safety of life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS) and the prevention of pollution from ships, notably the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and specifically its Annex VI, and the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention).

6 STAKEHOLDERS

6.1 It is well recognized that addressing the reduction of GHG emissions from ships at national level is linked to various Ministries, Government agencies or other institutions can be responsible for, or impacted by, national legislation to reduce GHG emissions from ships.



6.2 At national level, it is important to identify which maritime sectors and stakeholders are expected to play a role in the reduction of GHG emissions from ships That said, the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy identifies a level of ambition whereby the "*uptake of zero or near-zero GHG emission technologies, fuels and/or energy sources to represent at least 5%, striving for 10%, of the energy used by international shipping by 2030*". This and climate action by the European Union (EU), of which some Contracting Parties are also members, will increasingly impact maritime transport in the Mediterranean region as a whole and so there is an urgent need for Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to consider the challenges and opportunities from a regional perspective

6.3 The primary responsibility for achieving the objective of the Roadmap remains, in the main, with Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. Thus, the primary stakeholders for the implementation of the Roadmap, are Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention who can act both individually and as a group.

6.4 However to support their individual and collective efforts there must be collaboration coordination and collective efforts by all relevant stakeholders in the region. Considering the technical expertise required for the implementation of Roadmap in the framework of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, REMPEC, supported by the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention other MAP Components and other stakeholders will assist Contracting Parties to build consensus on various matters through the provision and coordination of technical support and providing a platform for regional or sub-regional cooperation.

7 OBJECTIVE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ROADMAP AND ACTION PLAN

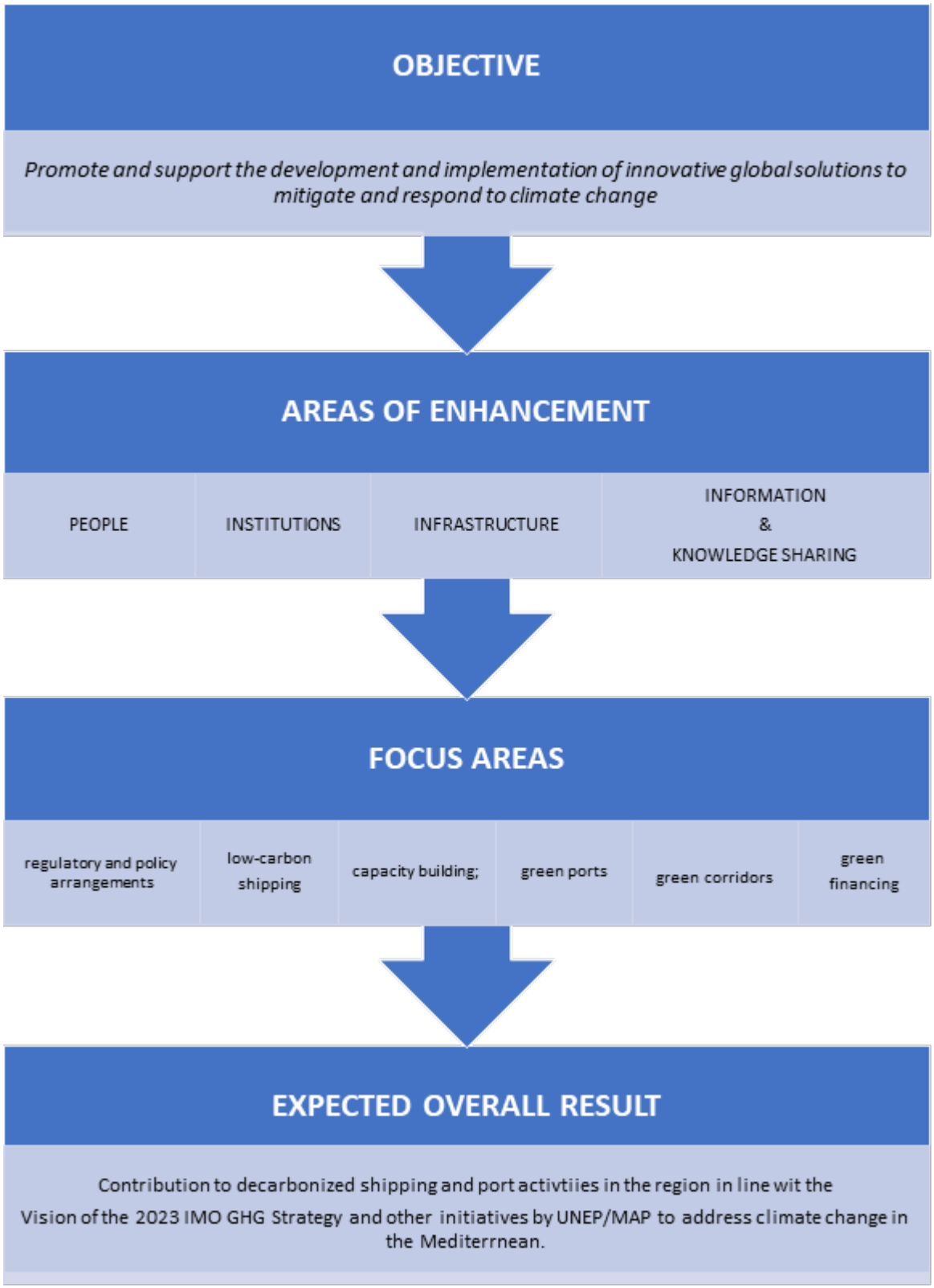
7.1 The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols at their 22nd Meeting (COP 22, Antalya, Türkiye) adopted Decision 25/16 on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031).

7.2 The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) identifies seven key Common Strategic Objectives (CSOs) representing the central focus areas to guide action over the 10-year period. In particular, CSO 2 is aimed to:

> *"Promote and support the development and implementation of innovative global solutions to mitigate and respond to climate change"*

7.3 The purpose of this Roadmap is to build on the experiences gain from the initiatives taken by Contracting Parties thus far to address GHG emissions from ships at the regional level and most importantly to reinforce, in a coordinated manner, the already established collaborative and collective efforts of Contracting Parties, who will build on what has already been achieved to address this CSO with a view that GHG emissions from ships and the ship-shore interface in the region are reduced and ultimately contribute to the level of ambition in the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy.

Figure 1: Roadmap flow chart



8 FOCUS AREAS OF THE ROADMAP

8.1 The Roadmap focuses on the following key areas:

Key Area 1: Regulatory and Policy arrangements

Background - MARPOL Annex VI, which regulates air pollution and GHG emissions from ships, is a critical instrument for mitigating maritime environmental impacts representing 97.3% of world merchant shipping tonnage. For Mediterranean coastal states, the region's 2022 designation as Sulphur Emission Control Areas (SO_x ECA) by IMO, effective from 1 May 2025, marks a transformative step. At the time of designation, 16 out of the 21 coastal States had acceded to MARPOL Annex VI. The Mediterranean SO_x ECA under MARPOL Annex VI targets SO_x but indirectly also supports GHG reduction.

Furthermore, biofouling on ship's hull significantly contributes to increase fuel consumption and GHG emissions from ships. Research suggests that a global approach to effective biofouling management through for example the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention) could reduce shipping-related GHG emissions by up to 19% equivalent to 198 million tons of CO_2. Effective biofouling management can lead to significant energy savings and fuel demand of significant benefit to a busy shipping region like the Mediterranean Sea.

Thus, Mediterranean coastal States, ratifying and effectively implementing MARPOL Annex VI and the AFS Convention become essential in aligning with global and regional climate objectives and contributing to a cleaner Mediterranean.

While some Mediterranean coastal States have ratified MARPOL Annex VI and the AFS Convention and integrated the provisions into their national legal frameworks, other coastal states are in the process of doing so. Universal adoption followed by enforcement across the region is vital to ensuring a harmonized regulatory framework, ensuring a level playing field that does not discriminate against any flag or port state and promoting regional cooperation in emission reductions.

In addition to the IMO regulations on GHG reduction, in 2021, the European Union (EU) introduced the ambitious "Fit for 55: package aiming for a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 across all industrial sectors, that will have a direct impact on the Mediterranean region. The shipping sector was subjected to four new regulations; 1) Emission Trading System (ETS) Directive which took effect in 2023 and was extended to maritime transport emission since 2024 2) FuelEU Maritime Regulation which took effect in 2025; 3) Alternative Fuels Infrastructure which is an update of an existing directive to ramp up the availability of LNG by 2025 and onshore electrical power supply in core EU ports by 2030; and 4) The revision of the Energy Taxation Directive with the aim to align the taxation of energy products with EU energy and climate policies is still under discussion. .

Recommendations:

1 accede to IMO instruments addressing the reduction of GHG emissions from ships including aspects of biofouling management, if not as yet done so;

2 transpose into national law the relevant regulations from IMO instruments concerning the reduction of GHG emissions from ships, and consider the development of regional or national policies on operational measures such as biofouling management, speed optimisation measures, technical measures supporting increased energy efficiency such as air lubrification, hull form optimisation, energy saving devices, wind propulsion assistance and environmentally friendly antifouling technologies and methods;

3 harmonize as appropriate, national regulations with the relevant IMO regulations addressing the reduction of GHG emissions from ships including aspects of biofouling management;

4 align national and regional policies, as appropriate, with emerging EU measures to drive cleaner fuels and low emission shipping;

5 ensure full compliance with the relevant IMO regulations addressing the reduction of GHG emissions from ships including aspects of biofouling management through adequate enforcement mechanisms.

Key Area 2: Low-carbon shipping

Background - The maritime industry has developed various zero/low-emission solutions, which are in different stages of development, tailored to vessel type, size and operational needs to meet the decarbonization goals set by the IMO. Options include battery-electric systems, hybrids, use of hydrogen, ammonia, LNG, biodiesel and biogas to replace the traditional fossil fuels, wind-assisted propulsion. Energy efficiency improvements – such as optimized ship design, operational (speed) management, proactive hull cleaning together with carbon capture onboard and upgraded logistic s– are also critical for cutting emissions. Additionally, digital tools, automation and AI can improve weather-based route planning and streamline port operations, reducing ship-port stays and port emissions. Solutions would vary between existing ships and new builds.

Recommendations:

1 ensure that there is sufficient capacity and expertise in new solutions for green shipping including the development of legislation to facilitate a conducive environment for the take-up of zero and low-emission solutions for domestic ships;

2 ensure compliance with the IMO mandatory technical and operational energy efficiency requirements for ships;

3 encourage technical and operational strategies to minimize emissions while maintaining operational efficiency such as expanding the SO_x ECA to include NOx and introducing voluntary slow steaming in specially protected areas with the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol;

4 offer tax incentives and subsidies for shipowners transitioning to zero-emission fuels;

5 support R&D for sustainable energy efficiency solutions by pooling resources from public and private stakeholders, support research on shipping energy efficiency, including on electric ships and wind propulsion assistance solutions, and develop data-driven tools for better management. Encourage scientific institutions and industry to identify key research areas, participate in R&D programmes, and share findings with coastal States;

6 engage with manufacturers and suppliers in coastal states to facilitate the import, installation and maintenances of low-emission ship technologies;

7 promote the use of smooth coating and alternative technologies for reducing hull friction;

8 conduct digitalisation projects for voyage optimization, fuel consumption tracking and predictive maintenance.

Key Area 3: Capacity building

Background - Transitioning to the use of low carbon fuel and net zero-emission shipping to achieve the goals of the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy requires transdisciplinary capacity building supplemented by raising awareness for collective action. Effective capacity building programmes for maritime personnel,

port authorities and government officials aligned with IMO instruments addressing the reduction of GHG emissions from ships, including IMO guidelines on zero emission shipping are key. Training must be systematic, addressing technical compliance with emission reduction technologies, operational best practices as well as legal and policy frameworks governing maritime decarbonization. Raising awareness to ensure all stakeholders understand the applicable regulatory frameworks in the region including the EU decarbonization initiatives and the urgency of transition to net zero-emissions from ships will indirectly reinforce the long-term risks on inaction.

Recommendations:

1 equip personnel with opportunities for knowledge on low-carbon shipping (green) technologies and on the relevant IMO instruments concerning the reduction of GHG emissions from ships;

2 build expertise in enforcing emissions regulations and implementing Port State Control (PSC) control measures;

3 establish regional centres of excellence on green shipping which can promote technologies and operations to improve energy efficiency and foster innovation through support to universities and research institutions building on the experience of IMO's MTCCs;

4 launch regional awareness campaigns, engaging industry leaders in the process to inform maritime professionals, shipowners and other stakeholders on the environmental impact of shipping emissions;

5 work with organizations such as IMO, EU, EBRD and other funding mechanisms to leverage funds and expertise for capacity building programmes and promote regional awareness.

Key Area 4: Green Ports

Background – Ports play an important role in reducing overall GHG emissions from ships. Various ports are in a phase of developing strategies to reduce emissions at the ship-port interface such as:

.1 reducing emission from tugboats;
.2 onshore power availability at berth;
.3 cargo-operations-related emission reduction;
.4 LED lighting; JIT arrival systems;
.5 carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS); and
.6 other measures to increase efficiency such as dynamic under-keel clearance, auto mooring, green fuel in trucks.

The use of low-emission fuels including the use of electrification to power vessel and hybrid vessels for short-sea shipping on ferries and onshore power supply (OPS) also known as "cold Ironing" are most likely the most common strategies to reduce GHG emissions from ships to date. Effective biofouling management can also lead to significant energy savings and emission reductions particularly beneficial to busy shipping lanes in the Mediterranean. These strategies do come with their own challenges for ports such as the availability of effective biofouling management and bunkering infrastructure for low-emission fuels as well as high energy demand for OPS from existing energy supply facilities in a country.

Recommendations:

1 promote the formal adoption of the IMO biofouling Guidance by Contracting Parties for intra-short captive shipping in the Mediterranean Sea;

2 promote In-Water Cleaning (IWC) facilities in targeted ports;

3 consider upgrading energy grid connections to support expanded electrification of port activities;

4 promote shore power (cold ironing) at major ports;
5 offer economic incentives across Mediterranean ports to reward low-carbon operations by shipowners in the form of "green rebates";

6 create a unified Mediterranean Green Port programme that grants fee reductions or priority berthing to vessels using alternative fuels or achieving high environmental ratings;

7 establish and once established, expand alternative fuel infrastructure to develop a network of alternative fuel bunkering hubs in key Mediterranean ports at the same ensuring compatibility of refuelling facilities across the region.

Key Area 5: Green Corridors

Background – Upgrading the infrastructure of ports to reduce GHG emission at the ship-shore interface facilitates the designation of specific low-emissions shipping routes or green corridors where only zero or low emission ships can operate. Since green shipping corridors will require the supply of green energy at one or both ends or nearby ports, it can motivate the coordination of infrastructure development so that it is complementary and interoperable.

This has the potential to promote fuel hub ports each specializing (initially) in certain alternative fuels and connecting these hubs along shipping corridors. Since the launch of the Clydebank Declaration in 2021[8], over 60 green shipping corridor initiatives have been announced, reflecting a significant increase from 21 in 2022 to more than 60 as of November 2024, including nearly 32 new corridors announced in 2023. Most remain in the feasibility study stage or are formulating implementation plans, while none have yet been fully operationalized in the Mediterranean region although multiple green corridors around the Mediterranean are in an advanced stage of being realized.

Initiating the implementation of green shipping corridors requires:

.1 establishing the baselines for the three pillars i.e. ships, fuels used by ships and infrastructure supplying ships and identifying first movers' opportunities;

.2 engaging relevant key stakeholders i.e. cargo owners, shipowners, operators, regulators, port authorities and fuel producers; and

.3 developing a holistic plan with timeline for all stakeholders. Subsequently, implementation would require securing investment in required infrastructure along the corridors.

Recommendations:

1 explore the possible establishment of port to port or sub-regional green corridors e.g. Western Mediterranean corridor connecting major ports.

Key Area 6: Green Financing

Background - The 2018 Initial IMO Strategy introduced "candidate mid- and long term measures" to further incentivise the reduction of GHG emissions form ships. Among these, market-based measures (MBMs) were identified as potential mid-term solutions. MBMs place a price on GHG emissions, creating an economic incentive for the maritime industry to reduce its fuel consumption by investing in more fuel-efficient ships, adopting advanced technologies and improving operational efficiency. Building on this, the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy reaffirmed the necessity of incorporating an economic element specifically through a maritime GHG emission pricing mechanism as part of a broader set of

candidate measures to achieve its reduction targets. The significance of such an economic element could be four-fold:

1. supporting the reduction of shipping's GHG emissions in alignment with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy

2. encouraging the transition to low and net zero-carbon solutions;

3. potentially contributing to an international R & D fund for scalable low-and zero- carbon technologies; and

4. supporting developing countries in their climate action including both adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Against this backdrop, in 2005, the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) Directive established Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) Directive. It covers approximately 45% of the EU's GHG emissions. As of 1 January 2024, the EU ETS Directive has been extended to maritime transport emissions. This will have significant impact on the shipping sector of Mediterranean countries engaged in trading in the EU.

Meanwhile, Mediterranean EU Member states are actively implementing the EU ETS Directive whilst some non-EU Mediterranean countries are taking steps to develop their own carbon pricing scheme designed to align with the EU ETS. (e.g Türkiye).

Economic and policy disparities between Mediterranean coastal States that are EU member States and those that are not EU Member states can create challenges for adopting a unified position at regional level on a maritime GHG emission pricing mechanism.

Recommendations:

1 participate actively in regional and international meetings and negotiations, fostering regional partnerships where possible to contribute to the development and effective implementation of a global maritime GHG emission pricing mechanism;

2 nothwithstanding the preservation of rights, ensure that any existing regional or national economic measure complements and is in line with a global maritime GHG emission pricing mechanism with the objective to avoid double burden and carbon leakage .

3 evaluate the administrative burden involved in managing a maritime global GHG pricing mechanism and ensure sufficient resources are in place to manage the mechanism once in place;

4 ensure that revenues from a global maritime GHG emission pricing mechanism are used to promote a just and equitable transition in States by facilitating environmental and climate protection, adaptation and resilience building within the boundaries of the energy transition in shipping, paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries.

9 OUTPUTS AND TIMELINES OF THE ROADMAP

9.1The expected outputs of the Roadmap are set out as at Appendix. These expected outputs have been derived from the various recommendations put forward under each of the focus areas of the Roadmap. The implementation of the Roadmap and consequently the expected outputs require effective partnerships, financial support and for the most part will be project driven.

9.2The timeline for the expected outputs listed in the Appendix are presented as approximations, offering flexibility to accommodate periodic reviews of the Roadmap's effectiveness and relevance.

These reviews will take into account the implementation requirements, as well as evolving technological advancements and regulatory developments. This will allow continuous alignment with the goals of the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy and initiatives by UNEP/MAP to address climate change in the region.

10 REPORTING AND MONITORING

10.1 A monitoring process is established to ensure the effective implementation of the Roadmap, while an effective reporting mechanism is essential to its successful implementation.

10.2 The Roadmap will be reviewed on a biennial basis by the meeting of REMPEC Focal Points. Adjustments will made as necessary, reflecting progress and addressing emerging challenges from GHG emissions from ships. This ensures that the Roadmap remains responsive to the evolving needs of the maritime sector in the region and the broader objectives of regional development and sustainability.

10.3 To this end, every two years REMPEC will prepare a consolidated report on the implementation of the Roadmap based on information provided by Contracting Parties and other sources of information available to it. The report will be submitted to the Meetings of its Focal Points. It will be publicly available and will be submitted to other fora, as appropriate.

11 RISK MITIGATION

11.1 The successful implementation of the Roadmap is subject to certain risks including, but not limited to appropriate and adequate funding being available within Contracting Parties, and regional institutions. Furthermore, the complexities of the Mediterranean Sea Region's socio-politics could present potential political instabilities within the region, which could hinder its successful implementation.

11.2 In order to mitigate the risks identified for the implementation of the Roadmap making use of digital technologies, as feasibly possible, to improve networking, capacity building and visibility should be considered. To mitigate risks associated with ensuring appropriate and adequate funding, Contracting Parties will ensure that the funds available are used in an efficient and appropriate manner, avoiding duplication of efforts wherever possible, in order to fully implement the Roadmap. Contracting Parties will also coordinate with all stakeholders (including the private sector, NGOs, regional and international non-governmental organisations, etc), looking for opportunities to collaborate and join efforts whenever possible and as appropriate.

11.3 REMPEC will assist Contracting Parties, with the limits of its capabilities to develop partnerships with regional and international organisations and seek funding opportunities where feasibly possible to support the activities necessary to implement the Roadmap. To mitigate risks associated with potential political instabilities, Contracting Parties will continue the efforts within the framework of the Barcelona Convention to address jointly, and individually, common challenges through regional consensus for the benefit of the entire region, and its individual Contracting Parties.

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Appendix

Expected Outputs of the Roadmap

	Expected Outputs	Timeline		
		Short term	Medium term	Long term
i.	Establishment of a Mediterranean Decarbonization Taskforce to oversee the implementation of the Roadmap	●	●	●
ii.	Accession to and transposition into national law the relevant international instruments addressing the reduction of GHG emissions from ships including aspects of biofouling management, harmonization of national regulations with these instruments	●	●	●
iii.	Compliance and operational efficiency starting with a focus on the current SO_x ECA, possibly expanding it to NO_x ECA in line with IMO's MARPOL Annex VI	●	●	●
iv.	Capacity building programme to equip personnel with knowledge on green shipping technologies and IMO GHG reduction instruments, EU maritime legislation while also developing expertise in emissions regulation enforcement and PSC measures	●	●	●
v.	Comprehensive raising awareness campaign among different maritime stakeholders to inform on shipping emission impacts, highlighting the advantages of the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy	●	●	
vi.	R&D on sustainable energy efficiency solutions through public-private collaboration. Research institutions and industry to identify key areas for innovation and share findings of pilot efforts among coastal states through a common platform	●	●	●
vii.	Voluntary slow steaming, and other routing measures introduced to minimize emissions while maintaining operational efficiency in specially protected areas within the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol		●	●
viii.	Tools designed for data collection for fuel tracking, voyage optimization and predictive maintenance		●	●
ix.	Adequate infrastructure provided to establish In-Water Cleaning facilities and to support ships using alternative fuels or land side energy sources in targeted ports		●	●
x.	An incentive programme which offers economic "green rebates" across Mediterranean ports to reward low-carbon operations to ship owners which will the form the basis of a unified Mediterranean Green Port programme granting fee reduction or priority berthing to environmentally superior v		●	●
xi.	Green Corridors created linking Mediterranean ports within the region and beyond			●
xii.	100% net zero emission shipping in the Mediterranean by 2050			●

]

[Draft Decision IG.27/12

Updated Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035 in the framework of the Offshore Protocol

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

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

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

Recalling Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

Recalling further the Protocol concerning the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil, hereinafter referred to as the Offshore Protocol, adopted in Madrid, Spain in 1994 and entered into force on 24 March 2011,

Recalling also Decisions IG.20/12 of COP 17 (Paris, France, February 2012) and IG.21/8 of COP 18 (Istanbul, Türkiye, December 2013) mandating the preparation and completion of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Offshore Protocol,

Recalling further Decision IG.22/3 of COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February 2016) which adopted the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Offshore Protocol, with a timeframe of March 2016 to December 2024,

Conscious that possible significant accidents caused by increasingly intense offshore activities can have long-term adverse consequences for the fragile ecosystems and biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea due to its enclosed nature and special hydrodynamics as well as negative consequences on the economies of the Mediterranean coastal States especially in relation to tourism and fisheries,

Recognizing the progress made and the challenges faced by Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan,

1. *Adopt* the Updated Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035 in the framework of the Offshore Protocol, set out in the Annex to this Decision;

2. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures to implement the Action Plan in a timely manner;

3. *Urge also* all the Contracting Parties that have not yet done so, to ratify the Offshore Protocol, as soon as possible, and adopt legislation for its implementation, and to cooperate to ensure compliance with its provisions;

4. *Invite* the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and MAP partners to provide necessary data so as to ensure that progress towards the achievement of the Action Plan can be adequately monitored, assessed and reported on;

5. *Invite further* the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat and other stakeholders to keep the Action Plan under review, in light of the experience gained;

6. *Note and approve* the resource mobilization framework, including the indicative roadmap and associated budget estimate, contained in Appendix 2 to the Action Plan, in support of the achievement of the objectives of the Action Plan;

7. *Invite* the Contracting Parties and relevant organizations including MAP partners to take prompt actions to implement the framework for resource mobilization, in support of the implementation of the Action Plan;

8. *Invite* Parties to come forward with new and innovative financing mechanisms in support of the implementation of the Action Plan;

9. *Request* the Secretariat to provide technical support to the Contracting Parties and mobilize adequate human and financial resources in cooperation with international bodies, including *inter alia* the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Seabed Authority (ISA), as well as European institutions and other relevant actors, including the oil and gas industry, to assist Mediterranean coastal States in carrying out the obligations arising from the Offshore Protocol;

10. *Agree* to allocate the necessary human resources within the Secretariat (REMPEC), to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

]

ANNEX
Updated Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan 2026-2035 in the framework of the Offshore Protocol

UPDATED MEDITERRANEAN OFFSHORE ACTION PLAN 2026-2035

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PART I – INTRODUCTION

I.1 Secretariat, MAP Components and Partners

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

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

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

I.2 Geographical coverage

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

I.3 Preservation of rights

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

I.4 Principles

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

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

(f) *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGSs)* in particular SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13(Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals). and

(g) *The principle of public participation and stakeholder involvement*.

1.5 Definitions

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

.1 "Output": an item to delivered over the timeframe of the Action Plan unless otherwise specified; and

.2 "Performance indicator": which is cumulative unless otherwise specified, and which is a measure of the achievements against an individual Specific Objective.

1.6 Timeframe

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

1.7 Appendices

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

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

PART II – OBJECTIVES

II.1. General Objectives

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

These measures, at regional level focus on:

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

II.2. Specific Objectives

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

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

II.2.1 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Specific objective 1*:* **To ratify the Offshore Protocol**

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

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

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

At the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, Contracting Parties approved the establishment of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (BARCO OFOG) and adopted its terms of reference (Decision IG.21/8). It also agreed to refer to it as the OFOG Group.

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

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

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

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

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

Specific objective 2: *To designate Contracting Parties' Representatives to participate in the BARCO OFOG and its Sub-Groups*		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	**Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources**	**Outputs relating to the MAP Partners**
a) Designation of the National Offshore Focal Point designated by all MAP Focal Points to coordinate at national level activities carried out in the framework of the Action Plan and actively participate in the OFOG Group; b) Designation, upon request by the Secretariat, through their National Offshore Focal Point, of the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for each OFOG Sub-Group; and c) Leadership, on a voluntary basis, of the established Sub-Groups to coordinate with the support of the Secretariat the work assigned to the Sub-Groups.	a) Promote the participation of representatives from relevant IGOs, NGOs and industry as observers to the OFOG Group and Sub-Groups; b) Enhancement of public awareness through the contribution of IGOs and NGOs with a relevant mandate to the topics discussed in the OFOG Group and Sub-Groups, through their participation as observers, ensuring an open and transparent process through public consultations; c) Establishment of institutional cooperation with various relevant regional and global institutions, initiatives and agreements and, at an operational level, establish synergies with these entities on ongoing activities of common interest; d) Publication and update of the composition of the OFOG Group and any Sub-Groups on a dedicated page of the relevant website of one of the UNEP/MAP Components; e) Updated list of the National Offshore Focal Points and OFOG Group Focal Points; f) Definition, in consultation with MAP Focal Points, of the roles and responsibilities of UNEP/MAP Components to facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan; and g) Identification of the required means including human resources to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan and the support of the relevant UNEP/MAP Components. A Resource Mobilization Framework is set out at **Appendix 2**.	a) Participation of representatives from relevant IGOs, NGOs and industry as observers to the OFOG Group and Sub-Groups.
Performance indicator (s): - Number of Contracting Parties with designated National Offshore Focal Points; - Number of Meetings of the OFOG Group organized; - Number of OFOG Sub-Groups established; and - Number of representatives from different Ministries of Contracting Parties, IGOs, NGOs and industry involved and or attending the OFOG Group and OFOG Sub-Group Meetings.		

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

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

Specific objective 3: *To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme*		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	**Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources**	**Outputs relating to the MAP Partners**
a) Technical cooperation and capacity building programme endorsed as set in **Appendix 1;** and b) Consideration of the possible application of the MOAP beyond oil and gas activities.	a) Integration of the technical cooperation and capacity building programme in the six year programme of activities of UNEP/MAP and its relevant Components and in their biennium programme of work; b) Preparation of the corresponding budget for consideration by the Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention; and c) Identification of donors to secure funds required for the implementation of the technical cooperation and capacity building programme. d) Coordination of a Meeting to discuss the impacts on and mitigating measures for the exploitation of the continental shelf, its seabed and its subsoil beyond oil and gas activities.	a) Provision of support (financial and /or in-kind) for the implementation of the technical cooperation and capacity building programme.
***Performance indicator (s)*:** - Number of technical and capacity building activities, including major projects requested by Contracting Parties, developed and implemented on a biennium basis; and - Number of people trained.		

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

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

effective implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is creating an enabling environment for public participation and its contribution to decision-making. Clearly expressed in SDG 16 and 17 is the call for this environment to promote public participation.

Specific objective 4: ***To promote access to information and public participation in decision-making***		
Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties	**Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components, depending on the availability of resources**	**Outputs relating to the MAP Partners**
a) On-line template for public information submitted in line with national and regional rules on access to information; b) Report to the Secretariat every two years relevant information on the offshore installations within their jurisdiction including, when appropriate, information on their disposal for inclusion in the inventory to be maintained by the Secretariat; and c) Report to the Secretariat every two years, under the BCRS, discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data in accordance with the monitoring programme to be defined by the OFOG Group in support of Specific Objective 8.	a) Support the preparation of the on-line template for public information in line with existing Decisions of the Contracting Parties addressing public access to information and with UNEP's Access to Information Policy; b) Development of an online regional system to be maintained for the purpose of public information sharing; c) Publication every two years, on a dedicated page of the relevant website of one of the UNEP/MAP Components, of the inventory of installations as well as the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data submitted by the Contracting Parties; and d) Consolidated report every two years on the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations data submitted by the Contracting Parties.	a) Provision of relevant information to complement the reports listed in Outputs b) and c) related to the Contracting Parties.
***Performance indicator (s)*:** - A functional and updated dedicated portal set-up as an information dissemination tool for the Action Plan; - Number of national reports submitted every two years to the Secretariat by Contracting Parties containing relevant information on offshore installations within their jurisdiction including, when appropriate, information on their disposal; and - Number of national reports submitted every two years to the Secretariat by Contracting Parties containing relevant information on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations in accordance with the monitoring programme.		

Specific objective 5: To enhance the regional transfer of technology

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

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

II.2.2 REGIONAL OFFSHORE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

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

Specific objective 6: To develop and adopt regional offshore standards

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

Specific objective 7: To develop and adopt regional offshore guidelines

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

II.2.3 REGIONAL OFFSHORE MONITORING PROGRAMME

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

The EcAp is the overarching principle of the Barcelona Convention, aiming to achieve good environmental status (GES) of the Mediterranean and ensuring adequate monitoring and assessment of the status on a cyclical basis.
The Offshore monitoring programme will be developed in line with the EcAp Roadmap and in particular with the IMAP.

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

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

PART III – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

III.1. Resource Mobilization

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

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

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

III.2. Reporting

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

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

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 –Technical cooperation and capacity building programme

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

Appendix 3 – Indicative potential research and development topics

Appendix 4 – Development of Regional offshore standards and guidelines

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

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Appendix 1: TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

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

Specific Objective 3: **To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme**	**Key stages**	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
	An ICG established to develop a checklist on key elements of safety with regard to design, construction, placement, equipment, marking, operations, maintenance of installation and firefighting which can help Contracting Parties in their inspection of installations. Following approval of the checklist, an online activity should be organized to facilitate its familiarization and use.										
• Minimum standards of qualifications for professionals and crews	A training course on the sharing of experiences on the common criteria, rules and procedures on minimum standards of qualifications for professionals and crews should be organised. An ICG established to develop minimum standards of qualifications for professionals and crews. Following approval of the standards, an online activity should be organized to facilitate their familiarization and use.					*X*	# #	*X*			
• Granting of authorizations	A training course on the sharing of experiences on the authorization system (Section II) under the Offshore Protocol based on Standards and Guidelines approved, should be organised. An ICG established to develop guidance to be followed when granting authorizations. Following approval of the guidance an online activity should be organized to facilitate its familiarization and use.							*X*	# #	*X*	
• Inspection/sanctions	A report reflecting the national, regional and international rules, procedures and practices regarding liability and compensation for loss and damage resulting from activities dealt with in the Offshore Protocol to be presented to the appropriate Meeting of the Contracting Parties.							#	# #	*X*	
Overview of the associated capacity building trainings:											
Training A: Indicative length: 2.5 days • Introduction to the Offshore Protocol and to the MOAP 2026-2035; • Special Restrictions or Conditions for Specially Protected Areas (SPA); • Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); • Monitoring;		X									

Specific Objective 3: **To establish a technical cooperation and capacity building programme**	**Key stages**	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
• Removal of installations.											
Training B: Indicative length: 1.5 days • Offshore platform Preparedness and Response & Contingency Plan assessment. *Focus on elements to be assessed in an Offshore OSCP within the framework of a permit application*				X							
Training C: Indicative length: 1.5 days • Safety measures including health and safety requirements and firefighting; • Minimum standards of qualifications for professionals and crews; *Focus on key elements to enforce for the safety of offshore operations*						X					
Training D: Indicative length: 2 days • Introduction on the adopted standards and guidelines developed under the MOAP 2016-2024 and the MOAP 2026-2035. • Granting of authorizations. • Inspection/sanctions (Installation/Discharge/Competent manning) ; *Training course building on the adopted standards and guidelines as well as on the previous trainings held*								X			
Training E: *To be specified at the mid-term review of the MOAP* Potential topics for 2034-2035 biennium: • /										X	

X / Blue, anticipated structuring training or meeting - # / Green, anticipated implementation period.
The letters “A,B, C, D, E” associated with the Trainings, reflect the order in which they would be organized.

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

Part I: Resource Mobilization Framework.

Overview of primary funding sources

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

Strategic Objective

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

Actions

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

Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF)

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

A Multi-donor trust fund (MDTF)

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

Partners in Resource Mobilization

5 **Contracting Parties are urged:**

.1 to consider providing financial contributions to the MTF and the MDTF established by Secretariat established for this purpose;
.2 to enter into bilateral partnership arrangements with the Secretariat, providing financial and in-kind support for the implementation of the Action Plan;
.3 to draw the attention of their relevant government authorities, including in particular those responsible for ODA (official development assistance), to the linkage between the relevant components of the technical capacity building programme defined in the

Action plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals;

.4 to co-operate with the Secretariat in the development and execution of resource mobilization campaigns and to facilitate consideration by the aforementioned authorities; and

.5 to draw the attention of relevant international and regional organizations in which they participate, to the importance of the offshore sector to sustainable development and the role of the UNEP/MAP system in implementing the Offshore Protocol legal framework for the sustainability of the Mediterranean Sea.

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

.1 to draw the attention of their respective memberships to the central importance of the Secretariat and its Components to enhance the capacity of Contracting Parties to implement the Offshore Protocol and its Action Plan in a uniform manner; and

.2 to assist in the mobilization of the resources and expertise of their members to contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan.

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

.1 to enter into partnership arrangements with the Secretariat, providing in-kind expertise support, through the secondment of experts, for implementation of the Action Plan; and

.2 to provide in-kind expertise, at no cost or no fee, to support the technical capacity building programme of the Action Plan.

8 The Secretariat is requested:

.1 to continue to engage with the United Nations, international and regional organizations in the development and execution of a capacity building programme which addresses the objectives of the Action Plan;

.2 to engage interested bilateral and multilateral donors to provide funding support for the realization of the objectives of the Action Plan.

9 Cost effective delivery

.1 request the Secretariat to continue to keep under review the cost of delivering technical assistance and introduce cost reduction measures as appropriate without lowering the quality of the services provided;

.2 urge Contracting Parties to consider making available qualified experts to provide technical advisory services at no fee or no cost to the UNEP/MAP system for the implementation of the Action Plan; and

.3 urge Contracting Parties to consider, when requesting technical advisory assistance and training, to undertake to share the costs associated with providing the assistance.

Part II: Provisional road map

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

X / Blue, anticipated structuring meeting or training - # / Green, anticipated implementation period.
The letters “A,B, C, D, E” associated with the Trainings, reflect the order in which they would be organized.

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

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

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[2] Total for five biennium

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Appendix 3: INDICATIVE POTENTIAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TOPICS

Offshore Energy Development

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

Environnemental Impact of Offshore Activities

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

Offshore Engineering and Technology with an emphasis on prevention

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

Legal and Regulatory Aspects of Offshore

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

Preparedness for and Response to accidental marine pollution

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

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Appendix 4: DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL OFFSHORE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

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

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

A) Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties

Specific Objective	Outputs relating to the Contracting Parties (CPs)	Link to the Protocol[3]	Means required for the implementation of the action plan *for indicative purposes only*
1. To ratify the Offshore Protocol	a) Ratification by all Contracting Parties of the Offshore Protocol, transposition of the Offshore Protocol into national law, and cooperation through the Secretariat to ensure compliance with its provisions	Art.32	Contracting Parties time
2. To designate Contracting Parties' Representatives to participate in the BARCO OFOG and its Sub-Groups	a) Designation of the National Offshore Focal Point designated by all MAP Focal Points to coordinate at national level activities carried out in the framework of the Action Plan and actively participate in the OFOG Group	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Nomination Contracting Parties time
	b) Designation, upon request by the Secretariat, through their National Offshore Focal Point, of the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for each OFOG Sub-Group	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Nomination
	c) Leadership, on a voluntary basis, of the established Sub-Groups to coordinate with the support of the Secretariat the work assigned to the Sub-Groups	Art.28 Decision IG.21/8	Volunteering

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

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

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

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

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

B) Outputs relating to the Secretariat and MAP Components

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

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

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

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

[Draft Decision IG.27/13

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

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

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

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

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/296 of July 2022, entitled "Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility",

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

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

Considering the findings and policy recommendations of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report - particularly those identifying impacts of pressures from agriculture, industry,

aquaculture, tourism, infrastructure, energy facilities, ports and maritime works and structures, as well as maritime activities, together with the emerging impacts of climate change - which together hinder progress towards achieving good environmental status of the Mediterranean marine environment,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annex V

Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027

Rationale for the Proposed Programme of Work 2026-2027

1. The proposed 2026-2027 Programme of Work (PoW), coinciding with the end of the 2022-2027 MTS cycle, is designed to ensure the effective and coherent finalization of the 2022-2027 MTS and its strategic outcomes and related targets, and considering the following elements:

    a. Strong ownership by the Contracting Parties (CPs) through regular consultation and better reflection of regional priorities and country needs;
    b. Coherence with the most recent developments in global processes;
    c. Learning from the lessons of PoW and Budget gathered during the current and previous biennia (design and implementation);
    d. Strengthened result-based management (RBM) approaches that have been already followed in the previous PoW, to further shift the focus to major and clearly defined outcomes to be achieved through the joint efforts of all concerned actors, including the Contracting Parties and MAP Partners;
    e. Delivering as one, as MAP system and in an integrated manner;
    f. Mobilization of partnership and outreach to boost implementation and efficiency.

2. The proposed 2026-2027 PoW aims, through its effective implementation, at strengthening the contribution and leadership role of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system - a unique legally binding regional agreement and an effective collaboration framework gathering Mediterranean coastal States and the EU in partnership with other actors including civil society and the scientific community, for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal regions. Its objective is to ensure progress towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its SDGs.

3. It also supports the achievement of global objectives at regional level, especially those deriving from the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), UNEP MTS, RSSD, the UNFCCC, the MEA including MARPOL Convention and its Protocols, the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships, the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from ships as well as the new international legally binding instrument on BBNJ and the global Treaty to address plastic pollution, through the effective implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, the updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and related COP decisions.

4. The proposed 2026-2027 PoW is built around 27 Outcomes as per the MAP MTS to be delivered through the implementation of 106 main activities, distributed over the MTS Programmes as shown below:

MTS Programmes	Number of Outcomes (MTS)	Number of Activities
Thematic Programme 1. Towards a Pollution and Litter Free Mediterranean Sea and Coast Embracing Circular Economy	4	23
Thematic Programme 2. Towards Healthy Mediterranean Ecosystems and Enhanced Biodiversity	4	7
Thematic Programme 3. Towards a Climate Resilient Mediterranean	4	7
Thematic Programme 4. Towards the Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Resources Including Circular and Blue Economy	4	13

MTS Programmes	Number of Outcomes (MTS)	Number of Activities
Foundational Programme 5. Governance	5	25
Enabling Programme 6. Towards Monitoring, Assessment, Knowledge and Vision of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast for Informed Decision-Making	3	19
Enabling Programme 7. For Informed and Consistent Advocacy, Awareness, Education and Communication	3	12

Thematic Programme 1: Towards a Pollution and Litter Free Mediterranean Sea and Coast Embracing Circular Economy

5. The main objective of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW for this Programme is to continue supporting the integrated responses and regulatory measures for prevention and reduction of plastic pollution and marine litter, including pilot actions addressing marine litter within Marine Protected Areas and Mediterranean Islands, emerging sources of pollution and prevent plastic use and leakages as well as toxic chemicals, and in the framework of the Regional Plans and NAPs under the Art. 15 of the LBS Protocol, the Dumping Protocol, the Guideline on Reginal Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Mediterranean.

6. Thematic Programme 1 also includes strengthening the capacity of coastal states to respond efficiently to marine pollution incidents, including the development of the guidelines on the adoption of the draft Decision on minimum penalties in case of illicit pollution and based on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031); and the support to the implementation of the Switchers Support Programme in the framework of the Regional Action Plan on SCP, while ensuring links and synergies with other relevant regional and global instruments and processes, including those under the IMO, the BRSC, UNEA Resolutions, as well as the anticipated global Treaty to address plastic pollution. The proposed activities further aim at promoting a transformational change embracing circular economy and contributing to the implementation of the One Health Approach, linking human and ecosystems health with pollution reduction and prevention.

7. More specifically, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW envisages to:

   a. Undertake national, sub-regional, regional actions to boost the implementation of the Marine Litter Regional Plan in the Mediterranean.
   b. Capitalize pilot actions addressing marine litter within Marine Protected Areas and Mediterranean Islands.
   c. Implement and scale up a robust policy framework to reduce and prevent plastic use and engage businesses to prevent plastic use and reduce plastic leakage.
   d. Develop new regulatory measures in line with article 15 of the LBS Protocol for priority sectors, including national, regional actions and enabling investments, to implement the adopted Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management.
   e. Promote sustainable Desalination Sector in the Mediterranean Assess pollution loads from land- based sources and activities.
   f. Undertake national and regional action to enhance the implementation of the Dumping Protocol.
   g. Undertake pilot actions to prevent, eliminate and dispose in an environmentally sound manner obsolete chemicals.

h. Improve follow-up of pollution events and enhance level of enforcement and the prosecution of discharge offenders.
i. Implement strategies for the prevention of toxic chemicals, including policy support and increase access to information on toxic chemicals, newly listed POPs and health impact
j. Strengthen the capacity of individual coastal states to respond efficiently to marine pollution incidents.
k. Enhance the capacities and networks of Business Support Organizations for Sustainable Business Development across the Mediterranean region, including the development of post-consumer textile waste recycling and revalorization pilot projects across the Mediterranean and Scale up Open Innovation and Corporate Venturing approaches and Enhance the Switchers Community.
l. Enhance and scale up the Sustainable Finance MED Observatory.
m. Support the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI.
n. Develop and implement a one-health approach for the Mediterranean.

Thematic Programme 2: Towards Healthy Mediterranean Ecosystems and Enhanced Biodiversity

8. The main objective of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW for this Programme is to continue the support to the Contracting Parties on the effective implementation of the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol, in particular, by protecting, preserving and managing, in a sustainable and environmentally sound way, areas of particular natural or cultural value, as well as the Post 2020 SAP BIO and the establishment, expansion and efficient management of a comprehensive, coherent and effective Mediterranean network of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). In complement support to countries will be provided in improving and restoring the ecological state of wetlands as vital NbS for Disaster Risk Reduction, addressing biodiversity loss and mitigating climate change impacts and securing water resources in the face of increased extreme weather events such as droughts.

9. This Programme also places a particular focus on ICZM Protocol Article 10 on specific coastal ecosystems and the development of the methodology for preparation of restoration plan in coastal zones, as well as mainstreaming restoration of coastal ecosystems and landscapes into ICZM/coastal plans and programmes, and on the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean.

10. More specifically, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW envisages to:

a. Support the Contracting Parties in protecting and conserving the Mediterranean Sea through well-connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and in particular through declaring and extending their MPA/Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), identifying and reporting OECMs, including transboundary areas and in Areas Beyond National Jurisdictions (ABNJ), designating protected areas with enhanced protection levels, and enforcing efficient management measures for their long-term conservation.
b. Assist the Contracting Parties for the evaluation of the existing SPAMIs and strengthening effective SPAMI management.
c. Ensure continuous knowledge enhancement, management measures definition and implementation, conservation status assessments of marine and coastal species and habitats covered by the updated Regional Action Plans and the Annex II and III to the SPA/BD Protocol.

d. Undertake state of play on existing practices and measures for biodiversity restoration including their scientific evaluation and sharing best practices applicable to the Mediterranean, as well as through implementing pilot/demonstration
e. Mainstream restoration of coastal ecosystems and landscapes into ICZM/coastal plans and programmes, including related methodology.
f. Implement targeted measures of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027).

Thematic Programme 3: Towards a Climate Resilient Mediterranean

11. The main objective of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW for this Programme is to support Contracting Parties in their efforts and capacities to prevent or reduce the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and increase resilience to climatic change and variability. It also aims at ensuring that Contracting Parties are provided with up-to-date scientific knowledge on related climate change. Following the update of the Regional Framework for Climate Change Adaptation, the 2026-2027 PoW will support its implementation with targeted actions, while promoting the role of private business sector in providing innovative solutions to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

12. More specifically, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW envisages to:

a. Mainstream adaptation to climate change into local ICZM plans, capitalizing major methodological deliverables and projects implemented in the 2024/2025 and upgrade the coastal resilience platform.
b. Improve the national capacities on climate change adaptation planning, in particular addressing issues affecting marine resources and fisheries sector.
c. Establish a community of practice for coastal climate adaptation, including capacity-building actions and best practice sharing on the application of nature-based solutions, the potential of blue carbon ecosystems and the definition of the current landscape of funding opportunities at global and regional for climate change adaptation.
d. Develop the framework and pathways to upscale Nature-based Solutions across the Mediterranean coastal zones.
e. Mainstream nature-based solutions into regional policies implementation, including nature restoration in coastal urban areas, ecosystem restoration with a focus on governance challenges and diversification of forest species.
f. Demonstrate how circular economy business models can support climate change adaptation and mitigation innovative solutions.
g. Deliver the Summary for policy makers Second Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR2).
h. Mobilize and implement innovative solutions to reduce GHG emissions from ships in selected ports, including through energy efficiency and decarbonization.

Thematic Programme 4: Towards the Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Resources Including Circular and Blue Economy

13. The main objective of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW for this Programme is to assist Contracting Parties in achieving the sustainability of coastal and marine resources through the implementation of adopted ICZM National Strategies and marine spatial planning and management approaches, while Strengthen MSP governance in the Mediterranean and integrating circular economy measures and solutions in key Blue Economy sectors, also by supporting the implementation of the SCP Regional Action Plan. Marine renewable energies is a key Blue Economy sector. Thematic Programme 4 will focus through the preparation of Guidelines to promote the

sustainability of the sector. Thematic Programme 4 will also include the work on the foundations for a Mediterranean sustainable taxonomy, as well as the support to the Contracting Parties on their efforts to implement the Offshore Protocol and the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan.

14. More specifically, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW envisages to:

    a. Implement the ICZM Protocol and its Common Regional Framework, focusing on the preparation or updating National ICZM Strategies and coastal plans and support the exchange of experience with other regional seas in addressing integrated coastal and marine planning and management.
    b. Assist CPs in implementing MSP and update methodological guidance for ICZM / MSP/ CCA, including Regional showcasing, MSP training and capitalizing on Transboundary Coastal Area Management Projects (CAMP) and tools for integrated planning available on ICZM Platform.
    c. Strengthen MSP governance in the Mediterranean by leading the MSP Working Group; support the cooperation with other MSP governance mechanisms existing in the region; and enhance the strategic role of MSP for a sustainable blue economy.
    d. Promote integration of circular economy into key Blue Economy sectors, including through recommendations, pilot actions, best practices and lessons learned sharing, sustainable entrepreneurship support and Policy Hub on green and circular economy.
    e. Explore Mediterranean water investment gap and identifying adapted financial tools.
    f. Implement key targeted measures of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan and maintain its governance, cooperation and partnership framework sustainable and operational.
    g. Develop Guidelines to promote sustainable marine renewable energies prepared for submission to MED POL FP meeting.
    h. Prepare the foundations for a Mediterranean sustainable taxonomy, by developing scientific papers and workshops on blended finance to align private investments with sustainability goals and corporate social responsibility, practical guidelines for sustainable finance and promote a participatory process to move away from harmful subsidies.
    i. Facilitate the application of measures defined within the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan at Regional level and by each CP within their jurisdiction to ensure the safety of offshore activities and reduce their potential impact on the marine environment and its ecosystem.

Foundational Programme 5: Governance

15. The main objective of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW for this Programme is to ensure effective implementation and enforcement by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, MAP Strategies and regional policies and measures and relevant COP Decisions, while supporting policy coherence and complementarity among relevant work at global, regional and national levels and enhanced efficiency with the use of new digital approaches. It also aims at implementing the updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and its flagship initiatives, developing targeted actions of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031), supporting the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, while strengthening public institutions and enhancing partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement, including with civil society organizations, the private sector, and science policy interface.

16. More specifically, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW envisages to:

    a. Ensure effective decision-making and review of implementation of the legal and policy instruments by the MAP relevant bodies; Deliver a successful COP 25, in 2027.

b. Support national efforts for further progressing on the ratification of the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention, to enable their entry into force for as many CPs as possible.
c. Formulate the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2028-2033 through an inclusive, participatory Contracting Parties' driven process.
d. Reinforce Contracting Parties' capacities on reporting on legally binding provisions of the MAP Barcelona Convention framework.
e. Strengthen Contracting Parties action to comply with legally binding obligations under Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.
f. Ensure the Mid-term evaluation of the post-2020 Regional Strategy on MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean and maximize synergies and Post 2020 Global agenda for the implementation of SAPBIO.
g. Organize the MCSD meetings and support MSSD 2026-2035 implementation, including flagship initiatives, by equally supporting the ownership and capacity building of CPs in integrating MSSD objectives and actions within National Sustainable Development Strategies.
h. Implement targeted actions of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, including the Mid Term review of the Strategy and the preparation of National Action Plans.
i. Implement the MAP Data Policy at regional and as appropriate at national levels and strengthening national capacities to implement it with closer support and dedicated workshops.
j. Strengthen SPI networks in the scope of MAP work.
k. Strengthen capacities for mobilizing external resources to implement PoW and MTS and executing efficiently externally funded projects in their context.
l. Strengthen partnerships with major regional and global actors and scientific and academic networks/institutions; Enhancing participation and engagement of the civil society, as well as of the private sector.
m. Promote gender mainstreaming and youth involvement into UNEP/MAP operations and activities.

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

17. The main objective of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW for this Programme is to enhance and strengthen the implementation of national IMAPs and capacity building actions; also through the implementation of the EU-funded projects SEMPA, EcAp Med Plus and Marine Litter Med Plus and upgrading the assessment component of IMAP, while entering into a new phase of delivery of the updated IMAP for GES assessment, also based on the outcomes of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 Med QSR).

18. Under Programme 6 work on Mediterranean foresight to support transition pathways towards a sustainable and inclusive future will carried out and the Environment and Development Observatory updated, together with the MSSD dashboard and the SCP indicators database, while MSSD core Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI) will be finalized. The full operability of the new MAP Knowledge Platform will be ensured, allowing the integration, harmonization, management and updating of InfoMAP System and MAP Components databases in a unique hub.

19. More specifically, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW envisages to:

a. Maintaining and updating the InfoMAP System through hardware and software upgrades to efficiently host UNEP/MAP datasets and ensure full integration into the Knowledge Management Platform.
b. Migrating, integrating, harmonizing, and updating MAP Component databases into the InfoMAP System to ensure full harmonization with the Knowledge Management Platform.
c. Advance Data Centre standardization for improved data flow integration.
d. Enhance all InfoMAP tools, including INFO/RAC Cloud tools for document repositories and dashboards integrated into the Knowledge Management Platform.
e. Strengthen national capacities to organize, upload, validate and release IMAP data, and establish a strong science-policy interface for the implementation of the ecosystem approach, including through workshops, and training sessions. Implementing IMAP at national and as appropriate sub-regional level taking in consideration the MED QSR 2023 recommendations and preparing thematic analyses and assessments as requested by the Contracting Parties.
f. Disseminating and participatory process on future scenarios and opportunities steaming from the Mediterranean at 2050 foresight study, making full use of them for further strategic approaches through spin-off (thematic or geographical) activities.
g. Strengthening work of global, regional, national and sub-national observatories on environment and development through data-sharing and capacity-building and updating the MSSD dashboard and the SCP indicators database, and MSSD core indicators.

Enabling Programme 7: For Informed and Consistent Advocacy, Awareness, Education and Communication

20. The main objective of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW for this Programme is to inform stakeholders and policy makers about the state of the Mediterranean Sea and coast and to make them aware of the environmental priority issues, and to disseminate knowledge and raise awareness and outreach of general public in particular youth, including through citizen science and digital campaigns. It also aims at contributing to a digital transformation using new technologies to improve networking and MAP visibility. A key milestone in the MAP advocacy campaign is the celebration with pride and inclusiveness of the UNEP/MAP B.C System Anniversaries (PAP/RAC, REMPEC, SCP/RAC).

21. More specifically, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW envisages:

a. Implementing the MAP Operational Communication Strategy 2026-2027 in the framework of the 2024-2029 Communication Strategy and updating it for the biennium 2028-2029.
b. Publishing and disseminating the results from the 2023 MED QSR, the Med2050 Foresight, and other environmental assessment products.
c. Delivering the MAP Knowledge Management Strategy and ensuring functioning and maintenance of MAP Knowledge Management Platform integrating information and knowledge from the entire MAP system.
d. Celebrating dedicated recognized Days of importance to the Mediterranean (i.e., in 2027 PAP/RAC 50th anniversary, Mediterranean Coast Day, SPAMI Day etc.).
e. Delivering environmental and sustainability awards and certificates (e.g. WeMed Sustainability Award, Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award, SPAMI Certificates) to enhance public awareness and outreach.
f. Preparing and implementing education and awareness programmes on key issues, including through e-learning tools with special attention to youth.
g. Developing and implementing a concrete communication and visibility plan towards COP 25.

Key Principles for the Budget Preparation[1]

22. Decision IG.26/14 "Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025" adopted by COP 23 (Portoroz, Slovenia, December 2023), provides for:

> *16. The Secretariat to undertake with no budgetary implications, an internal evaluation in order to assess the coherence of the MAP system to the provisions of the "Common Operational Principles for MAP Components", as adopted by COP 22 Decision IG. 25/3, Annex VI; the evaluation should consider the adequacy of all MAP Components with respect to the necessary functional and financial autonomy to fully and timely fulfil their regional mandate, as set by COP 16 Decision IG. 19/5 "Mandates of the Components of MAP", including possible proposals in relation to the structure of the MAP Components and their effects on the budget, including the use of the MTF to support the operational costs of all MAP Components, for consideration at COP 24;*
>
> *17. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, to prepare for careful consideration by the MAP Focal Points and, after further refinement, approval by COP 24 a result-based Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027, explaining the key principles and assumptions on which it is based and considering the progress achieved during the implementation of the 2022-2023 and 2024-2025 Programmes of Work, providing information on the consultation process followed for its preparation, and in full alignment with the MTS taking into consideration the outcomes of the above evaluation as provided for in paragraph 16;*
>
> *18. The Secretariat to develop a proposal for absorbing the whole remaining unutilized positive balance of the MTF, excluding the Working Capital Reserve, in the two following biennia (2026-2027 and 2028-2029) and maintain, as permanent principle of efficiency, the objective of avoiding unutilized positive balance of the MTF and to present this proposal for consideration at COP 24.*

23. In line with the above, the proposed 2026-2027 PoW and Budget aims at securing the activity budget to the maximum avoiding a significant decrease as compared to the resources allocated in 2024-2025, ~~aiming at~~ and the efficient use of the remaining unutilized balance of the MTF in the 2026-2027 with the objective of avoiding unused surpluses in the future beyond the minimum liquidity requirements. The proposed 2026-2027 budget is amounting to a total of 15,789,744 that represents a reduction by EUR 795,904 from EUR 16,585,648 of the current biennium.

24. The MAP Secretariat in consultation with the ECP explored three scenarios:

    a. No increase in the operational cost of the CU and MAP Components as compared to 2024-2025 plus the use of an additional amount of 2.5 million from the positive unutilized balance of the MTF.
    b. One percent annual increase on the operational costs[2] as compared to those in 2024-2025 plus the use of unutilized MTF balance of EUR 2.5 million.
    c. Two percent annual increase on the operational costs as compared to those in 2024-2025 plus the use of unutilized MTF balance of EUR 2.5 million.

25. The decision was made to propose the scenario (b) above in consideration of the funds expected to be available in 2026-2027 biennium to maximize the funding for activities to the extent possible but also considering the need for a slight increase of the operational costs of the entire system. Every effort ~~has been~~ will be made to economize on the use of resources for administrative purposes to the greatest extent possible.

[1] ~~A graphical representation of key elements of the proposed budget 2024-2025 will be provided as Information Document prior to the MAP FP meeting.~~

[2] In the case of the CU and MED POL the 1% increase of the operational costs applies to costs staff only, but the amount allocated for other administrative costs remain the same.

Elements for consideration regarding the Administrative and Staff Salary Costs

i. Administrative costs increase

26. The overall increase in operational costs has been proposed to an annual increase of one percent compared to the 2024-2025 biennium as explained above, across the MAP system. The above increases take into account the current rate of consumption of staff costs as well as other factors such as inflation in the region.[3] The Secretariat will closely monitor the budget balance of staff costs in 2026-2027.

ii. Changes in staff positions proposed

27. The G6 Administrative Assistant to the MAP Coordinator at G6 level, is proposed to be financed with the Host Country Contribution account (CAL) in 2026-2027 biennium to be supplemented with OTA funds at 50% of the total cost, as indicated by COP 23.

28. The commitment for the counterpart contribution to GEF funds has been fully honoured by end December 2025, there will be no staff posts for GEF programme to be financed from MTF in 2026-2027 biennium. The MTF allocations for this post in 2026-2027 is shifted to support activities of the CU and MED POL

29. All posts established under the GEF funded MED Programme funded from GEF are to be closed with its termination (one P4, one P3, one P2, two G5) in line with the two MedProgramme child projects termination date in 2026. The Secretariat in collaboration with HQ is making every effort to extend contracts for a core number of staff to support the implementation of some child projects under the MedProgramme that is envisaged to continue until end of 2027.

30. Two new posts have been proposed to be created to strengthen the delivery of the administrative and financial functions of the secretariat to be covered 50% by OTA and 50% by external projects, at P2 (Financial Administrative Officer) and G5 (Budget assistant) respectively, subject to funds eligibility. The creation of these post and their approval by COP may create better opportunities for funds mobilization and would support externally funded project delivery.

31. Despite the lower amount allocated for activities in 2026-2027 compared to the 2024-2025 biennium, every effort will be made to compensate possible negative impacts, through: a) strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat to deliver more effectively; b) reducing to the extent possible the costs of meetings and using up-to-date delivery modalities; c) reducing other administrative costs and making operations more effective; and d) mobilising larger amounts of external resources. UNEP HQs are encouraging effective use of Artificial Intelligence tools where applicable to improve the efficiency of UNEP programmatic delivery and a series of training sessions have been conducted in 2025 such as introduction to AI and use of AI software. This may further support cost reduction and enhanced efficiency.

iii. External resources

32. The Secretariat has secured or is in the process of mobilizing additional external resources that will support the implementation of the 2026–2027 PoW and Budget through ongoing and newly approved projects.

~~33.~~ Overall, the total amount of external resources secured to date for the 2026–2027 biennium amounts to EUR 11,503,008. The Secretariat is verifying the figures to make sure all submissions by Projects and Regional Activity Centers (RACs) with regard to externally secured and to be secured funding are accurate. ~~and will be reported during the CoP.~~

[3] The projected consumption rate based on an assumption of a full incumbency of MAP Secretariat posts reaches 98.58% in 2024-2025.

34. With regards to external funding not yet secured that is required to fully deliver the proposed POW or expand its scope in several countries the amount is EUR 7,776,850.

iv. Composition of proposed budget for 2026-2027

35. The total amount from MTF envisaged for the implementation of the proposed 2026-2027 PoW is EUR 15,789,744 which is composed of EUR 11,413,576 from assessed contribution, EUR 1,192,968 from EU Discretionary Contribution, EUR 683,200 from the Greek Host Country Contribution and unutilized MTF balance of EUR 2.5 million to be carried forward from 2024-2025 out of which EUR 1.5 million from the MEL and EUR 1 million from the QML funding.

v. MTF surplus

36. The Total Net Assets of USD 6.1 million, as reflected in the Interim Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2023, comprises of the Working Capital Reserve of USD 1.3 million and the accumulated surplus of USD 3.7 million. A table showing the status of the MTF balance and its evolution from 2012 until 2024 is also attached as Appendix 2 to the present document. The interim figures for 2024 are also included in the table for which final figures are to be confirmed prior to the MAP Focal Points meeting upon receipt of the Audited UNEP 2024 financial Statement.

37. The Cash and Cash equivalents as at 31 December 2023 amount to USD 5.4 million. By deducting the Working Capital Reserve of USD 1.3 million the net cash balance is calculated at the amount of USD 4.1 million.

38. The potential unutilized positive MTF balance as of 31 December 2025 has been projected to be approximately USD 4.1 million (EUR 3.5 million with the July 2025 UN exchange rate of 0.856), which ~~expected to be updated at MAP Focal Points meeting~~/will be updated by COP 24, incorporating possible refunds from Implementing Partners which were received after the closure of 2023 account as well as the additional savings in 2024-2025. The Statement of Income and Expenditure and Changes in Reserve and Fund Balances for the MTF is presented in Annex IV.

39. With regards to the EU Discretionary Contribution account, a "Statement of Performance" report has been provided by UNEP HQs which describes the annual movement of income and expenditures and the changes in the available balances for this account. The available balance of USD 1.3 million, as reflected in the Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31 December 2021, reflects the excess of Income over Expenditure and the Exchange Rate (loss)/gain for the respective period. A table summarizing the evolution of this account from 2014 until 2021 is attached as Annex IV to the present document.[4]

40. The proposal of the Secretariat is to use EUR 2.5 million out of the total amount of these savings for the 2026-2027 PoW and Budget. The remaining balance can be used for the biennium 2028-2029 as indicated by COP 23 or can be retained as a net cash balance to facilitate the efficient delivery of the POW implementation.

41. Historical records of contributions indicate that the majority of funds are received during the second and third quarters of the fiscal year. As a result, there would be insufficient cash available at the beginning of each fiscal to make payments to the Regional Activity Centres (RACs), if there is no cash balance carried forward from the preceding fiscal year. While it is important to fully implement planned activities and avoid retaining an excessive cash balance in the UN's accounts,

[4] The Secretariat will update this table upon receipt of the information by HQ with regard to 2022, 2023 and 2024 ~~by the MAP Focal Points meeting in September 2025~~ at the latest by COP24.

it is equally important to retain a net cash balance, when conditions permit. The amount retained may be equivalent to the budget required to cover up to four months of Programme of Work implementation, approximately EUR 2.5 million.

vi. *Need to increase the assessed ordinary contributions of the Contracting Parties to the MTF*

42. It is important to reiterate that considering the above-mentioned anticipated reduction of MTF savings, and in order to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the MAP system, it is important to bring to the attention of the MAP Focal Points the need for a regular increase in assessed ordinary contributions. This increase should align with international practices which take into consideration the annual increments in the salary scale of the UN staff and other relevant factors recommended for other UNEP administered MEAs.

43. The 97th Meeting of the Bureau held on 1-2 July 2025 noted the need for increasing the level of the assessed contributions in the coming years and in this respect an increase of 2.5% in the assessed contributions with respect to 2025 (base year) may be proposed to be covered by the use of the unutilized positive balance of the MTF. Therefore, Contracting Parties' actual contributions would remain stable until the unutilized positive balance of the MTF is absorbed at the level agreed by the Contracting Parties.

44. In this respect "Table 1. Overview of Income and Commitments" of the proposed budget presented in Annex 1 has been prepared based on this approach that indicates that the increased assessed contribution of 2.5% are absorbed by the positive balance of the MTF (included in the amount EUR 2.5 million). Following discussions held during the Meeting of the MAP FPs in September 2025, it was agreed to present a second visualization of the proposed budget that does not consider as a separate item the 2.5% increase of the annual assessed contributions (Table 1.bis Overview of Income and Commitments – without 2.5% annual increase of the assessed contributions).

45. In consideration of above, it is recommended to increase the contributions [on regular basis] as it is the practice as may be the case in other MEAs as well as previous cases within the MAP Barcelona Convention system, ~~by 2.5% annually~~ starting from 2028-2029 biennium. ~~as compared to 2024-2025.~~

vii. *UN Scale of Assessments*

46. Table 2. "Expected Ordinary Income" contributions presented in Annex I, is based on the UN scale of assessments for the period 2025 to 2027, adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) at its 79th Session on 24 December 2024 in Resolution A/RES/79/249.

47. The UN Scale of assessments is updated triennially, while the MAP Programme of Work and Budget is adopted biennially. Therefore, the updated UN scale of assessments for 2025 was not yet final at the time of budget approval of 2024-2025 PoW and Budget at COP23. Following discussion with the relevant services of UNEP HQ and taking into consideration the practices of other MEAs, the 2022-2024 scale of assessment was applied on the contributions table included in the draft Decision at the time of COP 23 and was maintained for the entire biennium 2024-2025.

48. Based on the new scale of Assessment there is a slight decrease for some Contracting Parties and a considerable increase for several Contracting Parties with modest contributions to the MTF. Table 2. "Expected Ordinary Income" provides all the details. It has to be noted that any increase in the assessed contributions for 2026-2027[5] comes from the application of the scale of assessment agreed by the UNGA and not due to any proposed increase of the assessed contributions by the Secretariat to the Contracting Parties.

[5] As presented in Table 2 Expected Ordinary Income

viii. Working Capital Reserve

49. Since 2015, a Working Capital Reserve (WCR) has been established in line with Procedure 3 of the Financial Rules and Procedures for the funds of the Barcelona Convention. The level of the WCR shall be determined by the Conference of the Parties by consensus, bearing in mind the desirability of bringing its level to the recommended UN rate of 15 percent of the average annual budget for the biennium, inclusive of programme support costs. In line with COP 18 Decision IG.21/17, the WCR was established at the level of 15 percent of the annual expenditures.

ix. RAC Host Countries' Contributions

50. Part C (RAC's Hosting Countries' Contributions) of Table 1: "Overview of Income and Commitments" in the Annex to this Decision will be filled in upon receipt of the expected value of contributions from the host countries of the RACs and will be updated as soon as the value is confirmed by the respective host countries ~~before the MAP FP meeting~~ for COP24.

x. Financial Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025

51. For MTF (Fund: 40MEL & EU Discretionary Grant:M1-32QML-000008), the budget consumption rate for the biennium 2024-2025, as of 30 June 2025 (shown in Table 1 below) reached the level of approximately 79%, out of which 46% represents the expenditure level and 33% represents the commitments level. In further detail, as regards the budget allocated to the RACs, the rate of commitment is at the level of 100%, since the full amount of all the Legal Instruments for the PoW 2024-2025 have been committed to the RACs for the entire biennium, while the rate of expenditure is at the level of 36%, noting that this figure represents the expenses reported by the RACs for the period January-December 2024, as the reporting of expenses for the first semester 2025 is due by end of July, after which the expenditure rate is expected to be increased and figures will be updated. Regarding the budget of CU and MED POL, the expenditure rate as of 30 June 2025 is at the level of 49% and the commitment rate is at the level of 7%, noting that budget for some major activities, in particular the COP 24 organization, has not yet been committed at the time of preparation of the present document.

Table 1: Financial Implementation of CU/Components as of 30 June 2025

Fiscal Year/Period	(Multiple Items)					
Grant	(Multiple Items)					
Row Labels	Sum of Consumable Budget - Umoja	Sum of Actual - Umoja	Sum of Commitment - Umoja	Sum of Consumed Budget - Umoja	Sum of Consumption Consumable Rate	Sum of Actual rate
CU	4,760,079	2,376,619	161,281	2,537,900	53.32%	49.93%
INFO/RAC	661,417	168,109	493,308	661,417	100.00%	25.42%
MEDPOL	2,719,559	1,161,118	214,435	1,375,553	50.58%	42.70%
PAP/RAC	1,608,838	645,797	963,038	1,608,835	100.00%	40.14%
PB/RAC	1,706,478	724,524	981,954	1,706,478	100.00%	42.46%
REMPEC	2,183,146	907,496	1,275,648	2,183,144	100.00%	41.57%
SCP/RAC	629,963	133,123	496,840	629,963	100.00%	21.13%
SPA/RAC	1,626,130	558,150	1,067,980	1,626,130	100.00%	34.32%
UNEP/PSC	1,526,816	1,045,223	-	1,045,223	68.46%	68.46%
Grand Total	**17,422,427**	**7,720,159**	**5,654,483**	**13,374,642**	**76.77%**	**44.31%**
	17,422,427		7,050,651			
			40%			

xi. Arrears

52. As of 30 June 2025, four Contracting Parties were in arrears for more than two years, as detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of Arrears as of 30 June 2025

Country	Contributions in Arrears	Years
State of Libya	EUR 680,930	2011 - 2024
Syrian Arab Republic	EUR 130,135	2011 - 2024
Algeria	EUR 171,564	2017-2019, 2021, 2024
Lebanon	EUR 101,218	2016, 2019 - 2024

Status of payment of contributions for 2024/2025

53. The collection rate of the Assessed Ordinary Contributions for the year 2024 reached the level of 98,45% and for year 2025, reached the level of 51.56% and the pledges in arrears reached the amount of EUR 1,083,847, as of 30 June 2025 (Annex 3).

54. The collection rate on EC voluntary contribution for 2024 and 2025 is 100% ~~and the contribution for the 2025 is expected to be received~~. The collection rate for host country contribution for 2024 is 100% and the contribution for the 2025 is expected to be received (Annex 3).

Appendix

Proposed draft decision POW and budget 2026-2027

Proposed Draft Decision IG.27/14

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

Recalling Articles 18 and 24(2) of the Barcelona Convention and Decision IG.21/15 of COP 18 (Istanbul, Türkiye, 3-6 December 2013) on the Financial Rules and Procedures for the funds of the Barcelona Convention;

Recalling Decision IG.25/1 of COP 22 (UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027) adopting the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 (MTS) as the framework for the development and implementation of the Programme of Work of UNEP/MAP;

Welcoming the Progress Report on the activities carried out during the 2024-2025 biennium and the related expenditure report;

Emphasizing the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for MAP and the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF);

Welcoming the rate of collection of assessed contributions including parts of the arrears, and noting the need for their timely collection;

~~*Appreciating* the guidance provided to the Secretariat by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention during the 2024-2025 biennium;~~

Expressing deep appreciation to the Contracting Parties and partners that have provided additional financial and other resources for the implementation of the activities of the 2024-2025 biennium, including through the Bilateral Agreements with the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, the EU-funded SEMPA, EcAp MED Plus and Marine Litter MED Plus projects, the GEF-funded MedProgramme, and Fish EBM project, etc. and *welcoming* the financial resources mobilized by the Secretariat including Regional Activity Centers (RACs) for the same purpose;

Welcoming the simplified structure of the Programme of Work and Budget applied to 2026-2027 Programme of Work and Budget presentation to ensure that Contracting Parties have a clear understanding of the priorities and the relationship with the MTS, bearing in mind the Decision IG. 17/5 “Governance Paper” adopted by COP 15 (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008);

Noting with appreciation the progress made on the refurbishment of the premises of the Coordinating Unit with the strong support of Government of the Hellenic Republic and welcoming the actions to be undertaken to conclude this process in ~~2024~~ early 2026;

Recalling the Recommendation of the 8th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, (Antalya, Türkiye, 12-15 October 1993) to establish a Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) to combat accidental marine pollution ~~and Decision IG.17/8 of the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008), on the Programme of Work and Budget for the 2008-2009 biennium~~;

Recognizing the demonstrated value of the MAU~~P~~ and the important role it plays in providing the necessary assistance to Contracting Parties to combat accidental marine pollution as well as the progress made in the Mediterranean for the prevention of pollution from shipping activities and the proactive role of Contracting Parties in this respect;

Highlighting the need for a~~n~~ future increase in the contributions , [which for 2026-2027 biennium to be covered with part of the unutilized MTF positive balance of EUR 2,5 million], and to consider an increase of the contributions by the Contracting Parties in

2028-2029 biennium, with an aim of ensuring stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for MAP and the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF);

Appreciating the guidance and advice provided to the Secretariat by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on all policy and administrative matters related to the successful delivery of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and COP decisions, and having considered the reports of the 95th and 96th and 97th Bureau Meetings;

1. *Request* the Executive Director of UNEP and the Coordinator of MAP to execute the Budget taking into consideration Decision IG.21/15 on the Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures for the Contracting Parties, in particular the provisions under Annex II, Procedure 2, paragraph 4, which entrusts the responsibility to certify and authorize expenditures to UNEP in conformity with the Programme of Work and Budget Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties;

2. *Approve* the 2026-2027 Programme of Work and Budget set out in the Annex to this Decision including the Deliverables of the Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027 set out in the Appendix to this Decision;

3. *Approve* the budget appropriations, as set out in Table 1 (Annex I) "Overview of income and commitments" of the Annex to this Decision; the income in the amount of EUR 15,789,744, composed of the Mediterranean Trust Fund in the amount of EUR 11,413,576; the European Union discretionary contribution in the amount of EUR 1,192,968; and the host country contribution of EUR 683,200 (USD 800,000); the use of the unutilized MTF positive balance up to the amount of EUR 2,500,000;

4. *Approve* the use of the budget appropriations as set out in Table 3 (Annex I) Summary of Activities and Administrative Costs by MAP Components;

5. *Approve* the 2026-2027 assessed ordinary contributions from Parties shown in Table 2 (Annex I) "Expected Ordinary Income" of the Annex to this Decision, which is based on the 2025-2027 scale of assessment adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at its 79th Session on 24 December 2024 in Resolution A/RES/79/249;

[*6. Agree* to consider a regular increase of the assessed contribution to the MTF on annual basis at a minimum level of 2.5% starting from the 2028-2029 biennium;]

7. *Request* the Executive Director of UNEP, subject to the approval of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to extend the Mediterranean Trust Fund through 31 December 2027;

8. *Approve* the staffing of the Coordinating Unit including MED POL for 2026-2027 as indicated in Table 4a "Details of Salaries and Operational and other Activities Costs of the Secretariat" in the Annex I to this Decision;

9. *Take note of* the staffing of REMPEC for 2024-2025 as indicated in Table 4b (Annex I), "Details of Salaries and Administrative Costs of REMPEC" in Annex I to this Decision;

10. *Take note* of the external funding secured by the Secretariat and MAP Components in the amount of EUR 11,503,008 and external non-secured funding in the amount of EUR 7,776,850 for the implementation of the Programme of Work 2026-2027;

11. *Authorize* the Coordinator in line with Decision IG.21/15 on the Financial Rules and Procedures for the Funds of the Barcelona Convention, Procedure 2, paragraph 6, to

approve:

a) transfers within the same Programme and Component up to 20% within the criteria: (a) funds to be transferred are savings achieved upon committing funds for full delivery of activities planned in the approved Programme of Work; and (b) the transferred funds are strictly used for achieving the outcomes of the Programme of Work of concerned biennia in line with the outcomes of the 2022-2027 Mid-term Strategy;

b) transfers from savings from vacant posts as accumulated until these posts are filled or other administrative costs, for implementing activities under the same MAP lead Component where such savings have been generated, that have been approved with non-secured funding, in line with the approved POW and budget;

c) report such transfers for information at the first meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties following occurrence of such transfers; and to subsequent MAP Focal Points Meeting and COP.

12. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to strictly adhere to Procedure 4.2 of the Financial Rules and Procedures and pay their contributions to the MTF in the first quarter of each year to allow for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Work;

13. *Request* the Secretariat to keep up to date information on the status of Contracting Parties' contributions to the Mediterranean Trust Fund and to continue to post it in a publicly available place on the UNEP/MAP website and report, for information, to the Bureau of the Contracting Parties in their periodical meetings on the status of unutilized resources;

14. *Ask* the Secretariat to report regularly to the Bureau meetings on the status of financial implementation of all funds including the voluntary contributions and externally funded projects;

15. *Encourage* the MAP components, whose primary role is to provide thematic expertise to Contracting Parties in their scope of work rather than overall project or programme management to rely at optimal external expertise;

16. *Ask* the Secretariat to reduce the cost of meetings in particular for technical meetings interpretation and translation services, including on-line platforms for cost-efficiency and to use to the extent possible free-of-charge services;

17. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to adhere to nomination deadlines of their representatives in meetings of the MAP system and to avoid modifications and cancellation of their travel in order to minimize losses arising from the increase of airfare and cancellation fees and inefficiencies and *ask* the Secretariat to use to the extent possible modalities of payments to avoid the loss of funds in case of late cancelations of missions of participants;

18. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to consider increasing their voluntary contributions in cash and/or in kind in support of the implementation of the 2026-2027 Programme of Work and to support the resource mobilisation activities of the Secretariat;

19. *Invite* other partners including industry to contribute adequate human and financial resources to meet the external funding requirements for priorities still unfunded under the 2026-2027 Programme of Work and Budget;

20. *Request* the Secretariat to prepare the new MAP MTS 2028-2033 through an

inclusive participatory process for careful consideration by the MAP Focal Points and in consultation with the Bureau a result-based Programme of Work and Budget for 2028-2029, on the basis of several alternative scenarios, one of which should be based on a zero percent increase in ordinary assessed contributions, explaining the key principles and assumptions on which they are based and their implications, taking into account the progress achieved during the implementation of the MTS 2022-2027 and the new proposed MTS 2028-2033.

Annex 1

Budget for 2026-2027

Table 1. Overview of Income and Commitments

	Approved Budget 2024-2025			Proposed Budget 2026-2027[1]		
Part A (Core Funding)	**1,956,092**	exchange rate	0.862		exchange rate	0.854
	€	€	€	€	€	€
A. Income	*2024*	*2025*	*Total 2024-2025*	*2026*	*2027*	*Total 2026-2027*
Expected Ordinary Income						
MTF Ordinary Contributions [7]	5,706,788	5,706,788	11,413,576	~~5,849,458~~ 5,706,788	~~5,995,694~~ 5,706,788	~~11,845,152~~ 11,413,576
EU Discretionary Contribution	596,484	596,484	1,192,968	596,484	596,484	1,192,968
Greek Host Government Contribution[2]	344,800	344,800	689,600	341,600	341,600	683,200
TOTAL of Expected Ordinary Income	**6,648,072**	**6,648,072**	**13,296,144**	**6,787,542**	**6,933,778**	**13,721,320**
B. Unutilized MTF Balance	**1,432,807**	**1,856,697**	**3,289,504**	**1,268,177**	**1,231,823**	**2,500,000**
**2.5% towards 2025 and 2026 assessed contribution*				**142,670**	**288,906**	**431,576**
***The remaining balance*				**1,125,507**	**942,917**	**2,068,424**
Total Available Funds	**8,080,879**	**8,504,769**	**16,585,648**	**7,913,049**	**7,876,695**	**15,789,744**
C. Commitments	*2024*	*2025*	*Total 2024-2025*	*2026*	*2027*	*Total 2026-2027*
Activities	2,027,214	2,437,499	4,464,713	1,872,345	1,742,274	3,614,619
Posts and Other Administrative Costs[3]	5,206,610	5,267,429	10,474,039	5,248,876	5,297,152	10,546,028
Programme Support Costs	847,055	799,841	1,646,896	791,828	837,269	1,629,097
TOTAL Regular Commitments	**8,080,879**	**8,504,769**	**16,585,648**	**7,913,049**	**7,876,695**	**15,789,744**
Provision for Working Capital Reserve (incl. PSC)[4]			**0**			**0**
Grand Total	**8,080,879**	**8,504,769**	**16,585,648**	**7,913,049**	**7,876,695**	**15,789,744**

Table 1.bis Overview of Income and Commitments – without 2.5% annual increase of the assessed contributions[6]

	Approved Budget 2024-2025			Proposed Budget 2026-2027[(1)]		
Part A (Core Funding)	**1,956,092**	exchange rate	0.862		exchange rate	0.854
	€	€	€	€	€	€
A. Income	*2024*	*2025*	*Total 2024-2025*	*2026*	*2027*	*Total 2026-2027*
Expected Ordinary Income						
MTF Ordinary Contributions	5,706,788	5,706,788	11,413,576	5,706,788	5,706,788	11,413,576
EU Discretionary Contribution	596,484	596,484	1,192,968	596,484	596,484	1,192,968
Greek Host Government Contribution[(2)]	344,800	344,800	689,600	341,600	341,600	683,200
TOTAL of Expected Ordinary Income	**6,648,072**	**6,648,072**	**13,296,144**	**6,787,542**	**6,933,778**	**13,721,320**
B. Unutilized MTF Balance	**1,432,807**	**1,856,697**	**3,289,504**	**1,268,177**	**1,231,823**	**2,500,000**
Total Available Funds	**8,080,879**	**8,504,769**	**16,585,648**	**7,913,049**	**7,876,695**	**15,789,744**
C. Commitments	*2024*	*2025*	*Total 2024-2025*	*2026*	*2027*	*Total 2026-2027*
Activities	2,027,214	2,437,499	4,464,713	1,872,345	1,742,274	3,614,619
Posts and Other Administrative Costs[(3)]	5,206,610	5,267,429	10,474,039	5,248,876	5,297,152	10,546,028
Programme Support Costs	847,055	799,841	1,646,896	791,828	837,269	1,629,097
TOTAL Regular Commitments	**8,080,879**	**8,504,769**	**16,585,648**	**7,913,049**	**7,876,695**	**15,789,744**
Provision for Working Capital Reserve (incl. PSC)[(4)]			**0**			**0**
Grand Total	**8,080,879**	**8,504,769**	**16,585,648**	**7,913,049**	**7,876,695**	**15,789,744**

[6] Presentation of the proposed budget that does not consider as a separate item the 2.5% increase of the annual assessed contributions that was to be absorbed by the unspent positive balance of the MTF.

Part B (External Funding)

	Total 2022-2023	*Total 2024-2025*	*Total 2026-2027*[6]
UNEP/MAP Project Funding	7,605,204	10,033,896	6,692,871
Resources mobilized by Components	11,831,052	6,352,141	4,710,137
Resources to be mobilized	7,617,000	10,295,644	7,776,850
TOTAL	27,053,256	26,681,681	19,279,858

Part C (RAC's Hosting Countries' Contributions)[5]

Country (Center)	*2024*	*2025*	*Total 2024-2025*	*2026*	*2027*	*Total 2026-2027*[6]
Croatia (PAP/RAC)	266,546	266,546	533,092			
France (BP/RAC)			0			
Italy (INFO/RAC)			0			
Malta (REMPEC)	260,000	260,000	520,000			
Spain (SCP/RAC)	684,658	488,037	1,172,695			
Tunisia (SPA/RAC)			0			
TOTAL of Host Country Contributions (in cash/kind)	**1,211,204**	**1,014,583**	**2,225,787**			

(1): 1% annual increase in Posts and Other Administrative Costs

(2): The equivalent of USD 400,000 in EUR for the 2026–2027 biennium is calculated based on the UN Operational Rate of Exchange applicable as of 30 June 2025. This results in a slight decrease compared to the current biennium (2024–2025), for which the exchange rate used was 0.862.

(3): Includes the Greek Host Country Contribution.

(4): No additional resources required for the WCR for 2026-2027. The 15% of the difference between the Assessed Ordinary Contributions (MEL) allocation in 2024-2025 and 2026-2027 is to be returned back to the MEL Trust Fund balance.

(5): The national contributions towards MAP's Regional Activities Centers (RACs) from the respective Host Country.

(6): The figures will be updated following additional information to be received by the respective RAC's Host Countries.

Table 2. Expected Ordinary Income [3]

Assessed Ordinary Contributions apportioned to the Parties of the Barcelona Convention for the 2026–2027 biennium (EUR)[1]						
	0% Increase in A.O.C.*			0% Increase in A.O.C.*		
Contracting Parties	**Approved Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2024 |(in €)**	**Approved Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2025 (in €)**	**Approved Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2024-2025 (in €)**	**Proposed Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2026 (in €)**	**Proposed Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2027 (in €)**	**Proposed Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2026-2027 (in €)**
Albania	3,704	3,704	7,408	5,146	5,146	10,292
Algeria	50,469	50,469	100,938	44,768	44,768	89,536
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5,556	5,556	11,112	7,204	7,204	14,408
Croatia	42,135	42,135	84,270	45,283	45,283	90,566
Cyprus	16,669	16,669	33,338	18,010	18,010	36,020
Egypt	64,360	64,360	128,720	93,653	93,653	187,306
EU	142,670	142,670	285,340	142,670	142,670	285,340
France	1,999,323	1,999,323	3,998,646	1,985,237	1,985,237	3,970,474
Greece	150,482	150,482	300,964	144,081	144,081	288,163
Israel	259,755	259,755	519,510	313,377	313,377	626,754
Italy	1,476,573	1,476,573	2,953,146	1,447,504	1,447,504	2,895,009
Lebanon	16,669	16,669	33,338	11,321	11,321	22,641
Libya (State of Libya)	8,334	8,334	16,668	20,583	20,583	41,166
Malta	8,797	8,797	17,594	10,292	10,292	20,583
Monaco	5,093	5,093	10,186	5,660	5,660	11,321
Montenegro	1,852	1,852	3,704	2,058	2,058	4,117
Morocco	25,466	25,466	50,932	30,360	30,360	60,720
Slovenia	36,579	36,579	73,158	39,622	39,622	79,245

	0% Increase in A.O.C.*			0% Increase in A.O.C.*		
Contracting Parties	**Approved Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2024 |(in €)**	**Approved Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2025 (in €)**	**Approved Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2024-2025 (in €)**	**Proposed Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2026 (in €)**	**Proposed Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2027 (in €)**	**Proposed Assessed Ordinary Contributions for 2026-2027 (in €)**
Spain	988,086	988,086	1,976,172	975,123	975,123	1,950,246
Syrian Arab Republic	4,167	4,167	8,334	3,087	3,087	6,175
Tunisia	8,797	8,797	17,594	9,262	9,262	18,525
Türkiye	391,252	391,252	782,504	352,485	352,485	704,970
TOTAL Assessed Ordinary Contributions (MTF)	**5,706,788**	**5,706,788**	**11,413,576**	**5,706,788**	**5,706,788**	**11,413,576**

Additional Contributions apportioned to the Parties of the Barcelona Convention for the 2026–2027 biennium (EUR)[1]

	Expected Contribution for 2024 (in €)	**Expected Contribution for 2025 (in €)**	**Expected Contribution for 2024-2025 (in €)**	**Expected Contribution for 2026 (in €)**	**Expected Contribution for 2027 (in €)**	**Expected Contribution for 2026-2027 (in €)**
EC Discretionary Contribution	596,484	596,484	**1,192,968**	596,484	596,484	**1,192,968**
Host Country Contribution (Greece) [(2)]	344,800	344,800	**689,600**	341,600	341,600	**683,200**

(1): The proposed Assessed Ordinary Contributions are aligned with the current UN assessed rates (2026-2027) based on the Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 24 December 2024.

(2): The equivalent of USD 400,000 in EUR for the 2026–2027 biennium is calculated based on the UN Operational Rate of Exchange applicable as of 30 June 2025. This results in a slight decrease compared to the current biennium (2024–2025), for which the exchange rate used

(3): The assessed contribution for 2026 and 2027 is the same with the 2024 and 2025 as explained in the footnote (7) under Table 1

*A.O.C.=Assessed Ordinary Contribution(s)

Table 3. Summary of Activities and Administrative Costs by Component (MTF/EU Discretionary Contribution)

		Approved 2024-2025 (in €)			Proposed Budget 2026-2027 ~~/ 1% annual increase in Posts and Other Administrative Costs~~		
COMPONENTS	**ACTIVITIES/ADMIN COSTS (in €)**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024-2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2026-2027**
CU	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	246,000	769,691	1,015,691	225,000	575,000	800,000
	POSTS AND OPERATIONAL COSTS	1,637,901	1,669,135	3,307,036	1,621,465	1,637,099	3,258,564
	TOTAL	**1,883,901**	**2,438,826**	**4,322,727**	**1,846,465**	**2,212,099**	**4,058,564**
MED POL	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	320,000	290,000	610,000	235,000	270,000	505,000
	POSTS AND OPERATIONAL COSTS	892,001	906,215	1,798,216	915,059	923,995	1,839,054
	TOTAL	**1,212,001**	**1,196,215**	**2,408,216**	**1,150,059**	**1,193,995**	**2,344,054**
REMPEC	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	260,809	243,143	503,952	221,835	164,483	386,318
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	675,093	690,465	1,365,558	697,370	704,343	1,401,713
	TOTAL	**935,902**	**933,608**	**1,869,510**	**919,205**	**868,826**	**1,788,031**
PB/RAC	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	225,908	265,000	490,908	257,010	119,918	376,928
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	532,700	532,700	1,065,400	538,027	543,407	1,081,434
	TOTAL	**758,608**	**797,700**	**1,556,308**	**795,037**	**663,325**	**1,458,362**
PAP/RAC	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	270,000	210,916	480,916	135,000	212,278	347,278
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	488,317	488,317	976,634	493,200	498,132	991,332
	TOTAL	**758,317**	**699,233**	**1,457,550**	**628,200**	**710,410**	**1,338,610**
SPA/RAC	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	351,197	372,000	723,197	415,000	170,000	585,000
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	371,547	371,547	743,094	375,262	379,015	754,277
	TOTAL	**722,744**	**743,547**	**1,466,291**	**790,262**	**549,015**	**1,339,277**

		Approved 2024-2025 (in €)			Proposed Budget 2026-2027 ~~/ 1% annual increase in Posts and Other Administrative Costs~~		
COMPONENTS	**ACTIVITIES/ADMIN COSTS (in €)**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024-2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2026-2027**
INFO/RAC	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	194,800	156,581	351,381	155,000	115,595	270,595
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	124,250	124,250	248,500	125,493	126,747	252,240
	TOTAL	**319,050**	**280,831**	**599,881**	**280,493**	**242,342**	**522,835**
SCP/RAC	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	158,500	130,168	288,668	163,500	85,000	248,500
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	140,000	140,000	280,000	141,400	142,814	284,214
	TOTAL	**298,500**	**270,168**	**568,668**	**304,900**	**227,814**	**532,714**
CC/RAC	TOTAL ACTIVITIES	-	-	-	65,000	30,000	95,000
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	**-**	**-**	**-**	**65,000**	**30,000**	**95,000**
	SUBTOTAL	**6,889,023**	**7,360,128**	**14,249,151**	**6,779,621**	**6,697,826**	**13,477,447**
PSC*		**847,055**	**799,841**	**1,646,896**	**791,828**	**837,269**	**1,629,097**
GRAND TOTAL		**7,736,078**	**8,159,969**	**15,896,047**	**7,571,449**	**7,535,095**	**15,106,544**

*PSC calculation 13% on MTF and 7% on EU QML prorated to the respective income

TOTAL ACTIVITIES	**2,027,214**	**2,437,499**	**4,464,713**	**1,872,345**	**1,742,274**	**3,614,619**
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE & OPERATIONAL	**4,861,809**	**4,922,629**	**9,784,438**	**4,907,276**	**4,955,552**	**9,862,828**
DIRECT COSTS	**6,889,023**	**7,360,128**	**14,249,151**	**6,779,621**	**6,697,826**	**13,477,447**
PSC	**847,055**	**799,841**	**1,646,896**	**791,828**	**837,269**	**1,629,097**
GRAND TOTAL	**7,736,078**	**8,159,969**	**15,896,047**	**7,571,449**	**7,535,095**	**15,106,544**

Table 4 a. Details of Salaries and Operational and other Activities Costs (Secretariat)

Secretariat	Approved (in €)			Proposed Budget (in €)		
	2024	2025	Total 2024-2025	2026	2027	Total 2026-2027
	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF
Professional Staff [3]						
Coordinator - D.1	252,341	256,126	508,467	258,687	261,274	519,961
Deputy Coordinator - P.5	227,718	231,134	458,852	233,445	235,779	469,224
Programme Officer (Governance) - P.4	195,799	198,736	394,535	200,723	202,730	403,453
Programme Officer (MED POL) - P.5	227,718	231,134	458,852	233,445	235,779	469,224
Programme Officer (MED POL) - P.4	195,799	198,736	394,535	200,723	202,730	403,453
Programme Officer (MED POL Monitoring & Assessment Officer) - P.3	165,613	168,097	333,710	169,778	171,476	341,254
Programme Officer (Socio-economic Activities/ Sustainable Development) - P.3	165,613	168,097	333,710	169,778	171,476	341,254
Programme Officer (MED POL Pollution) - P.3	165,613	168,097	333,710	169,778	171,476	341,254
Legal Officer - P.3	165,613	168,097	333,710	169,778	171,476	341,254
Programme Officer QSR Expert - P.3	165,613	168,097	333,710	169,778	171,476	341,254
Information and Communication Officer-P.3	165,613	168,097	333,710	169,778	171,476	341,254
Admin/Fund Management Officer - P.4[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administration Officer - P.2[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Programme Officer (Marine Litter Programme Management Officer) - P.2/P.3[4]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Programme Officer (Offshore Programme Officer) - P.2/P.3[4]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance & Administrative Officer - P.2[9]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Professional Staff	**2,093,053**	**2,124,448**	**4,217,501**	**2,145,691**	**2,167,148**	**4,312,839**

Secretariat	Approved (in €)			Proposed Budget (in €)		
	2024	2025	Total 2024-2025	2026	2027	Total 2026-2027
	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF
General Service Staff[3]						
Information Assistant- G.5	61,606	63,146	124,752	63,777	64,415	128,192
Programme Assistant - G.5	61,606	63,146	124,752	63,777	64,415	128,192
Programme Assistant - G.5	61,606	63,146	124,752	63,777	64,415	128,192
Programme Assistant (MED POL) - G.5	61,606	63,146	124,752	63,777	64,415	128,192
Programme Assistant (MED POL/CU) - G.4	54,069	55,421	109,490	55,975	56,535	112,510
Meetings and Procurement Assistant - G.6[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payments and Travel Assistant - G.5[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Budget Assistant - G.6[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Assistant - G.6[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Assistant - (Assistant to the Coordinator/CU) - G.6[6]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Clerk - G.4[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0
IT Assistant - G.5[5]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance and Budget Assistant - G.5[9]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Project posts with limited duration						
(MedProgramme) Programme Assistant - (CU) - G.5[8]	61,606	63,146	124,752	0	0	0
(MedProgramme) Finance and Budget Assistant - (CU) - G.5[7]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total General Service Staff	**362,099**	**371,151**	**733,250**	**311,083**	**314,195**	**625,278**
TOTAL POSTS	**2,455,152**	**2,495,599**	**4,950,751**	**2,456,774**	**2,481,343**	**4,938,117**

Secretariat	Approved (in €)			Proposed Budget (in €)		
	2024	2025	Total 2024-2025	2026	2027	Total 2026-2027
	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF
Operational and other Activities Costs						
Travel on Official Business	64,750	64,751	129,501	64,750	64,751	129,501
Other Office costs [2]	10,000	15,000	25,000	15,000	15,000	30,000
Total Operational and other Activities Costs	**74,750**	**79,751**	**154,501**	**79,750**	**79,751**	**159,501**
TOTAL Posts and Operational and other Activities Costs	**2,529,902**	**2,575,350**	**5,105,252**	**2,536,524**	**2,561,094**	**5,097,618**

(1) Post is covered by the Programme Support Costs.

(2) Allocation for MAP staff training, ICT services and MAP Office contingency plan development, and expenses to UNEP HQ on maintenance of the MAP website. Any unspent budget balances to be utilized for Activities.

(3) 1% annual increase in P&G staff salaries in 2026 and 2027.

(4) Post to be funded by external resources or secondment.

(5) Post to be funded by external resources if mobilized.

(6) Post to be funded by CAL and OTA equally shared as per COP23 decision.

(7) Post to be covered by project funding (GEF)

(8) The budget for this post is part of the total commitment to MedProgramme at the level of 200,000 USD per biennium. The funding of this post from the MTF will end on 31 December 2025.

(9) These positions to be funded 50% by OTA and other external project as appropriate provided funds availability.

Table 4 b. Details of Salaries and Administrative Costs (REMPEC)

REMPEC	Approved Budget 2024-2025 (in €)			Proposed Budget 2026-2027 (in €)		
	2024	2025	Total 2024-2025	2026	2027	Total 2026-2027
	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF	MTF
Professional Staff						
Head of Office P.4	179,608		179,608	0		0
Head of Office P.5		182,302	182,302	175,596	183,825	359,421
Programme Officer (Prevention) P.3	137,270	139,329	276,599	158,176	139,116	297,292
Programme Officer (OPRC) P.3	143,152	145,299	288,451	158,176	139,116	297,292
Programme Officer (Offshore Programme Officer) – P.2 (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Professional Officer (APO) (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Professional Staff	**460,030**	**466,930**	**926,960**	**491,948**	**462,057**	**954,005**
General Service Staff(3)						
Administrative/Financial Assistant - G7 (3)	44,401	45,067	89,468	45,647	45,525	91,172
Assistant to the Director - G.7	49,312	50,052	99,364	48,003	50,029	98,032
Secretary - G.5	43,275	43,924	87,199	43,496	45,349	88,845
Total General Service Staff	**136,988**	**139,043**	**276,031**	**137,146**	**140,903**	**278,049**
TOTAL POSTS	**597,018**	**605,973**	**1,202,991**	**629,094**	**602,960**	**1,232,054**
Other Administrative Costs						
Travel on Official Business	25,000	25,000	50,000	20,500	22,950	43,450
Office costs	53,075	59,492	112,567	47,776	78,433	126,209
Total Other Administrative Costs	**78,075**	**84,492**	**162,567**	**68,276**	**101,383**	**169,659**
TOTAL POST AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	**675,093**	**690,465**	**1,365,558**	**697,370**	**704,343**	**1,401,713**

(1) This post to be funded by external resources or secondment
(2) This post will be covered by the relevant International Maritime Organization Member State in the framework of the IMO Associate Professional Officer (APO) programme.
(3) This post is partially covered by IMO contribution (Euro 13,000 per annum) paid from IMO's share of Project Support Costs.

Annex 2

Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027

PROGRAMME 1: POLLUTION

Main activity (means of implementation)	Expected deliverable	Lead Component	Other Component(s)	Partners	Related COP Decision	SDG Targets	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Comments
Outcome 1.1. Strategies and Action plan addressing marine litter and plastics developed and implemented through comprehensive, coherent and collaborative approaches							**12,000**	**12,000**	**24,000**	**408,800**	**250,800**	
1.1.1. Undertake national, sub-regional, regional actions to boost the implementation of the Marine Litter Regional Plan in the Mediterranean **(in-house expertise, consultancy, regional/ sub-regional meetings, regional platform, pilots and national capacity building)**	a) "Adopt-a-beach" measures implemented in 5 countries in 22 sites involving civil society. b) "Fishing-for-Litter" measures implemented in 4 countries in 12 sites involving local and fisherman association. c) Minimum 2 joint activities implemented with partners of the ML Regional Cooperation Platform or GPML. d) Up to 7 CPs supported to implement the upgraded IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) on Marine Litter and its Indicators.	MED POL	CU, SCP/RAC; REMPEC, SPA/RAC, EU funded ML MED PLUS Project,	UNEP, GPML, GFCM, BSC, OSPAR, HELCOM, ML MED PLUS Project	LBS Protocol (Articles 3, and 4) COP 15 Decision IG.17/6 - Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 18 Decision IG.21/3 - Ecosystems Approach including adopting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and targets (Annex I) COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Articles 11, 12, 15) COP 22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)	12.4; 12.5; 14.1 ; 5.5, 5.c			-	111,000	50,000	
	e) Technical support provided to 3 CPs, which so request, to implement the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships and the related provisions of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, where appropriate.	REMPEC, CU	MED POL	IMO, FAO, GFCM, EBRD					-			
	f) Awareness raised on the status of lost containers in the Mediterranean through a regional workshop to identify potential regional measures								-	36,600	36,600	
	g) Awareness raised and sharing of best practices on the impact of pollution from marine plastic pellets, through a Regional workshop.								-	64,200	64,200	
	h) Synergies maximized between the work at regional and global level to address marine plastic litter from ships, as well as other relevant plans or initiatives, maintained and strengthened.								-		-	

1.1.2. Capitalize pilot actions addressing marine litter within Marine Protected Areas and Mediterranean Islands **(In-house expertise, consultancy, pilot actions, workshops, publications)**	a) One BeMed Islands community is managed, supported and strengthened. b) Best practices are shared across Mediterranean Islands and MPAs. c) Seven pilot actions involving private and public stakeholders are implemented to test innovative prevention measures across Albania, Turkey, Cyprus, Tunisia, France and Spain.	SCP/RAC		BeMed, SMILO, CAPIMED Project and Waste Agency of Catalonia.	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 3.2 and 3.3 on Sustainable Tourism) COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (articles 9, 10, 11) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure T1 addressing sectors of relevance for the Barcelona Convention)	14.1	-	-	-	82,000	-	
1.1.3. Implement and scale up a robust policy framework to reduce and prevent plastic use **(In-house expertise, consultancy, pilot actions, workshops, publications, partnership agreements)**	a) Technical assistance and capacity building provided to new 2 countries to develop national measures tackling SUPs, including EPR. b) Technical assistance and capacity building provided to at least 6 new sub-national authorities to address the entire life cycle of plastics. c) Technical assistance provided to the Coalition of Local and Sub-National Governments to end plastic pollution	SCP/RAC	MED POL	WWF, ML MED Plus Project & Waste Agency of Catalonia	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 3.2 and 3.3 on Sustainable Tourism) COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (articles 9, 10 and 11) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure T1 addressing sectors of relevance for the Barcelona Convention)	12.4; 12.5; 14.1	12,000	12,000	**24,000**	65,000	50,000	

1.1.4. Engage businesses to prevent plastic use and reduce plastic leakage (In-house expertise, consultancy, pilot actions, workshops, publications, partnership agreements)	a) Implement and upscale a certification scheme for HORECA businesses reducing SUPs at the regional level. b) Organisation of a regional forum with representatives from the industry sector and public sector on the prevention of SUPs and plastic leakage. c) Technical assistance and capacity building provided to industry value chain to prevent pellet loss.	SCP/RAC	MED POL	GIZ, BeMed, Savethemed, Plastic Europe, ML MED Plus Project & Waste Agency of Catalonia	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 3.2 and 3.3 on Sustainable Tourism) COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (articles 9, 10 and 11) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure T1 addressing sectors of relevance for the Barcelona Convention)	12.4; 12.5; 14.2			-	50,000	50,000	
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							**196,955**	**10,000**	**206,955**	**4,485,166**	**736,905**	
1.2.1.Develop new regulatory measures in line with article 15 of the LBS Protocol for priority sectors (Consultancies, regional meeting, PhD studies)	a) New/Updated Guidelines concerning pleasure craft activities and the protection of the marine environment in the Mediterranean prepared for submission to REMPEC Focal Points for possible approval by COP25.	REMPEC	CU	HELMEPA, SYBASS, EMSA	Decision IG 17/9 (2008), Article 11 Prevention & Emergency Protocol				-		51,400	
	b) Raise awareness on the impact of noise pollution from ships in the Mediterranean			IMO GloNoise Partnership, EMSA	Article 11 Emergency and Prevention protocol Mediterranean Strategy (CSO 7)				-		63,265	
	c) Guidelines for the prevention/reduction of construction and demolition waste sector affecting marine and coastal environment prepared for submission to the MED POL Focal Points meeting. d) Best practices identified on the management of plastic/ML waste generated from Aquaculture sector and shared with the MED POL Focal Points. e) Guidelines to enhance the environmental protection of marine and coastal environment with regard to plastic waste recycling practices prepared and submitted to the MED POL Focal Points.	MED POL, SCP/RAC	CU REMPEC	WES, EU funded ML MED PLUS Project, MSSD, Waste Agency of Catalonia	LBS Protocol (Article 5) COP 22 Decision IG.25/5 - Amendments to Annexes I, II and IV to the LBS Protocol (Annex I)		25,000		**25,000**	15,000	30,000	

1.2.2 Take national and regional actions including enabling investments, to implement the adopted Regional Plans **(Consultancies, in-house expertise, SSFAs, Meetings)**	a) Up to 7 CPs supported to implement at least 5 common measures stemming from the Regional Plans following an internal assessment of the measures provided in the NAPs prepared by the CPs. b) Project portfolio of NAPs reviewed and potential funding explored for their implementation at national or sub-regional level. c) Feasibility studies on Waster Water Sector in 3 CPs delivered including socio-economic assessment, technical ToRs for the works implementation, capacity building program for national agencies involved in project operation, and communication & gender action plan.	MED POL, SCP/RAC	CU, MedProgramme, MLMed+, EcAp+,	CPs, UNEP, GPML, EU relevant Directives (MSSD, The revised European Union's (EU) Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive 2024/3019), EcAp MED PLUS Project	LBS Protocol (Articles 5 and 13) Decision IG.25/8: Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Annex I-Article V)	5.5, 5.c; 6.5; 6.6; 6.a; 12.4; 13.1; 14.1 ; 13.2; 14.2; 14.5			-	3,099,166	350,000	
1.2.3 Promote sustainable Desalination Sector in the Mediterranean (Consultancies, SSFAs)	Support provided to at least 2 CPs for implementing desalination guidelines with the focus of the brine management	MED POL	CU, SCP/RAC SPA/RAC	CPs, Fondazione Univerde, Global water Intelligence, MedProgramme	UNEP/MED WG.563/13: Guideline on Reginal Standards for Discharge from Desalination Plants and Decision Support Systems for Sustainable Desalination Technologies in the Med	6.3; 6.a; 12.4;	-		-	60,000	20,000	
1.2.4 Assess pollution loads from land- based sources and activities **In-house expertise.**	A concise sector - specific pressure regional assessment report prepared, based on NAPs/NBB reports (2025-2035) using NAP indicators. The outcome reported to the MED POL Focal Points meeting.	MED POL, INFO/RAC	CU	WES, MSSD, MedProgramme	LBS Protocol (Articles 5 and 13)	5.5, 5.c; 6.5; 6.6; 6.a; 12.4; 13.1; 14.1 ; 13.2; 14.2; 14.5			-	-	20,000	
1.2.5 Undertake national and regional action to enhance the implementation of the Dumping Protocol **(In-house expertise, regional meeting)**	Best practices from CPs on the dumping of Inert Geological Materials compiled and presented, with a proposal for their inclusion in the Compendium of Best Practices for implementing the Dumping Protocol.	MED POL	CU, REMPEC	IMO, Other Regional Seas	Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea (Articles 1 and 6) COP 22 Decision IG.25/6 - Amendments to the Annex to the Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea COP 20 Decision IG.23/12 - Updated Guidelines on Management of Dredged Materials	5,5; 12.4; 14.1	30,000		**30,000**		35,000	

1.2.6. Undertake pilot actions to prevent, eliminate and dispose in an environmentally sound manner obsolete chemicals. **(Consultancies, SSFAs, Meetings, Implementation Contracts)**	a) Phase 2: 1,275 Tons of PCBs [Albania (240 T), Algeria (613 T), Tunisia (326 T), Bosnia and Herzegovina (19 T), Montenegro (77 T)] collected and disposed. b) Available metallic Mercury in Tunisia (100 T) removed.	MED POL,/ MedProgram me	CU	UNEP Chemicals, MedProgramme	Hazardous Waste Protocol (Articles 3, 5, 6, 10) LBS Protocol (Article 15) Decision IG.20/8.3: Regional Plan for the management of PCBs waste and nine pesticides for the Mediterranean Region (2004) (Appendix B) Regional Plan on the Reduction of Inputs of Mercury (Decision IG.20/8.1 - 2012) (Annex I)	5,5; 12.4; 14.1			-	1,281,000		
1.2.7. Improve follow-up of pollution events and enhance level of enforcement and the prosecution of discharge offenders	a) Seventh Meeting of MENELAS organized and recommendations implemented through technical support provided to CPs, which so request b) Analysis on the minimum level of penalties including the development of guidelines for implementation of the Decision on minimum criteria c) Improve technical capacity to at least 11 CPs through the participation to coordinated aerial surveillance operations for illicit ship pollution discharges.	REMPEC	CU	IMO, UNODC, INTERPOL, CBSS (ENPRO), OSPAR (NSN), Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, RAMOGE Agreement, Cedre, UPGM	Decision IG.21/9 COP 22 Decision IG.25/16	12.4; 14.1	64,455		**64,455**		20,740	
1.2.8. Implement strategies for the prevention of toxic chemicals, including policy support (In-house expertise, consultancy, meetings)	a) Technical support is provided to 1 country for the update / adoption of new regulation for the restriction of import and use of new POPs. b) Technical support is provided to additional countries for the development of a roadmap for the update / adoption of new regulation for the restriction of import, manufacturing and use of new POPs.	SCP/RAC	MED POL	BRS Secretariat, Waste Agency of Catalonia	LBS Protocol (articles 3,4 and 5) COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (articles 9, 10 and 11, and Appendix II). COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing)	12.4; 14.1	17,500	10,000	**27,500**	15,000	30,000	

1.2.9. Increase access to information on toxic chemicals, in particular newly listed POPs and health impact (In-house expertise, consultancy, national trainings, public webinars, awareness raising)	a) 1 awareness campaign to raise awareness on health impact of newly listed POPs, based on human biomonitoring data collected in southern Mediterranean countries. b) 1 Regional Communication Campaign and event on the importance of prevention approach and tools to implement it at the national level.	SCP/RAC	MED POL	Health Authorities, BRS Secretariat	LBS Protocol (articles 3, 4 and 5) COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (articles 9, 10 and 11, and Appendix II). COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing)	12.4; 14.1			-	15,000		
1.2.10. Strengthen the capacity of individual coastal states to respond efficiently to marine pollution incidents (in-house expertise, consultancy, national workshops, sub-regional workshops, training, exercises and meetings, sub-regional Cooperation Agreements)	a) National Preparedness and Response Systems organized through National/Regional workshops to implement the Improvement Plan	REMPEC	CU, EMSA	IMO, IOPCF, IPIECA, ITOPF, Cedre, ISPRA,	Emergency and Prevention Protocol; COP 8 Decision IG 3/5 - Establishment of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit COP 15 Decision IG 17/18 - Special revolving to cover expenses related to the activities of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit COP 20 Decision IG.23/11: Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents COP 22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (CSO 1)	12.4; 14.1	10,000		**10,000**		35,500	
	b) Technical and capacity building support to CPs to update National Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plans.						10,000		**10,000**		34,200	
	c) Coordinated spill response exercises and trainings implemented to strengthen capacities at the National and Sub-regional level to respond to HNS and oil spills and to improve the quality and interoperability of response capacities.			IMO, IPIECA					-		18,300	
	d) Best practices shared through regional workshops and meetings organized to assist in the development, updating, and implementation of Sub-regional contingency plans for cooperation and synergies operationalized and enhanced.			RAMOGE, IOPC, ITOPF, Cedre, IPIECA, Sea Alarm, MONGOOS, ISPRA					-			
	e) Relaunch the MGICAP (Mediterranean Government Industry Cooperation Action Plan between REMPEC and MOIG to improve combined government/ industry integrated response to pollution accidents.			IMO, IPIECA, MOIG			10,000		**10,000**		7,500	
	f) Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) maintained and, where appropriate, expanded; and MAU special revolving fund balance maintained.			RAMOGE, IOPC, ITOPF, Cedre, IPIECA, Sea Alarm, MONGOOS			30,000		**30,000**		4,500	

	g) Guidelines on the decision-making process for granting access to a place of refuge for ships updated.			IMO, EMSA					-		16,500	
	h) Guide to good Practices for port reception facility providers and users adopted in 2009, updated.		REMPEC	IMO					-			
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							**62,000**	**7,000**	**69,000**	**401,500**	**706,000**	
1.3.1.Enhancing the capacities and networks of Business Support Organizations for Sustainable Business Development across the Mediterranean region **(In-house expertise, regional meetings/webinars, travels and accommodation)**	a) 100 Mediterranean Business Support Organizations supported and coached to enhance their sustainable business development services b) 20 BSO supported to improve their capacities and networks for circular business development c) 30 experts trained in circular business development	SCP/RAC	MED POL	Mediterranean Business Support Organizations; Trainers and Experts; Sustainable Entrepreneurs and Businesses. Waste Agency of Catalonia	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure B1 targeting mainly BSOs)	5.5; Targets of SDG 8, and 12	10,000	-	**10,000**	9,500	-	
1.3.2. Implement the Switchers Support Programme **(regional programme for sustainable business development) (In-house expertise, external services)**	a) Enhanced support to entrepreneurs, businesses , experts and Business Support Organizations through the provision of a platform offering a full set of circular business development methodologies and tools. b) The platform counts with 8,000 registered users into the platform. C) 60 entrepreneurs and businesses supported to develop and/or enhance their circular business models.	SCP/RAC		Mediterranean Business Support Organizations; Trainers and Experts; Sustainable Entrepreneurs and Businesses; Investors/Financial Actors, Waste Agency of Catalonia	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measures E1, E2, E3 and E4 targeting mainly entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs).	5.5; 5.a; Targets of SDG 8, and 12	25,000	-	**25,000**	250,000	480,000	
1.3.3. Scale up Open Innovation and Corporate Venturing approaches (In-house expertise, consultancy, platform, training)	a) 2 Open Innovation challenges are launched in key value chains b) Technical assistance delivered to circular startups implementing 2 solutions through open innovation procedures	SCP/RAC		Mediterranean Business Support Organizations; Trainers and Experts; Sustainable Entrepreneurs and Businesses	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure E3 targeting mainly entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs).	5.5; all targets of SDG 8, and 12.	-	-	**-**		-	

1.3.4. Enhance the Switchers Community, build a member-centered governance and internal coordination mechanisms for community development. (In-house expertise, consultancy)	a) VI and VII editions of the "Switchers Talks" (community annual meeting) are organized. b) The Switchers Products platform hosts products and services and offers marketing services to the community members. c) The Regional Communication & Marketing Campaign 2026-2027 is developed.	SCP/RAC		REVOLVE, Waste Agency of Catalonia	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure E2 targeting mainly entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs).	5.5; all targets of SDG 8, and 12.	10,000	-	**10,000**	36,000	80,000	
1.3.5. Enhance and scale up the Sustainable Finance MED Observatory (In-house expertise, consultancy)	a) Organisation of 1 Regional Forum on Sustainable Finance and Impact Investing. b) 1 Virtual Community of Practice is upscaled. c) The communication and Advocacy Plan for 2026-2027 is enhanced and upscaled.	SCP/RAC		EVPA, Waste Agency of Catalonia	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure F1 targeting mainly Financial actors)	5.5; all targets of SDG 8, and 12.	7,000	7,000	**14,000**	60,000	70,000	
1.3.6. Invest in innovative sustainable/circular business models, empowering start-ups to access impact investing (In-house expertise, consultancy, regional event, Partnership Agreement)	a) the Switchers Fund second investment round is organized. b) 10 MSMEs are supported with impact investing tools (equity, quasi-equity, loans) and technical assistance.	SCP/RAC		FCdM, SEFEA IMPACT, FEBEA, Waste Agency of Catalonia	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure F2 targeting mainly Financial actors)	5.5; all targets of SDG 8, and 12.	10,000	-	**10,000**	46,000	76,000	

1.3.7 Development of post-consumer textile waste recycling and revalorisation pilot projects across the Mediterranean.	a) 5 Pilot projects to collect, re-use and recycle post-consumer textile waste implemented in Egypt, Italy, Lebanon, Spain, and Tunisia. b) 5 Pilot projects to prevent and revalorize post-consumer textile waste implemented in Egypt, Italy, Lebanon, Spain, and Tunisia.	SCP/RAC	MED POL	INTERREG Next Med "Waste2Fashion: Developing a Pilot Circular System for post-consumer textile waste in the Mediterranean" Project. CEDARE, Egyptian Clothing Bank, Next Technology Teconotessile Società Nazionale di Rizerca, Fondazione Museo del Tessuto di Prato, Federation Tunisienne du Textile et de l'Habillement, FabricAid	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measures E1 and E3 targeting mainly entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs).	5.5; all targets of SDG 8, and 12.	-	-	-	-		
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							**87,862**	**10,000**	**97,862**	**0**	**131,000**	
	a) 1 technical regional report as analysis of SDG6 at Mediterranean level: current state and solutions for SDG 6.3 "Improve water quality, wastewater treatment and safe reuse" implementation (consultant & in-house expertise) b) 1 webinar	PLAN BLEU, MED POL	CU, PAP/RAC	IME	IG.26/8 Regional Plan on Stormwater management IG.25/8 Regional Plan on Urban wastewater treatment and management COP 21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies Decision IG.25/1	SDG 6, especially SDG target 6.3	20,000	-	**20,000**	-	-	
1.4.1. Develop and implement a one-health approach for the Mediterranean **(In-house expertise, consultancy, workshop, publication)**	c) 1 technical regional report on the impact of urban green infrastructure Nature based solutions -NbS and urban architecture (culture-based solutions - cbS) on health and climate resilience in Mediterranean cities (case studies in the southern shore where climate change significantly affects vegetation) - consultant & in house expertise d) 1 Regional workshop to present and discuss the technical study with national experts: based on the technical report, discussion possible strategies for implementing climate-resilient	Plan Bleu	PAP/RAC; SCP-RAC, CC/RAC	MedCities, C40, ICLEI, UCLG and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (circular economy)	COP 21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies Decision IG.25/1	SDG 11	10,862	10,000	**20,862**	-	20,000	

	and health-promoting urban green infrastructure.											
1.4.2. Support the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, facilitating the entry into effect of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA), and explore the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NOx ECA) **(in-house expertise, consultancy, national workshops, conference services, venue, travel arrangements, regional meeting)**	a) Technical support and capacity building provided to CPs, which so request, to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI. b) Implementation of different IMO guidelines on scrubbers use and potentially the development of a regional policy/ recommendations of the discharge of wash water from scrubbers (follow up to MASE Study)	REMPEC	CU, MED POL, PB/RAC	IMO, EMSA, Med MoU, Paris MoU	IMO 79th MEPC on designation of the Med SOx ECA COP 22 Decision IG.25/14 - Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI COP 22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (CSO 2)	12.4; 14.1	27,000		**27,000**		10,000	
	c) Support port twinning/exchanges provided for the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA), including enforcement related to ships equipped with scrubbers. (Focus should be given to enforcement)			IMO, HELCOM, OSPAR, Bonn Agreement					-		58,000	
	d) Technical and Feasibility Study on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NOx ECA) as well as related roadmap prepared and validated by the relevant bodies with a view to submission to COP25.			IMO, HELCOM, OSPAR, Bonn Agreement			30,000		**30,000**		33,000	
	e) Exchange best practices and crease more awareness on the NOx ECA through the Organisation of webinars and a regional seminar			IMO, HELCOM, OSPAR, Bonn Agreement					-		10,000	
							358,817	**39,000**	**397,817**	**5,295,466**	**1,824,705**	

Programme 1: Pollution	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Total funding (in €)
CU	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
MED POL	**55,000 €**	**0 €**	**55,000 €**	**4,566,166 €**	**505,000 €**	5,126,166 €
REMPEC	**181,455 €**	**0 €**	**181,455 €**	**100,800 €**	**463,705 €**	745,960 €
Plan Bleu	**30,862 €**	**10,000 €**	**40,862 €**	**0 €**	**20,000 €**	60,862 €
SPA/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
PAP/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
INFO/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
SCP/RAC	**91,500 €**	**29,000 €**	**120,500 €**	**628,500 €**	**836,000 €**	1,585,000 €
TOTAL	***358,817 €***	***39,000 €***	***397,817 €***	***5,295,466 €***	***1,824,705 €***	*7,517,988 €*

Outputs	358,817 €	39,000 €	397,817 €	5,295,466 €	1,824,705 €	7,517,988 €
Outcome 1.1	12,000 €	12,000 €	24,000 €	408,800 €	250,800 €	683,600 €
Outcome 1.2	196,955 €	10,000 €	206,955 €	4,485,166 €	736,905 €	5,429,026 €
Outcome 1.3	62,000 €	7,000 €	69,000 €	401,500 €	706,000 €	1,176,500 €
Outcome 1.4	87,862 €	10,000 €	97,862 €	0 €	131,000 €	228,862 €

PROGRAMME 2: BIODIVERSITY

Main activity (means of implementation)	Expected deliverable	Lead Component	Other Component(s)	Partners	Related COP Decision	SDG Targets	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Comments
Outcome 2.1. Ecosystem resilience improved through restoration of those with best regeneration potential							**35,000.00**	**10,000.00**	**45,000.00**	**220,000.00**	**320,000.00**	
	a) 6 country factsheets with specific policy recommendations based on Action Sites experiences. The only Mediterranean site is the Venice Lagoon in Italy where the focus will be on making recommendations on adopting adaptive management for salt marshes restoration/conservation b) Final Advocacy paper to promote awareness on government strategies at stakeholder level for wetland restoration	Plan Bleu	CU, SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC	H2020 Waterlands project Partners EU-FEDER	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Specific section: 4.4. Enabling tools for marine biodiversity conservation	14.2 14.4 14.5			**5,000.00**	120,000.00		
2.1.1. Promote the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration in the Mediterranean: Identify innovative actions, capitalize and promote replication **(In-house expertise, consultancy, online meetings, in person workshops, external services)**	- Integration of participatory processes into ICZM and MSP governance structures. - In collaboration with PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu will conduct a preliminary study characterizing the governance landscape in the pilot sites, including an analysis of relevant policies, stakeholder mapping, and institutional frameworks. - Drafting of a summary report on the selected NBS from the participatory workshops (Scenario Workshop Adaptation Pathways and DLabs), - Drafting of a policy brief, and organization of the policy seminar in Marseille. - Plan Bleu is responsible for coordinating collaborative activities with the Mission for Natural Heritage's governance projects (D4N, of which Plan Bleu is already a partner, and C4N). (Frame of the INCORE MED Euro Med project)	Plan Bleu, PAP/RAC	PAP/RAC	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (GR). Eco-union (SP) Public institution RERA S.D. for coordination and development of Split-Dalmatia county (CR) Sardinia Region (IT) Sciaena (PT) University of Tallinn (EST) Iuav University of Venice (IT)	Decision IG.26/10 - Conceptual Framework for Implementing Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean. Decision IG.25/4 - Assessment Studies	14	5,000.00	**0**	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	

	c) Recovery plans and emergency actions , both in situ and ex situ as required, for endangered and threatened species whose depends on such actions, developed and implemented for at least for 2 species to e be decided at the SPA/RAC FP meeting	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	Contracting Parties, Agreed Action Plan Partners; EuroMed Dialogue 4 Nature IUCN-med	Action 2 of the Post-2020 SAPBIO : COP22 Decision IG.25/11 -Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 4,11,12,20 of SPA/BD Protocol	14.2 14.4 14.5	10,000.00	10,000.00	**20,000.00**	0.00	70,000	
	d) At least X Priority actions supported for the full and effective implementation of the Restoration programme of Pinna nobilis.	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	Contracting Parties, Agreed Action Plan Partners; IUCN-med	Annex V of the COP22 Decision IG.26/5 -Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SAPMIs) and ecosystem restoration Article 4, 11, 12, 20 of SPA/BD Protocol	14.2 14.4 14.5	20,000.00	0.00	**20,000.00**	0.00	70,000	
	e) Inventory of ecosystems with the highest ecological relevance and/or regeneration potential (as nursery areas, carbon stocks, avoiding coastal erosion, preventing or reducing the impact of natural disasters) such as Posidonia beds, coralligenous assemblages, wetlands, and dune systems, among others, developed at least in 2 countries	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	Contracting Parties, Agreed Action Plan Partners, IUCN-Med	Action 12 of the Post-2020 SAPBIO : COP22 Decision IG.25/11 -Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 4,11,12,20 of SPA/BD Protocol	14.2; 14.4; 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	180,000	
	f) Mainstreamed restoration of coastal ecosystems and landscapes into ICZM/coastal plans and programmes in at least 2 countries g) Methodology for preparation of restoration plan in coastal zones developed and presented to the CPs	SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC	CU and PB	CPs Mediterranean Forest Initiative	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 10, 11,12, 18, 27 and 32)	15.9; 15.1; 15.2; 14.1; 14.2			**0.00**			
	h) Regional workshop on a possible common approach for restoration programmes and actions	SPA/RAC	CU and other components as relevant	Contracting Parties, relevant stakeholders	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)					100,000		
Outcome 2.2. Comprehensive, coherent Mediterranean network of well-managed MPAs and OECMs in place, expanded, effective and sustainable							**130,000.00**	**0.00**	**130,000.00**	**742,035.63**	**202,200**	
2.2.1. Support the Contracting Parties in protecting and conserving the Mediterranean Sea through well-connected,	a) Guidance on operational measures and associated protective measures for the effective implementation of PSSAs (shipping activities) (in view of 30x30 commitments) to	REMPEC	SPA/RAC	IMO, ACCOBAMS, PELAGOS Agreement	COP 23 Decision IG.26/5; Article 11 Emergency & Prevention Protocol	5, 14			**0.00**		17,200	

ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures **(in-house expertise, consultancy, external services, national and regional meetings, field surveys, national and regional trainings/workshops, exchange visits, conferences, financial support to countries)**	be submitted to REMPEC Focal Points											
	b) Ad hoc Group of Experts for MPAs in the Mediterranean (AGEM) operational to guide the implementation of the Post-2020 MCPA & OECM Regional Strategy in order to achieve the 30x30 CBD Target operational (meetings, webinars, tools, etc.)	SPA/RAC	CU	GFCM, ACCOBAMS,, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN	Annex I of the COP22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance Annex 1 of the COP23 Decision IG.26/5: Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Ecosystem Restoration	5, 14, 17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	0.00	
	c) Management and business plans elaborated for MCPAs in Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia based on sound scientific knowledge, comprehensive consultation and engagement of stakeholders.	SPA/RAC,	CU	Contracting Parties, Relevant national authorities, GFCM, ACCOBAMS,, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN, EU-funded SEMPA Project	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) COP 22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	5.5 14.2 14.5 15.1	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	258,979.92	0.00	
	d) MCPA management effectiveness improved through the implementation of management plans and capacity building programme in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.	SPA/RAC,	CU	Respective Contracting Parties, Relevant national authorities, GFCM, ACCOBAMS,, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN, EU-funded SEMPA Project	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) COP 22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	5.5 14.2 14.5 15.1	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	336,113.70	0.00	

	e) Management effectiveness assessed in existing MCPAs/SPAMIs in Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia using the Integrated Management effectiveness Tool (IMET).	SPA/RAC,	CU and other MAP Component as relevant	Respective Contracting Parties, Relevant national authorities, GFCM, ACCOBAMS,, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN, EU-funded SEMPA Project	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) COP 22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	5.5 14.2 14.5 15.1	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	24,131.24	0.00	
	f) Best practices shared, direct and indirect MPA-related community gathered, priority action for effective implementation of the MCPA-OECM g) Visibility and advocacy on MPAs in the Mediterranean increased and commitments for achieving 30by30 strengthen through the Fourth edition of the Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	EU funded SEMPA project, MedPAN (co-organizer with SPA/RAC), REMPEC, ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IUCN-Med, WWF (technical partners), host country environmental authorities, local partners.	COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)-Action COP 22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	5.5 14.2 14.5 15.1	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	122,810.77	0.00	
	h) OECMs are identified, recognized, and reported at national and regional levels through capacity building and awareness-raising activities (meetings, workshops, tools, webinars, trainings, etc.)	SPA/RAC,	CU, REMPEC, PAP/RAC	Respective Contracting, AGEM members, FAO, GFCM, IMO, ACCOBAMS,, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN	Action 15 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Annex I of COP 22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	5.5 14.2 14.5 15.1	15,000.00	0.00	**15,000.00**	0.00	25,000	
	i) Analysis of the reports on Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) for the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs elaborated, for submission to SPA/RAC FP meeting	SPA/RAC	CU	SPA/BD Focal Points	COP22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including	14	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00		

					Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance							
	l) Status report on the Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean elaborated and disseminated	SPA/RAC	CU	MedPAN, MPA managers, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN	COP22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	14.17	15,000.00	0.00	**15,000.00**	0.00	30,000	
2.2.2. Ensure effective SPAMI management and evaluation (In-house expertise, consultancy, external services, field trips, exchange visits)	a) SPAMI management status kept under review: SPAMI ordinary review (10 SPAMIs): 04 Ordinary review in 2026: - Marine Protected Area of Tavolara-Punta Coda Cavallo (Italy), - Marine Protected Area and Natural Reserve of Torre Guaceto (Italy), - Miramare Marine Protected Area (Italy), and - Plemmirio Marine Protected Area (Italy); 06 Ordinary review in 2027: - Bouches de Bonifacio Nature Reserve (France), - Marine Protected Area of Capo Caccia-Isola Piana (Italy), - Punta Campanella Marine Protected Area (Italy), - Al-Hoceima National Park (Morocco), - Archipelago of Cabrera National Park (Spain), and - Maro-Cerro Gordo Cliffs (Spain).	SPA/RAC	CU	SPA/BD Focal Point, SPAMI Managers, Technical Advisory Commissions	COP23 Decision IG.26/5: Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Ecosystem Restoration	14.17	100,000.00	0.00	**100,000.00**	0.00	0.00	
	b) SPAMI Twinning Programmes Implemented : (i) exchange visits implemented for management issues diagnosis, habitats conservation & fishing impacts, (ii) Medium-term on-the-job training implemented in twinned SPAMIs, (iii) Peer-to-peer support and mentoring: actions to strengthen management effectiveness in twinned SPAMIs and/or joint monitoring programmes implemented.	SPA/RAC	CU	SPAMIs, National authorities, NGOs	COP 22 Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	14.17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	120,000	
	c) SPAMI network is supported through implementing activities contributing to their effective management or through possible declaration of new SPAMIs, 2 CPs supported	SPA/RAC	CU	SPA/BD Focal Points, GFCM, ACCOBAMS,, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN	COP23 Decision IG.26/5: Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Ecosystem Restoration	14.17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	10,000	

Outcome 2.3. Mediterranean endangered and threatened species and key habitats in favourable status of conservation							**20,000.00**	**0.00**	**20,000.00**	**492,105**	**692,000**	
2.3.1. Implement regional and national actions to boost the implementation of the Action Plans on marine key habitats	a) Status of implementation of the Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea assessed and Action Plan updated	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	National experts and organizations, NGOs, MPN, SPA/BD Focal Points, Agreed Action Plans Partners; GFCM	Annex II of the COP 21 Decision IG.24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region, and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean, Action 1 of the Post-2020 SAPBIO : COP22 Decision IG.25/11 -Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	14.1 14.2 14.4 14.6	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**	0.00	50,000	
	b) Scientific updates shared, to take stock of newest knowledge and address emergent issues of the marine key habitats, proceedings disseminated through 8th Mediterranean Symposium on marine vegetation, 5th Mediterranean Symposium on the Conservation of the Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions and 4th Mediterranean symposium on the dark habitats	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	Agreed Action Plan Partners, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN, etc	COP 21 Decision IG.24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region, and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean	14.1 14.2 14.4 14.6	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	90,000	
	c) Measures related to conservation in the Mediterranean marine ecosystems to respond to mass mortality events linked to heatwaves' events implemented	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	Action Plan Partners, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN	Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 1, 2, 14, 17, 19 of the Post 2020 SAPBIO COP 22 Decision IG.25/11- Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 11, 12, 13, 14 of the SPA/BD Protocol	14.1 14.2 14.4 14.6	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	170,000	

2.3.2. Effectively implement the updated regional Strategy and Action Plans for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and share related best practices	a) Status of implementation of the Action plans for the conservation of cetacean in the Mediterranean assessed and action plans updated	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN, Agreed Action Plan Partners	COP 21 Decision IG,24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region, and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean Decision IG.25/13 - Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 1 of the Post 2020 SAPBIO COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 11, 12, 13, 14 of the SPA/BD Protocol	14.1 14.2 14.4 14.5	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**	0.00	20,000	
	b) Priority actions to fill key knowledge gaps (through scientific research), for threatened and endangered species supported, including monitoring and threats mitigation (i.e., Marine Litter, Underwater Noise, Collision, CC, etc.) .	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN, WWF MedPO, MedPAN, Agreed Action Plan Partners,	COP 21 Decision IG,24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region, and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean COP22 Decision IG.25/13- Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the	5.5 14.1 14.2 14.4 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	80,000	

					Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 1,2,14 and 18 of the Post 2020 SAPBIO COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 11, 12, 13, 14 of the SPA/BD Protocol							
	c) Conservation status of threatened and endangered species improved at national and regional levels as provided for in the related updated regional Action Plans and strategy (Monk seal, Cartilaginous fishes, marine Turtles, cetaceans and marine & coastal Birds).	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN-Med, Agreed Action Plan Partners,	COP 21 Decision IG,24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region, and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean COP 22 Decision IG.25/13 Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 1,2,14 and 18 of the Post 2020 SAPBIO COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 11, 12, 13, 14 of the SPA/BD Protocol	5.5 14.1 14.2 14.4 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	102,000	

	d) NAP + integrating fisheries within the blue economy and aligned with the Post 2020 SAPBIO goals and targets, including investment plan, drafted in Interested CPs	CU, SPA/RAC		GFCM and GEF FishEBM Med partners and beneficiary countries	Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 14, 32 and 33 of Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	5.5 14.1 14.2 14.4 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	353,350.30	0.00	
	e) Interested CPs supported in the establishment of a national public-private blue economy partnership	CU, SPA/RAC		GFCM and GEF FishEBM Med partners and beneficiary countries	Action 14, 32 and 33 of Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	5.5 14.1 14.2 14.4 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	138,754.63	0.00	
2.3.3. Implement conservation measures and share best practices related to threatened and endangered species listed in Annex II to SPA/BD Protocol (In-house expertise, consultancy, training awareness raising)	a) Capacity building and best practices shared through a Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries b) Capacity building and best practices shared on cartilaginous identification and conservation, including rescue center twining programme for turtles	SPA/RAC	CU and other Components as relevant	Contracting Parties, Agreed Action Plan Partners	COP 21 Decision IG,24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region, and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean COP22 Decision IG.25/13 - Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 1,2,14 and 18 of the Post 2020 SAPBIO COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 11, 12, 13, 14 of the SPA/BD Protocol	5.5 14.1 14.2 14.4 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	60,000	

	c) Mechanism to deal with Bycatch mitigation including the adaptation and/or ban of fishing gears most harmful to biodiversity including on the seabed, developed and their implementation started in several countries so that the bycatch of species in bad conservation status is reduced to a level that allows full recovery	SPA/RAC		GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN-Med, Agreed Action Plan Part ners,	COP 21 Decision IG.24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; COP22 Decision IG.25/13 Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 22 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Article 11, 12, 13, 14 of the SPA/BD Protocol	5.5 14.1 14.2 14.4 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	120,000	
Outcome 2.4. Non -indigenous species introductions minimized and introduction pathways under control							**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**151,682.08**	**59,170**	
2.4.1. Update and implement the regional action plan on Non Indigenous species (NIS) and species introductions, as well as targeted measures of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) **(in-house expertise, consultancy, conference services, venue, travel arrangements, regional meetings and events, national capacities building)**	a) Scientific updates shared, to take stock of newest knowledge and address emergent issues related to NIS through 3rd Mediterranean Symposium on the Non-Indigenous Species.	SPA/RAC	REMPEC	Agreed Action Plan Partners	Article 13 of the SPA/BD Protocol Action 4, 5, 6, 14, 201 of the COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) Annex IV of the Decision IG.25/5 : Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	14.1 14.2 14.4 14.6	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	0.00	
	b) Measures to cope with the negative effects of non-indigenous species on biodiversity as well as those of other potential stressors identified and disseminated.	SPA/RAC		GFCM and GEF FishEBM Med partners and beneficiary countries		14.1 14.2 14.4 14.6	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	151,688	0.00	
	c)Priority actions supported for the full and effective implementation of the updated regional NIS Action Plan.	SPA/RAC,	REMPEC	Agreed Action Plan Partners		14.1 14.2 14.4 14.6	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	10,000	

	d) Targeted technical support provided to CPs for the ratification and implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention as well as for the implementation of the 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species.	REMPEC	CU, SPA/RAC	IMO, GEF, UNDP, EBRD, ACCOBAMS, Pelogos Agreement, HELMEPA	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6 - Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment Annex IV of the Decision IG.25/5 : Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Ecosystem Restoration COP 22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (CSO 5) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027)	14			**0.00**		9,970	
	e) Regional Guidelines on Management of Biofouling and related capacity building activities in at least 3 CPs developed								**0.00**		17,000	
	f) Regional information and decision support system or tool developed.								**0.00**		7,200	
	g) Guidelines for the development of national law to give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement, developed and submitted to REMPEC Focal Points								**0.00**		10,500	
	h) A regional online BWM Working Group to drive the process towards harmonization of BWM measures in the region established and report submitted to REMPEC Focal Points								**0.00**		4,500	
							185,000	**10,000**	**195,000**	**1,605,823**	**1,273,370**	

Programme 2: Biodiversity	**MTF Budget 2026 (in €)**	**MTF Budget 2027 (in €)**	**Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**Total funding (in €)**
CU	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**492,105 €**	**0 €**	492,105 €
MED POL	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
REMPEC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**66,370 €**	66,370 €
Plan Bleu	**5,000 €**	**0 €**	**5,000 €**	**120,000 €**	**0 €**	125,000 €
SPA/RAC	**180,000 €**	**10,000 €**	**190,000 €**	**993,718 €**	**1,207,000 €**	2,390,718 €
PAP/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
INFO/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
SCP/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	0 €
TOTAL	***185,000 €***	***10,000 €***	***195,000 €***	***1,605,823 €***	***1,273,370 €***	***3,074,193 €***

Outputs	185,000 €	10,000 €	195,000 €	1,605,823	1,273,370 €	**3,074,193 €**
Outcome 2.1	35,000 €	10,000 €	45,000 €	220,000 €	320,000 €	585,000 €
Outcome 2.2	130,000 €	0 €	130,000 €	742,036 €	202,200 €	1,074,236 €
Outcome 2.3	20,000 €	0 €	20,000 €	492,105 €	692,000 €	1,204,105 €
Outcome 2.4	0 €	0 €	0 €	151,682 €	59,170 €	210,852 €

PROGRAMME 3: CLIMATE CHANGE

Main activity (means of implementation)	Expected deliverable	Lead Component	Other Component(s)	Partners	Related COP Decision	SDG Targets	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Comments
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.)							**50,000.00**	**5,000.00**	**55,000.00**	**10,000.00**	**100,000.00**	
3.1.1. Mainstream adaptation to climate change into local ICZM plans (In-house expertise, consultancy, online and in person training workshops, online meetings, external services)	a) Planning capacities to address climate change impact on fishery sector and marine resources in coastal areas through trainings and support for the development of related measures	CU, SPA/RAC		GFCM and GEF FishEBM Med p artners and benef iciary countries	Monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and NIS related common indicators of the COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Action 13 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	5.5; 13.2; 13.b			**0.00**			
	b) Mainstreamed adaptation to climate change into coastal plans and programmes in at least 2 countries	PAP/RAC	Respective CPs	CPs, GEF MedProgramme	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 8, 18, 22 and 23); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM; UNFCCC Art. 4, paragraph 1(e); Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF)	5, 13.1; 13.2; 13.3; 13.5; 14 and 15			**0.00**			
	c) Coastal resilience platform upgraded with new case studies from the Mediterranean	PAP/RAC		CPs, GEF MedProgramme	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 8, 15, 22 , 23, 25 and 32) Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF)	13.3		5,000.00	**5,000.00**	10,000.00		
3.1.2. Establishment of Community of practice for coastal climate adaptation	a) Community on Practice on Climate Change Adaptation launched and established online b) Sharing and exchanging of experiences through at least of 2 on-line meetings among CPs to address coastal climate adaptation	PAP/RAC	CC/RAC; INFO/RAC	CPs, PEERS, OCP, Medecc	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 8, 15, 22 , 23, 25 and 32) Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF)	13.3; 14; 15.9			**0.00**			
	c) State of play of the current landscape of funding opportunities at global and regional for climate change adaptation to enhance the relevant capacities of the CPs	CC/RAC	CU and other Components	EU, UfM, Green Climate Fund, UNFCCC, CBD, IMO	COP 19 Decision IG.22/6 - Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas Strategic Direction 3.1. Decision IG.25/1 UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 COP23 Decision IG.26/12 -	13.1; 14.2	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	

					Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change							
	d) The potential of blue carbon ecosystems to support climate change mitigation efforts in the Mediterranean region identified, building and adding value to the existing recent studies	CC/RAC	SPA/RAC; PB; PAP/RAC	EU, UfM, Blue Mediterranean Partnership, PAMEx, Mediterranean Posidonia network	Decision IG. 22/2 MSSD 2016-2025 Strategic Action 4.3.3. COP 19 Decision IG.22/6 - Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas Strategic Direction 2.2.	13.1, 13.2, 14.2, 14.5; 17.6; 17.9	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**		30,000	
	e) Capacity-building and best practice exchange shared on the application of nature-based solutions to enhance climate change mitigation through the regional workshops	CC/RAC PAP/RAC			Decision IG. 22/2 MSSD 2016-2025 Decision IG.25/1 UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 COP23 Decision IG.26/12 - Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change	13.1, 13.2, 14.2, 14.5, 17	40,000.00	0.00	**40,000.00**		50,000	
3.1.3. Enhancing coastal risk management and climate adaptation through integrated planning	a) Handbook for Coastal Risk Management and Climate Adaptation through Integrated Planning	PAP/RAC			Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 8, 15, 22 , 23 and 25)	13.3; 14; 15.9			**0.00**			
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							**24,367**	**16,468**	**40,836**	**208,000**	**421,000**	
3.2.1. Mainstream nature-based solutions into regional policies implementation, including for adaptation and mitigation to climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development/ green economy. **(In-house expertise, consultancy, online and in person workshops and meetings)**	a) Technical report to strengthen ecological connectivity through NbS and nature restoration in coastal urban areas based on case studies delivered and reviewed by a regional workshop and its outcome published (consultant & inhouse expertise)	PLAN BLEU	PAP/RAC	Mediterranean Forest Initiative (UNEP/MAP), IUCN	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO). Goal 3 Enable the necessary transformative change, putting in place tools and nature-based solutions for implementation and mainstreaming	SDG 11			**0.00**			
	b) Methodological guideline to strengthen integration of NbS such as urban greening techniques, green corridors, selection of species adapted to new climates into climate change adaptation plans & strategies of Mediterranean cities (consultant and in-house expertise)	PLAN BLEU	CC/RAC	IUCN, ICLEI, DG MENA	COP 19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	SDGs 11 / 16 / 17	7,823.06	0.00	**7,823.06**	50,000.00		
	c) One policy paper on ecosystem restoration (marine/ coastal/ terrestrial ecosystems) to be presented at the annual institutional dialogue event with Euro Mediterranean partners in 2026 and 2027 and travel to cover expenses of participants (from south Med countries) d) Two annual dialogue summary reports (1 in 2026 and 1 in 2027) on ecosystem restoration with a focus on governance challenges related to marine/coastal restoration challenges and	PLAN BLEU	SPA/RAC	Partners from the Interreg Euro Med D4N project, DG MENA	COP 19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	SDG 15	3,468.00	3,468.45	**6,936.45**	40,000.00		

	implications of the EU Nature Restoration Law in the Mediterranean region. e) One SIMPEER exercise carried out on national forest strategies (or other relevant topic based on needs) back to back with an Annual Institutional Dialogue event, involving 3 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention: one from each shores (priority to those CP who haven't done it in previous exercises).											
	f) Technical report on the adaptation to climate change through Mediterranean forests through diversification of forest species (seedlings for mixed forests) resilience to water stress of species and its review in national workshop in Morocco and Tunisia (consultant & in-house expertise, national workshops)	PLAN BLEU	CC/RAC PAP/RAC; CU	UNEP, FAO, CIHEAM, école forestière de Rabat Salé (MO) INAT Tunisie, DG MENA	COP 19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	SDG 15	13,076.88	13,000.00	**26,076.88**	50,000.00		
	g) Handbook for Strengthening Coastal Resilience with NbS	CC/RAC	PAP/RAC; MED POL; REMPEC		Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 10, 22, 23, 27 and 32); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	13.3; 14; 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		50,000	
	h) Framework and Pathways to upscale Nature-based Solutions across the Mediterranean coastal zones, including a component on public participation	PAP/RAC	CU, PB/RAC, SPA/RAC	DesireMed project INCORE MED project, Horizon 2020	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 10, 22, 23, 27 and 32); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	13.3; 14; 15			**0.00**	48,000.00	309,000	
	i) Plan Bleu will lead 1 preliminary study on the characterization of the governance landscape at pilot sites (3 regions: Catalonia, Sardinia, Algarve and one city Kastela in Croatia) j) Plan Bleu will oversee the production of 1 comprehensive report on the Nature-based Solutions selected as a result of the participatory workshops (SWAP and DLabs). k) Plan Bleu will produce 1 Policy Brief and organize the final policy seminar in Marseille in collaboration with PAP/RAC.	Plan Bleu, PAP/RAC	PAP/RAC	INCORE MED project partners: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (GR). Eco-union (SP) Public institution RERA S.D. for coordination and development of Split-Dalmatia county (CR) Sardinia Region (IT) Sciaena (PT) University of Tallinn (EST)	Decision IG.26/10 - Conceptual Framework for Implementing Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean. Decision IG.25/4 - Assessment Studies	14			**0.00**	20,000.00		

				Iuav University of Venice (IT)								
3.2.2. Mobilise and implement innovative solutions to reduce GHG emissions from ships in selected ports, including through energy efficiency and decarbonisation **(in-house expertise, consultancy, national and regional workshops / capacity building)**	a) Innovative solutions to reduce GHG emissions from ships in selected ports, including through energy efficiency and decarbonisation implemented.	REMPEC	CU, SCP/RAC, Plan Bleu, CC/RAC	IMO, UNDP, EMSA, UfM, WestMed Initiative, EUSAIR, MTCC Africa, PAMEX, PLIFF, EU INTERREG NEXT MED	COP 19 Decision IG.22/6 - Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas COP 22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (CSO 2); Articles 3 and 11 of EMERGENCY and Prevention Protocol	13.1; 13.2, 14			**0.00**		4,500	
	b) Capacity Building activities on low carbon shipping and clean ports implemented through regional workshop to raise awareness and share best practices								**0.00**			
	c) National Action Plans for implementation of 2023 IMO GHG Strategy, developed in at least 2 CPs, who so request								**0.00**		35,000	
	d) Roadmap to Transitioning to Low Carbon shipping in the Mediterranean implemented								**0.00**		22,500	
Outcome 3.3. Better understanding and knowledge of climate change and its impacts on environment and development							**15,646.13**	**0.00**	**15,646.13**	**400,000.00**	**0.00**	
3.3.1. Develop and provide policy recommendations to address thematic impacts of climate change	a) Summary for policy makers for MAR 2 drafted and delivered	Plan Bleu	CU	MedECC; AIR Climat DG NEAR or DG MENA	COP22 Decision IG.25/4 - Assessment studies Decision IG.26/13 - Assessment Studies: Summary for Policymakers of the MedECC Special Report on Climate and Environmental	SDG 13; Cross cutting			**0.00**	300,000.00		
	b) A regional analysis through a technical regional report on the state of Mediterranean large water cycle including main uses and adaptation solutions focusing on water-forest (Wa-Fo) interface c) technical report reviewed and validated in a webinar	Plan Bleu	CU	IME; Mediterranean Forest Initiative (MFI); UNEP-GEF; GWP-Med; EU-WES DG MENA	COP 19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	Cross cutting	15,646.13	0.00	**15,646.13**	100,000.00		
Outcome 3.4. Mitigation of Climate Change progressed through Circular Economy, increased resource efficiency and carbon neutrality business strategies							**10,000.00**	**4,000.00**	**14,000.00**	**5,000.00**	**48,000**	
3.4.1. Demonstrate mitigation and nature regeneration potential of Circular Economy business models, facilitating innovative solutions and engage with private and public stakeholders **(In-house expertise, consultancy, reports, decision support tool)**	a) 1 Updated JUST2CE Decision Support System with carbon footprint indicators and climate change mitigation indicators/strategies disseminated via capacity building and technical assistance. b) 2 sector-focused reports on Circular Economy innovation and climate change mitigation opportunities targeting specific value chains c) 1 sector-focused reports addressing mitigation potential of	SCP/RAC	CC/RAC	ACEN, University of Sheffield, University of Vigo, UAB, Waste Agency of Catalonia Funds	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure E4 targeting mainly entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs).	12.3	10,000.00	4,000.00	**14,000.00**	5,000.00	48,000	

	sustainable consumption and 1.5 degree lifestyle policies in the Mediterranean developed. d) Best practices shared and exchanged on just transition mechanisms to circular economy through 1 regional workshop with public and private stakeholders across the Mediterranean region						**100,014**	**25,468**	**125,483**	**623,000**	**569,000**	

Programme 3: Climate	**MTF Budget 2026 (in €)**	**MTF Budget 2027 (in €)**	**Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**Total funding (in €)**
CU	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
MED POL	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
REMPEC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**62,000 €**	**62,000 €**
Plan Bleu	**40,014 €**	**16,468 €**	**56,483 €**	**560,000 €**	**0 €**	**616,483 €**
SPA/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
PAP/RAC	**0 €**	**5,000 €**	**5,000 €**	**58,000 €**	**309,000 €**	**372,000 €**
CC/RAC	**50,000 €**	**0 €**	**50,000 €**	**0 €**	**150,000 €**	**200,000 €**
INFO/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
SCP/RAC	**10,000 €**	**4,000 €**	**14,000 €**	**5,000 €**	**48,000 €**	**67,000 €**
TOTAL	***100,014 €***	***25,468 €***	***125,483 €***	***623,000 €***	***569,000 €***	***1,317,483 €***

Outputs	100,014 €	25,468 €	125,483 €	623,000 €	569,000 €	**1,317,483 €**
Outcome 3.1	50,000 €	5,000 €	55,000 €	10,000 €	100,000 €	165,000 €
Outcome 3.2	24,368 €	16,468 €	40,836 €	208,000 €	421,000 €	669,836 €
Outcome 3.3	15,646 €	0 €	15,646 €	400,000 €	0 €	415,646 €
Outcome 3.4	10,000 €	4,000 €	14,000 €	5,000 €	48,000 €	67,000 €

PROGRAMME 4: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE

Main activity (means of implementation)	Expected deliverable	Lead Component	Other Component(s)	Partners	Related COP Decision	SDG Targets	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Comments
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)							**122,000**	**125,000**	**247,000**	**0.00**	**50,000**	
4.1.1. Implement CAMP projects	a) CAMP Türkiye specific activities reports delivered (Inception Report, Report on ecological status of coastal and marine areas in relation to IMAP objectives (biodiversity, NIS, etc.); Climagine Report, Report on pollution control and marine litter reduction in Izmir area) b) CAMP Malta specific activities reports delivered (Inception Report, Report on ecological status of coastal and marine areas in relation to IMAP objectives (biodiversity, NIS, etc.); Climagine Report)	PAP/RAC	CU, MedWaves; CC/RAC	Türkiye Malta	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 18, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 22, 26, 27 and 32); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	All SDGs as appropriate	80,000.00	80,000.00	**160,000.00**		50,000	
		SPA/RAC					20,000.00	20,000.00	**40,000.00**	0.00	0.00	
		PB/RAC							**0.00**			
		MED POL					10,000.00	10,000.00	**20,000.00**			
		INFO/RAC							**0.00**			
4.1.2. Assist CPs in preparing National ICZM Strategies and coastal plans	a) At least 2 CPs, upon request, are supported for the implementation of selected measures under the adopted ICZM National Strategies b) Co-developed Coastal plans focused on coastal adaptation and resilience c) Exchange of experience with other regional seas in addressing integrated coastal and marine planning and management	PAP/RAC; CPs	BP/RAC, other as relevant		Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 18, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 22, 26, 27 and 32); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	All SDGs as appropriate			**0.00**			
4.1.3. Assist CPs in implementing MSP	a) Support national actions towards MSP (Albania, Tunisia), including preparation of technical sectoral studies and data standards, also addressing land-sea interactions b) Organising up to 2 national MSP trainings c) Capitalising on Transboundary CAMP Otranto - Feasibility study on ABMT in the Adriatic-Ionian region	PAP/RAC; CPs	CU, SPA/RAC, other as relevant	Albania, Tunisia; CPs	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 3 and 9); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM; COP 23 Decision IG.26/13	SDGs 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15			**0.00**			
4.1.4. Update methodological guidance for ICZM / MSP/ CCA in the Mediterranean	a) Regional hands-on guidance document for MSP in the Mediterranean, updating MSP tools and MSP Workspace b) Regional showcasing of Methodological Guidelines for the preparation of the Coastal Plans	PAP/RAC	CU, BP, SPA/RAC, other as relevant	INCORE-Med project	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 18, 15, 27 and 32); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	All SDGs as appropriate			**0.00**			

	c) Support tool for integrated planning available on ICZM Platform											
4.1.5. Strengthen MSP governance in the Mediterranean	a) Improved capacities through implementing regional MSP trainings (up to 2) showcasing practical examples, lessons learned and future needs b) MSP Working Group acting and contributing to MSP in the Mediterranean (up to 4 meetings in biennium) c) Support provided to strengthen cooperation with other MSP governance mechanisms existing in the region, including Med MSP COP	PAP/RAC	CU, SPA/RAC, other as relevant		COP23 Decision IG.26/10; COP21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	SDGs 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15	12,000.00	15,000.00	**27,000.00**			
Outcome 4.2. Sustainable Blue and Green Economy tools and approaches in the context of Sustainable Development and MSSD implementation							**37,000**	**17,000**	**54,000**	**748,000**	**401,875**	
4.2.1. Promote sustainable and resilient tourism in the Mediterranean Region **(workshops, in-house expertise, consultancy, publication, translation)**	a)1 Policy Paper for the "Med Cluster on climate change, nature & Biodiversity" for the euro-Mediterranean countries b) 1 in-person annual meeting gathering the members of the 4 Med clusters. Plan Bleu in charge of the "Med Cluster on climate change, nature & Biodiversity" c) 1 study visit plan for policy/decision makers on sustainable tourism	PLAN BLEU		C4T consortium Interreg Euro Med Program EU-FEDER	COP19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth	8,000.00	0.00	**8,000.00**	90,000		
	d) 1 comprehensive methodology to assess the main coastal tourism-related issues concerning climate change, including lessons learnt and policy recommendations " e) 1 catalogue of best practices to disseminate and highlight successful project achievements on resilient tourism against climate change, particularly within the Interreg Euro Med community. f) Strengthening the climate resilience of a French pilot site through the implementation of ecosystem-based approaches	PLAN BLEU		NT4CC partnership EU-FEDER	COP 19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth	7,000.00	0.00	**7,000.00**	60,000		
4.2.2 Enhancing the strategic role of MSP for the blue economy	a) Supported green transition of maritime sectors within MSP, based on EGD, at the Mediterranean scale b) Supported the EGD-oriented blue	PAP/RAC		MediGreen	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 3, 6, 9 and 10); COP 23 Decision IG.26/13	SDGs 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15			**0.00**		321,875	

	economy initiative towards MSP in Albania											
4.2.3. Demonstrate the impact of Green and Circular Economy entrepreneurship in delivering social, economic and environmental value	a) 10 sustainable new businesses and start-ups, selected through open calls in collaboration with countries, supported to assess their environmental, social and economic impact. b) Regional communication campaign showcasing the environmental and social positive impacts of sustainable businesses developed	SCP/RAC		Sustainable Businesses, Impact Assessment experts OFIGREEN project	COP19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure E4 targeting mainly entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs).	5.5; 5.a; 8; 12	5,000.00	0.00	**5,000.00**	10,000	0.00	
4.2.4. Boost targeted actions for a sustainable and inclusive Blue economy transition at regional and national levels **(in-house expertise, consultancy, workshops publication, translation, databases, policy brief)**	a) At Least 20 innovative transformative solutions to prevent and eliminate pollution of ocean, seas and waters are identified and documented for the Mediterranean Basin. b) Results, best practices and lessons learned of the Mediterranean Sea Lighthouse are showcased through a regional event gathering blue economy stakeholders, including private and public actors, across the Mediterranean.	SCP/RAC		Sustainable Businesses, Impact Assessment experts SEACURE Project	COP 19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP 22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure T2 addressing sectors of relevance for the Barcelona Convention)	5.5; 5.a; 8; 12	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	168,000	60,000	
4.2.5. Support the implementation of SCP, circular economy and innovative sustainable economies at regional and national levels **(in-house expertise, consultancy, internet portal, policy brief)**	a) Technical assistance and capacity building is provided to public authorities on circular economy related instruments, including on eco-design, product information/passport, public procurement. b) The Switchers Policy Hub on green and circular economy transition in the Mediterranean is strengthened by increasing its community and developing new content. c) Policy developments and connection with the Barcelona Convention framework are facilitated in the framework of the InterregMed Community4Innovation, contribution to a Mediterranean Innovative sustainable economy Hub is made, transferring of knowledge to southern Mediterranean countries	SCP/RAC		Sustainable Businesses, Impact Assessment experts INTERREG Projects D4I and C4I	COP19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure P1 targeting mainly policy-makers and public authorities).	5.5; 5.a; 8; 12	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	420,000	0.00	

	is facilitated. d) Policy developments and connection with the Barcelona Convention are facilitated in the framework of the InterregMed Dialogue4 innovation, contribution to the monitoring of Mediterranean collaboration network is made, collaborations are facilitated, support for the replication of transformative innovation policy labs is provided.											
4.2.6. Support the implementation of the SCP Regional Action Plan and the incorporation of the new provisions in the UN legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (Plastic Treaty) across the Mediterranean region	a) Integrate SCP principles into national policies, strategies, and legal frameworks by providing technical assistance to two Mediterranean countries to ensure the adoption of the new provisions of the Plastic Treaty in line with the SCP Regional Action Plan. b) 2 national gap analyses in Mediterranean countries to assess policy needs in relation to the SCP Action Plan and the Plastic Treaty.	SCP/RAC		Sustainable Businesses, Impact Assessment experts	COP19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Operational Objective 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 on Goods Manufacturing) COP22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products	5.5; 5.a; 8; 12	17,000.00	17,000.00	**34,000.00**	0.00	20,000	
Outcome 4.3. Innovative environmental management and economic instruments implemented for the protection and efficient use of coastal and marine resources							**52,223.06**	**39,538.38**	**91,761.44**	**80,000.00**	**100,000**	
4.3.1. Support the effective use by CPs of economic instruments and other tools for nature conservation and sustainable development in order to diversify the policy mix in the Mediterranean **(In-house expertise, workshop, publication, translation)**	a) Exploring Mediterranean water investment gap and identifying adapted financial tools Reviewed by a regional workshop / roundtable to mobilize water investments	Plan Bleu		EU WES Project, GWP-Med EU-FEDER	COP19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	cross cutting, with a focus on SDG sub objective 6.5.1	20,000.00	10,000.00	**30,000.00**	80,000.00		
	b) 1 operational guide to local and national decision-makers on accessing funding for NbS implementation for urban adaptation and resilience to environmental changes	Plan Bleu		EBRD, GWP-Med	COP19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	SDGs 3 / 11 / 17			**0.00**			
	c) 1 open interactive mapping of relevant seagrass restoration sites and actions in the Mediterranean d) 1 regional action plan for seagrass restoration including guidelines for the integration of the value of seagrass services e) 1 final project conference organized enhancing seagrass ecosystem services integration through Policy and Advocacy	Plan Bleu	SPA/RAC	ARTEMIS Project consortium	COP22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	SDG 14	7,000.00	0.00	**7,000.00**			
	f) Blended Finance for a Greener Future: aligning private investments with public sector sustainability goals and corporate social	Plan Bleu	CU	Mediterranean researchers/consultants from	COP 19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	SDG 8, Crosscutting	10,000.00	13,469.19	**23,469.19**		45,000	

	responsibility g) 10 papers, each on a specific subtheme, written by Mediterranean researchers, to be grouped in a Plan Bleu/UNEP/MAP Edited Volume (consultant & inhouse expertise) h) 1 regional academic in -person Workshop to discuss the 1st drafts of the paper, so as to strengthen their content			academia (Plan Bleu network)								
	i) Foundations for a Mediterranean Green Taxonomy: practical guidelines for sustainable finance: practical guidelines for sustainable finance j) 10 papers, each on a specific subtheme, written by Mediterranean researchers, to be grouped in a Plan Bleu/UNEP/MAP Edited Volume (consultant & inhouse expertise) k) 1 regional academic in -person Workshop to discuss the 1st drafts of the paper, so as to strengthen their content	Plan Bleu	CU	Mediterranean researchers/consultants from academia (Plan Bleu network), possible cooperation with OECD	COP 19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	SDG 8, Crosscutting	10,000.00	13,469.19	**23,469.19**		45,000	
	l) Preparation of a paper on Empowering Communities Sustainable Finance : Ways Forward, through a participatory process to enhance sustainable finance and Moving Away from Harmful Subsidies m) 2 virtual meetings of the Community Empowerment Working Group (based to the extent possible on the WG on Sustainable Finance established under the MSSD) to discuss and exchange views on the use of financial instruments and progress achieved in phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies	Plan Bleu	CU	Local communities (territories, municipalities), international and financial organizations, academia and CPs representatives	COP19 - Decision IG.22/2 - MSSD	SDG 8, Crosscutting	5,223.06	2,600.00	**7,823.06**		10,000	
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							**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**177,100**	
4.4.1. Implement key targeted measures of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan **(in-house expertise, consultancy, online trainings, conference services, venue, travel**	a) Guidelines to promote sustainable marine renewable energies prepared for submission to MED POL FP meeting	MED POL	REMPEC	IOGP -MOIG	COP19 Decision IG.22/3 - Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil	9.4; 14.2	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		60,000	
	b) Criteria, rules standards and procedures in accordance with the Revised Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan developed and adopted by COP25	REMPEC, CU					0.00	0.00	**0.00**		16,500	

arrangements, regional meeting)	c) Online training organised on selected topics, as set out in the Revised Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan and organisation of sub regional workshops				COP21 Decision IG.24/9 - Mediterranean Offshore Guidelines and Standards: (a) Common Standards and Guidance on the Disposal of Oil and Oily Mixtures and the Use and Disposal of Drilling Fluids and Cuttings; (b) Common Standards and Guidelines for Special Restrictions or Conditions for Specially Protected Areas (SPA) within the Framework of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan		0.00	0.00	**0.00**		22,300	
	d) Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) organised and held; Offshore Protocol implementation and Annexes to the Offshore Protocol kept under review; sharing of best practices and latest relevant developments.						0.00	0.00	**0.00**		51,300	
	e) Dedicated website for Offshore Protocol to create the necessary visibility developed	REMPEC	INFO/RAC		COP22 Decision IG.25/7 - Amendments to the Annexes to the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil COP22 Decision IG.25/15 - Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil	9.4; 14.2	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		27,000	
							211,223	**181,538**	**392,761**	**828,000**	**728,975**	

Programme 4:Sustainable resource use	**MTF Budget 2026 (in €)**	**MTF Budget 2027 (in €)**	**Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**Total funding (in €)**
CU	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
MED POL	**10,000 €**	**10,000 €**	**20,000 €**	**0 €**	**60,000 €**	**80,000 €**
REMPEC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**117,100 €**	**117,100 €**
Plan Bleu	**67,223 €**	**39,538 €**	**106,761 €**	**230,000 €**	**100,000 €**	**436,761 €**
SPA/RAC	**20,000 €**	**20,000 €**	**40,000 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**40,000 €**
PAP/RAC	**92,000 €**	**95,000 €**	**187,000 €**	**0 €**	**371,875 €**	**558,875 €**
CC/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
INFO/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
SCP/RAC	**22,000 €**	**17,000 €**	**39,000 €**	**598,000 €**	**80,000 €**	**717,000 €**
TOTAL	***211,223 €***	***181,538 €***	***392,761 €***	***828,000 €***	***728,975 €***	**1,949,736 €**

Outputs	211,223 €	181,538 €	392,761 €	828,000 €	728,975 €	1,949,736 €
Outcome 4.1	122,000 €	125,000 €	247,000 €	0 €	50,000 €	297,000 €
Outcome 4.2	37,000 €	17,000 €	54,000 €	748,000 €	401,875 €	1,203,875 €
Outcome 4.3	52,223 €	39,538 €	91,761 €	80,000 €	100,000 €	271,761 €
Outcome 4.4	0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €	177,100 €	177,100 €

PROGRAMME 5: GOVERNANCE

Main activity (means of implementation)	Expected deliverable	Lead Component	Other Component(s)	Partners	Related COP Decision	SDG Targets	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Comments
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							**98,000.00**	**0.00**	**98,000.00**	**0.00**	**303,500**	
5.1.1. Strengthen Contracting Parties action to comply with legally binding obligations under Barcelona Convention and its Protocols	a) Progress on ratification of the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention; Facilitation and/or technical support provided to 3 CPs upon request.	CU	MAP Components	Participating CPs and their relevant authorities and institutions	Decision IG.26/1, Decision IG.26/2	All SDG 14 Targets;			**0.00**			
	b) Contracting Parties develop national policies, legislation and mechanisms for the implementation and enforcement of the BC Protocols. c) Technical assistance to CPs to develop national policies, regulatory frameworks and which are consistent with the BC and its Protocols is provided. d) Status of implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its protocols reviewed, achievements and issues at stake identified. e) Coordinated assistance to address cases of implementation difficulties and or possible noncompliance situations.	CU, Compliance Committee	MAP Components	MEAs, UNEP	Decision IG.26/1, Decision IG.26/2	All SDG 14 Targets;	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		30,000	
5.1.2.Effective Implementation and Enforcement of Post-2020 SAPBIO	a) At least 2 Mediterranean countries are assisted to prepare or revise their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans by fully incorporating the relevant elements of the Post-2020 SAPBIO	SPA/RAC	CU, Relevant RACs	CPs (SPA/BD FPs, SAPBIO Correspondents), advisory committee members	Action 34 and 35 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	17.14	40,000.00	0.00	**40,000.00**	0.00	100,000	
	b) The collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO assessed	SPA/RAC	CU, Relevant RACs	CPs (SPA/BD FPs, SAPBIO Correspondents), advisory committee members	Action 34 and 35 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	14.17	30,000.00	0.00	**30,000.00**	0.00	30,000	

	c) Socio-economic and ecological impacts of Post-2020 SAPBIO actions with very high priority are measured, analyzed, and documented	SPA/RAC	CU, Relevant RACs	CPs (SPA/BD FPs, SAPBIO Correspondents), advisory committee members	Action 34 and 35 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	14.17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	30,000	
5.1.3. Mid-term evaluation of the post-2020 Regional Strategy on MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean	a) Mid-term (2026) evaluation of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy on MCPAs and OECM in the Mediterranean undertaken, through its Evaluation and Monitoring Framework, with conclusions and recommendations for the Strategy implementation by 2030 elaborated	SPA/RAC	CU	SPA/BD Focal Points, AGEM members, regional Partners	COP22 Decision IG.26/5 -Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SAPMIs) and ecosystem restoration	14.17	25,000.00	0.00	**25,000.00**	0.00	40,000	
5.1.4. Ensure Contracting Parties compliance with adopted monitoring and reporting under Barcelona Convention Protocols **(in-house expertise, national assistance)**	a) Awareness raised and support provided on reporting obligation under the Prevention and Emergency Protocol and related IMO Conventions.	REMPEC	CU, INFO/RAC, DG ECHO	IMO, DG ECHO, EMSA	COP 15 Decision IG.17/5 - Governance paper COP 18 Decision IG.21/1 - Compliance Committee including renewal of members, the modification of the rules of procedure and the Programme of Work of the Compliance Committee COP 18 Decision IG.21/9 - Establishment of a Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention COP 22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)	All SDG 14 targets			**0.00**		14,500	
	b) BCRS, REMPEC Country Profile, MEDGIS-MAR, MIDSIS-TROCS, MENELAS Information System maintained; and updated by all Contracting Parties.								**0.00**		49,000	
	c) Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean established and awareness raised on its use								**0.00**		10,000	
	d) Awareness raised and support provided on reporting obligation under the ICZM Protocol	PAP/RAC	CU, INFO/RAC		Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Article 31)	Targets of SDG 2, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15			**0.00**			
5.1.5. Strengthen Contracting Parties action to comply with ICZM Protocol	a) Status of the implementation of the Common Regional Framework for ICZM Action Plan and recommendations for possible update submitted to MAP FP meeting b) Report on comparative analysis of the land policy instruments for coastal management	PAP/RAC	CU, Other relevant components		Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 17, 20 and 32)	Targets of SDG2 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15	3,000.00	0.00	**3,000.00**			

5.1.6 Ensure MAP Data Policy full implementation at regional and as appropriate at national levels	a) MAP Data Policy Annexes related to each UNEP/MAP data flow tuned and updated. b) Dissemination activities carried out among CPs in order to facilitate the Data Policy implementation; c) Assistance/training workshops for CPs for MAP data sharing Policy implementation on general and particular (at country level) issues; d) Effectiveness of MAP Data Policy principles application in time evaluated (e.g. through monitoring on data retrieved from Countries); e) Support MAP Components and CU in the correct and full interpretation of MAP Data Policy and its application at country level.	INFO/RAC	CU, MAP Components	UNEP	COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria COP 22 Decision IG.25/3 - Governance COP22 Decision IG.25/10 - MAP Data Policy	SDG 14 Targets			**0.00**			
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							**225,000**	**935,000**	**1,160,000**	**1,575,000**	**770,000**	
5.2.1. Deliver successfully COP 25 of MAP Barcelona Convention (in-house expertise, Host Country Agreement, conference services, venue, side events, travel arrangements)	a) COP 25 Declaration, Decisions including the PoW 2026-2027 reviewed and adopted, recommendations of the Compliance Committee and the MCSD reviewed. b) Progress achieved during the biennium 2024-2025 reviewed and acknowledged. c) Status of implementation of the Convention and its Protocols reviewed. d) MAP visibility and outreach enhanced.	CU	All MAP Components	Host country, CPs, MAP Partners	Decision IG.26/2	All SDG 14 targets;17.14	0.00	310,000.00	**310,000.00**	60,000.00	50,000	
5.2.2. Deliver successfully the 22nd Meeting of the MCSD (in-house expertise, consultancy, Host Country Agreement, conference services, venue, travel arrangements, regional meetings)	a) 22nd Meeting of the MCSD successfully implemented (2027), strengthened Partnerships and ownership for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean. b) MCSD Inputs provided to COP 25 c) 2 meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee successfully implemented	CU	Plan Bleu, SCP/RAC and other MAP Components	MCSD Members, MAP Partners	Decision IG.22/2 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025	crosscutting especially on SDGs 2, 5.5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	25,000.00	100,000.00	**125,000.00**		80,000	

5.2.3 Deliver successfully the main institutional meetings of MAP (Bureau, Consultation FP Meeting, MAP Focal Point, EcAp Coordination Group and Thematic/ Components Focal Points). **(in-house expertise, consultancy, Host Country Agreement, conference services, venue, travel arrangements, regional meetings)**	a) The 98th, 99th and 100th Meetings of the Bureau as well as a Bureau meeting on the eve of COP 25 successfully held. b) Progress of implementation of the MAP PoW 2026-2027 reviewed on a 6-monthly basis. c) Guidance provided to the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties on specific issues. d) Main directions of the new PoW 2028-2029 defined. e) Meeting of the MAP Focal Points preceded by the MAP Component/Thematic Focal Points and back to back with the EcAp Coordination Group Meetings. f) EcAp Roadmap Implementation and other related COP decisions implementation reviewed. g) Draft decisions to COP 25 reviewed and negotiated, PoW and Budget reviewed, etc. h) Technical products of MAP components reviewed by the Components Focal Points meetings. i) Integrated sessions organised based on thematic approach.	CU	All MAP Components	UNEP, EcAp MED PLUS MEA, IMO and all REMPEC's Partners, Host country authorities, MAP Partners, SPA/RAC partner organizations (observers)	COP 15 Decision IG.17/5 - Governance paper COP 16 Decision IG.19/5 - Mandates of the Components of MAP COP 19 Decision IG.22/17 - Reform of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) and Updated MCSD Constitutive Documents COP 18 Decision IG.21/3 - Ecosystems Approach including adopting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and targets COP 18 Decision IG.21/15 - Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures for the Contracting Parties, its subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean Decision IG.26/12 - Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 32 and 33)	All SDG 14 targets, 17.14	70,000.00	125,000.00	**195,000.00**		70,000	
		MED POL					10,000.00	40,000.00	**50,000.00**		20,000	
		PLAN BLEU					0.00	30,000.00	**30,000.00**	10,000.00		
		REMPEC					0.00	120,000	**120,000**			
		SPA/RAC					0.00	50,000.00	**50,000.00**	5,000.00	20,000	
		PAP/RAC					0.00	30,000.00	**30,000.00**	0.00	10,000	
		SCP/RAC					0.00	30,000.00	**30,000.00**	0.00	10,000	
		CC/RAC					0.00	30,000.00	**30,000.00**	0.00	10,000	
		INFO/RAC					0.00	30,000.00	**30,000.00**	0.00	10,000	
5.2.4. Organize Compliance Committee Meetings **(in-house expertise, conference services, travel arrangements)**	a) 2 Compliance Committee Meetings successfully convened; Non-compliance situations addressed and brought to the attention of COP 25. b) Interactions and possible joint sessions with Compliance Committees of other MEAs held (e.g. ESPOO).	CU, Compliance Committee	MED POL, RACs	Compliance Committees under relevant MEA	Decision IG.26/1	All SDG 14 targets; 16.3; 17.14; to a lesser extent SDGs 6, 12, 13	40,000.00	40,000.00	**80,000.00**			
5.2.5. Formulate the MAP MTS 2028-2033 through an inclusive, participatory Contracting Parties' driven process. **In house expertise, consultancy, meetings**	a) MTS 2022-2027 evaluation and review successfully delivered; b) MTS 2028-2033 prepared and submitted to MAP FP and COP 25 through a participatory process and under Parties' leadership.	CU	All MAP Components	CPs, MAP Partners	Decision IG.25/1, Decision IG.26/2	Crosscutting especially on SDGs 2, 5.5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	30,000.00	0.00	**30,000.00**		60,000	

of MAP Focal Points (working documents in 2 languages, information documents, conference services).	a) Preparation of a concept note for project proposals aimed at supporting the implementation of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, facilitating access to available funding opportunities and enabling stakeholders to engage in new adaptation initiatives across the region	CC/RAC	CU		Decision IG.25/1 UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 Decision IG.26/13 - Assessment Studies: Summary for Policymakers of the MedECC Special Report on Climate and Environmental COP 19 Decision IG.22/6 - Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas Decision IG. 22/2 MSSD 2016-2025 Decision IG.24/3 – Governance COP23 Decision IG.26/12 - Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change	13.1; 13.a; 17.3	0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
	b) Practical guide to facilitate access to global funding opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation developed and submitted to FPs of CC/RAC	CC/RAC	CU		Decision IG. 22/6, Decision IG. 22/2 Decision IG.25/1 UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 Decision IG.24/3 – Governance COP23 Decision IG.26/12 - Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change	13.2; 13.a; 17.6	15,000.00	0.00	**15,000.00**		50,000	
5.2.6. Strengthen the MAP result-based programmatic framework including gender mainstreaming and sustainability of operations (in-house expertise, consultancy, MAP Task Force meetings, regional and international meetings)	a) Externally funded projects executed effectively and in coordination with PoW. b) Gender is mainstream in MTS, Projects and MAP Component activities Implementation	CU/MED POL	RACs, MED POL	EcAp MED PLUS and ML MED PLUS / SEMPA Project	Decision IG.26/2	5.5; 5.a; 5.b; 5.c			**0.00**	1,500,0000		
5.2.7 Support the ownership and capacity building of CPs in integrating MSSD objectives and actions within National Sustainable Development Strategies **(in-house expertise, consultancy, regional meetings)**	a) Needs Analysis conducted on ownership and capacity building of CPs b) Implementation of SIMPEER on voluntary basis conducted c) Online regional workshop held on outcomes of a) and b) for follow up	CU	Plan Bleu, SCP/RAC and other MAP Components	MCSD Members, MAP Partners	Decision IG.22/2 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025	Cross cutting especially on SDGs 2, 5.5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		80,000	

5.2.8 Promote outreach and regional synergies, funding opportunities and enhanced partnership of MSSD flagship initiatives **(in-house expertise, regional meetings)**	a) 2 Online regional workshops (1 per year) successfully implemented to maximise funding opportunities b) Targeted actions under MSSD Flagship initiatives implemented in collaboration with the leading partners	CU	Plan Bleu, SCP/RAC and other MAP Components	MCSD Members, MAP Partners, regional Stakeholders, MSSD flagship initiatives Leaders and Partners	Decision IG.22/2 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025	Cross cutting especially on SDGs 2, 5.5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	20,000.00	0.00	**20,000.00**		250,000	
5.2.9. Organize SAPBIO correspondent meetings	a) Two meeting of the SAP BIO National Correspondents organised (two presential meeting in 2026 and 2027) and reports available.	SPA/RAC	All MAP Components	CPs (SPA/BD FPs, SAPBIO Correspondents)	Action 34 and 35 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	14.17	15,000.00	0.00	**15,000.00**		50,000	
5.2.10. Enhancing Inter-Ministerial and inter-sectoral coordination frameworks at national levels	a) Support operation of established IMCs upon request	PAP/RAC	CU, all components as relevant		Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 6 and 7); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	16, 17			**0.00**			
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							**30,000.00**	**0.00**	**30,000.00**	**0.00**	**170,000**	
5.3.1. Maximize synergies with Post 2020 Global agenda for the implementation of SAPBIO	a) Effective working exchanges with Global institutions of relevance for the implementation of Post-2020 SAPBIO actions (BBNJ, GBF, CBD, Regional Seas strategic Directions) linked to their prerogatives ensured.	SPA/RAC, CU	PAP/RAC, REMPEC, Plan Bleu	CPs, UNEP, CBD, BBNJ, IMO, SCBD, FAO GFCM, UNFCCC, IUCN, IMO, UN-Oceans, UNESCO- IOC, IPBS	Action 37, 38, 41, 42 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	14.17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	10,000	
5.3.2 Mainstreaming of transboundary EIA and SEA in Barcelona Convention Framework	a) Guidelines for environmental assessment in a transboundary context b) Analysis of existing legal instruments and experience in the Mediterranean on transboundary EA c) Training and capacity building on EA in a transboundary context	CU / PAP/RAC		UNECE, ESPO	COP23 Decision 26/14 Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 29 and 32)	All SDGs as relevant	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		60,000	
5.3.3. Strengthen cooperation for joint reporting under the BC and its Protocols **(in-house expertise, national trainings, twinnings)**	a) Mechanism developed for promoting mutual supportiveness with other relevant international instruments on reporting. b) Support for reporting provided at national level (e.g. e-reporting modules, twinning approach). c) Workshop to support Contracting Parties with Reporting obligations	CU and INFO/RAC	RACs, MED POL	MEAs	Decision IG.26/1	All SDGs as relevant	30,000.00	0.00	**30,000.00**		100,000	

Outcome 5.4. Enhanced partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement, including with the private sector and science policy interface							**13,455.00**	**0.00**	**13,455.00**	**17,600.00**	**89,200**	
5.4.1. Promote the title of Partner to Regional Action Plan for the conservation of threatened species and marine key habitats "Regional Action Plans Partners"(In-house expertise, online meetings)	a) Regional Action Plans Partners Title promoted, and the list of Action Plan Partners established for each Regional Action Plan	SPA/RAC	CU, relevant RACs	RAPs Partners	COP 16 Decision IG.19/6 - MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership COP 23 Decision IG,26/5 Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Ecosystem Restoration	14.17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	10,000		
5.4.2. Strengthen participation and contribution of civil society and private sector to the work of MAP BC system **(in-house expertise, support attendance in MAP meetings, round tables)**	a) New MAP Partners added and existing MAP Partners renewed; Enhanced engagement of MAP Partners in policy development and implementation. b) Annual round table discussions held (back-to-back with other meetings).	CU	RACs, MED POL	MAP Partners, NGOs, CPs	COP 22 Decision IG.25/3 - Governance COP 16 Decision IG.19/6 - MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership	17.6; 17.9; 17.14; 17.16; 17.17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		30,000	
	c) Comprehensive plan of actions implemented, including the resource mobilization strategy for the effective and sustainable delivery of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan (2016-2024)	CU, REMPEC					0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
5.4.3. Strengthen SPI networks and enhance partnership with scientific institutions to support MAP Barcelona Convention system **(In-house expertise, workshop, publication, translation)**	a) COR ESA meeting and evaluation of coastal & marine socio-economic activities	PLAN BLEU	CU	PLAN Bleu EcAp Med Plus project EcAp MED PLUS project	COP ecosystem approach decision	DG 14 Targets; SDG 17.14; 17.16; 17.17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	17,600.00	30,000	
5.4.4. Implement the targeted actions of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) **(in-house expertise, consultancy, conference services, venue, travel arrangements,**	a) National Action Plans for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) developed for 3 CPs.	REMPEC	CU	IMO, EMSA, UfM, WestMed Initiative	COP 22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)	SDGs 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, Especially; 12.4; 14.1	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		18,000	
	b) Mid Term review of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) undertaken.						13,455.00	0.00	**13,455.00**			

regional meeting, national assistance)	c) Thematic meeting of REMPEC FP held in the first year of the biennium for this purpose. (included under 5.3.e. above thus additional budget required)						0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
	d) Youth and Gender Mainstreaming Strategy to encourage more participation of youth and women developed and submitted to REMPEC Focal Points						0.00	0.00	**0.00**		11,200	
Outcome 5.5. Coordinated approaches implemented to strengthen public institution capacities for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols							**10,000.00**	**0.00**	**10,000.00**	**0.00**	**30,000**	
5.5.1. Development of project proposals to support Parties' institutions on initial implementation of Post-2020 SAPBIO	a) Preparation and inception regional/ sub-regional level Projects for key priority strategic actions of Post-2020 SAPBIO ensured.	SPA/RAC	CU /Other RACs as per thematic	CPs, SPA/BD FPs, technical partners, Public and private donors	Action 34 and 35 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)	14.17	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**		30,000	
5.5.2. Undertake capacity building on ICZM, MSP and CC	a) Training materials updated for the English and French edition of the MedOpen virtual training course. b) Two runs of MedOpen Advanced organised c) Syrian Virtual University supported through delivering seven two-hours lectures on ICZM for their master's degree students on Natural Resources Management	PAP/RAC			Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 25, 26 and 32); COP 21 Decision IG.24/5	4, 13, 14, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
							376,455	**935,000**	**1,311,455**	**1,592,600**	**1,362,700**	

Programme 5: Governance	**MTF Budget 2026 (in €)**	**MTF Budget 2027 (in €)**	**Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**Total funding (in €)**
CU	**215,000 €**	**575,000 €**	**790,000 €**	**1,577,600 €**	**840,000 €**	**3,207,600 €**
MED POL	**10,000 €**	**40,000 €**	**50,000 €**	**0 €**	**20,000 €**	**70,000 €**
REMPEC	**13,455 €**	**120,000 €**	**133,455 €**	**0 €**	**102,700 €**	**236,155 €**
Plan Bleu	**0 €**	**30,000 €**	**30,000 €**	**10,000 €**	**0 €**	**40,000 €**
SPA/RAC	**120,000 €**	**50,000 €**	**170,000 €**	**5,000 €**	**310,000 €**	**485,000 €**
PAP/RAC	**3,000 €**	**30,000 €**	**33,000 €**	**0 €**	**10,000 €**	**43,000 €**
CC/RAC	**15,000 €**	**30,000 €**	**45,000 €**	**0 €**	**60,000 €**	**105,000 €**
INFO/RAC	**0 €**	**30,000 €**	**30,000 €**	**0 €**	**10,000 €**	**40,000 €**
SCP/RAC	**0 €**	**30,000 €**	**30,000 €**	**0 €**	**10,000 €**	**40,000 €**
TOTAL	***376,455 €***	***935,000 €***	***1,311,455 €***	***1,592,600 €***	***1,362,700 €***	***4,266,755 €***

Outputs	376,455 €	935,000 €	1,311,455 €	1,592,600 €	1,362,700 €	**4,266,755 €**
Outcome 5.1	98,000 €	0 €	98,000 €	0 €	303,500 €	401,500 €
Outcome 5.2	225,000 €	935,000 €	1,160,000 €	1,575,000 €	770,000 €	3,505,000 €
Outcome 5.3	30,000 €	0 €	30,000 €	0 €	170,000 €	200,000 €
Outcome 5.4	13,455 €	0 €	13,455 €	17,600 €	89,200 €	120,255 €
Outcome 5.5	10,000 €	0 €	10,000 €	0 €	30,000 €	40,000 €

PROGRAMME 6: SHARED KNOWLEDGE FORESIGHT

Main activity (means of implementation)	Expected deliverable	Lead Component	Other Component(s)	Partners	Related COP Decision	SDG Targets	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Comments
Outcome 6.1. Inclusive and participatory foresight activities conducted at regional and national and local levels, with associated capacity-building							**20,000.00**	**0.00**	**20,000.00**	**130,000.00**	**0.00**	
6.1.1. Support transition towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Future in the Mediterranean at 2050 – Building Back Better using strategic participatory foresight **(In-house expertise, consultancy, workshop, publication, translation)**	a) 4 national workshops to support transition pathways towards 2050 for a sustainable future of the basin (avoid the worst scenario and promote the best one). b) 1 regional report with the main outputs	PLAN BLEU	CU		COP22 Decision IG. 25/4 - Assessment studies	Cross cutting especially on SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
	c) 1 regional workshop as a Foresight exercise on future opportunities for the Mediterranean non-conventional water resources sector (desalination and wastewater reuse) between 2026 and 2050	PLAN BLEU		IME, FAO, other unconventional water resources expert to be mobilize for such scenarios	COP 21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies	SDG 6, especially SDG target 6.3	20,000.00	0.00	**20,000.00**	130,000.00		
	d) 1 regional report with the main outputs as deliverable on transition pathways towards 2050 for a sustainable future of the basin e) 1 regional workshop on a Foresight exercise on future opportunities for the Mediterranean non-conventional water resources sector (desalination and wastewater reuse) f) Vulnerability mapping of coastal zones with high tourism assets g) foresight visualization tools & modelling scenarios (coastal & urban planning h) One Recommendations booklet for decision-makers to strengthen tourism resilience	PLAN BLEU		Region SUD	COP 21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies	Cross cutting	0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
Outcome 6.2. Science-based IMAP, foresight and other assessments and assessment tools for strengthened science -policy interface and decision making							**140,000**	**260,000**	**400,000**	**1,013,354**	**414,000**	
6.2.1. Strengthen the implementation of national IMAP-based monitoring programmes for all clusters and	a) 21 CPs implement national IMAP and report quality assured data to the IMAP InfoSystem in a timely manner on biodiversity and NIS	SPA/RAC	Relevant RACs, CU	National IMAP competent laboratories/ authorities; relevant national	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal	4.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.5	10,000.00	10,000.00	**20,000.00**	600,000.00	60,000	

deliver quality assured data (in-house expertise, consultancy, IMAP TF, CORMONs)				and international scientific institutions; SEMPA Project	environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria							
	b) At least 7 CPs supported with capacity-building; application of monitoring guidelines; and to ensure delivery of quality-assured data	SPA/RAC	Relevant RACs, CU	National IMAP competent laboratories/ authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions; SEMPA and EcAp MED PLUS Projects	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 : Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	4.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.5	10,000.00	10,000.00	**20,000.00**	111,183.00	0.00	
	c) 21 CPs implement national IMAP and report quality assured data to the IMAP InfoSystem in a timely manner on coast and hydrography	PAP/RAC	Relevant RACs, CU	SEMPA Project	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Article 16)	13.1; 13.2; 13.3; 13.5; 14.1; 14.2; 14.5; 15.1; 15.2; 15.3; 15.5; 15.9	10,000.00	10,000.00	**20,000.00**	50,000.00		
	d) At least 7 CPs supported with capacity-building to ensure delivery of quality-assured data on coast and hydrography	PAP/RAC	Relevant RACs, CU	SEMPA Project	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Article 16)	13.1; 13.2; 13.3; 13.5; 14.1; 14.2; 14.5; 15.1; 15.2; 15.3; 15.5; 15.9			**0.00**	180,00.00		
	e) At least 7 CPs supported to implement IMAP- based monitoring programmes for EO5, EO9, EO10 and quality-assured data reported in IMAP Info System. f) Up to 4 CPs supported to implement pilot monitoring for riverine inputs of litter.	MED POL	CU, IMAP Task Force	ML MED PLUS project	COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria COP 20 Decision IG.23/6 - 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report COP 21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies COP 23 Decision IG.26/3 - The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean	14.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.5	30,000.00	20,000.00	**50,000.00**	57,000.00	204,000	

6.2.2. 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, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, CCI 26,27) (in-house expertise, external consultancy, IMAP TF, CORMONs)	a) CORMON meetings on biodiversity and NIS organized annually	SPA/RAC	CU, IMAP Task Force	National IMAP competent authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions; EU MSFD technical bodies; EcAp MED PLUS project	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	14.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.6	5,000.00	45,000.00	**50,000.00**	5,170.98	10,000	
	b) Organisation of 2 CORMON coast and Hydrography meetings c) Support CPs (up to 5) to prepare their GES for CI 16	PAP/RAC	CU, IMAP Task Force	National IMAP competent authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions; EU technical bodies; EcAp Med PLUS Project	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Article 16)	15.1; 15.2; 15.3; 15.5; 15.9; 15.A	5,000.00	30,000.00	**35,000.00**		10,000	
	d) Mediterranean Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) are established, and the Background Assessment Criteria (BACs) have been upgraded at sub-regional and regional levels, under IMAP CI 17, subject to data availability, as to address gaps within the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR). e) Reference and boundary values for Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) and Total Phosphorus (TP) are developed across sub-regions, subject to data availability, by following a pilot exercise, and proposing a modality for an alternative use of satellite-derived Chlorophyll-a (Chl a) data. f) BAC and EAC for Common Indicator 18 (CI 18) are elaborated, including inter-sub-regional harmonization, subject to availability of biological effects data from multiple sources. g) Assessment methodologies along with the assessment scales are being revised to incorporate deliverables (a, b, and c), further building on the foundations established in the 2023 MED QSR	MED POL	CU, IMAP Task Force	ML MED PLUS/EcAp MED PLUS projects	COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (Annex-Section III, 3) COP 20 Decision IG.23/6 - 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (Section 1) COP 21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies (Article 3) COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Articles 11, 12, and 13) COP 23 Decision IG.26/3 - The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean (Article 13, Annex I-section 4)	14.2; 14.a	50,000.00	120,000.00	**170,000.00**		80,000	

	h) Guidance Factsheet for IMAP EO10 (Marine Litter), Common and [Candidate Indicators] updated i) CORMON Pollution and Marine Litter meetings organised (one online, one in person)											
6.2.3. Further develop IMAP EO and related Common Indicators (in-house expertise, external consultancy, IMAP TF, CORMONs)	a) GES and Targets developed for Common indicator of the Ecological objective 4 on marine food Webs.	SPA/RAC	CU, IMAP Task Force	National IMAP competent authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions; EU MSFD technical bodies	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	14.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.7	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	20,000	
	b) Common indicators using phytoplankton and zooplankton developed to assess the GES of pelagic habitats	SPA/RAC	CU, IMAP Task Force	National IMAP competent authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions; EU MSFD technical bodies	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	14.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.7	10,000.00	15,000.00	**25,000.00**	0.00	0.00	
	c) Guidance Factsheet for climate change related indicators	PAP/RAC	Plan Bleu, CC, Other relevant components	National IMAP competent authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions; EU technical bodies; SEMPA Project	Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 16, 22 and 23)	13.3; 14; 15.9	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**		10,000	
6.2.4. Review and update of the common indicators factsheets related to Biodiversity (EO1), fisheries (EO3) and Sea-floor Integrity (EO6) (in-house expertise, external consultancy, IMAP TF, CORMONs)	a) Common indicators factsheets updated as appropriate for biodiversity, NIS b) Common indicators for factsheet for Sea-floor Integrity developed	SPA/RAC	CU, IMAP Task Force, GFCM	National IMAP competent authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions; GFCM; EU MSFD technical bodies; FishEBM Project	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	14.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.8	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	10,000.00	20,000	

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.							**326,851.53**	**182,700.53**	**509,552.06**	**220,765.00**	**1,091,700**	
6.3.1. 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)**	a) Intercalibration exercise is set to support the Quality Assurance related to IMAP Common Indicator 18. b) Analyses undertaken in up to 7 CPs to identify national counterparts with the greatest needs regarding provision of equipment for sampling, analysis, processing and quality assurance of data. c) Intercalibration exercise and TC are undertaken to support the Quality Assurance related to IMAP Common Indicators 17 and 20. d) Intercalibration exercise and TC are undertaken to support the Quality Assurance related to IMAP Common Indicators 13 and 14. e) Intercalibration exercise undertaken to support the Quality Assurance related to floating microplastics (IMAP Common Indicator 23).	MED POL	CU, MAP Components, IMAP Task Force CU, MAP Components, IMAP Task Force		COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria COP 20 Decision IG.23/6 - 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report COP 21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies COP 22 Decision IG.25/9 - Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol COP 23 Decision IG.26/3 - The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean	14.a	80,000.00	80,000.00	**160,000.00**		150,000	
6.3.2. Strengthen the MSSD and SCP Regional Action Plan monitoring framework and a regional observatory on the environment and development **(In-house expertise, workshop, consultancy, translation, web services)**	a) National assistance and capacity building activities provided for the implementation of EO1 and EO2	SPA/RAC	Relevant RACs, CU	National IMAP competent laboratories/ authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	4.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.5	20,000.00	0.00	**20,000.00**	**0.00**	30,000	
	b) Citizen survey guidance for NIS monitoring under IMAP developed to strengthen public awareness and participation.	SPA/RAC	Relevant RACs, CU	National IMAP competent laboratories/ authorities; relevant national and international scientific institutions	COP 15 Decision IG.17/6: Implementation of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria	4.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		30,000	

c) Data and information on water sector available on the regional Observatory to Strengthen Plan Bleu's observatory analysis (statistical analysis and maps) on water sector	PLAN BLEU	INFO/RAC, CU	UNEP/GRID	COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies	SDG 6	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**	22,500.00		
d) 1 regional workshop to discuss and propose an update of the MSSD dashboard e) The updated version of the MSSD dashboard (In -house expertise ; consultancy)	PLAN BLEU	CU		COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies	Cross cutting	20,000.00	5,000.00	**25,000.00**	22,500.00		
f) 1 technical document exploring the possibility to develop a Post GDP indicator for the Mediterranean. (In -house expertise; consultancy) for the Exploration of potential new indicators and data for consideration by the Contracting Parties, "post-GDP indicators" to measure sustainable development more holistically in the Mediterranean	PLAN BLEU	CU	OSPAR, HELCOM, GOAP and including input from JRC/MARE	COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies	SDG 8	0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
g) 4 comprehensive technical factsheets drafted with scope and rationale, method, definition, population on Technical feasibility of 4 new indicators to complement the MSSD dashboard (on Food security index; on plastic pollution on Fisheries & aquaculture; on harmful subsidies) (In -house expertise ; consultancy)	PLAN BLEU	SPA/RAC	FAO, GFCM, OECD MED POL, MedWAVES-SCP/RAC	COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies	SDG 2; 12	3,911.53	3,911.53	**7,823.06**	22,500.00		
h) Regional observatory running with updated functionalities (consultants & in-house expertise)	PLAN BLEU	INFO/RAC	UNEP/GRID	COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies	Cross cutting especially on SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**	22,500.00		
i) SCP indicators dashboard is further updated and the latest data is uploaded within WESR Mediterranean (MapX). j) SCP Indicators are updated in the MSSD Dashboard in line with the new MSSD and the SCP-related targets in the Strategy.	SCP/RAC	Plan Bleu		COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) (Objective 5)	5.5; 5.a; 8; 12	2,500.00	2,500.00	**5,000.00**	15,000.00	0.00	
k) A series of capacity-building workshops to train country representatives (GIS specialists) on MapX functionalities in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Türkiye	Plan Bleu	CU		COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD)	Cross cutting	20,000.00	15,000.00	**35,000.00**		150,000	

					COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies							
	l) Strengthen communication related to the Observatory (deliverables and methods) through a comprehensive redesign of Plan Bleu's website (planbleu.org)	Plan Bleu	CU; INFO/RAC		COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies	Cross cutting	30,000.00	0.00	**30,000.00**		50,000	
	m) A matrix (statistical dependencies across environmental drivers and socio-economic variables) developed to address complex issues through a nexus approach based on Plan Bleu's Observatory databases.	Plan Bleu	CU		COP 19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD) COP 22 Decision IG.25/17 - Assessment studies	Cross cutting	0.00	0.00	**0.00**			
6.3.3.Maintain Biodiversity databases as appropriate, regularly update databases content and elaborate an operational strategy for marine biodiversity data management, in line with the UNEP/MAP Data Policy	a) Georeferenced Information on Mediterranean Biodiversity key components is centralized in the SPA/RAC open access platform, Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform (MBP)	SPA/RAC	INFO/RAC, REMPEC, PAP/RAC	ACCOBAMS, MedPAN, IUCN, GFCM, national biodiversity focal points	Action 16 of the Post2020 SAPBIO : COP 22 Decision IG.25/11: Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO).	14.2, 14.5, 15.1, 15.5, 17,6	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**	0.00	40,000	
	b) SPA/RAC website operational and regularly updated.	SPA/RAC	INFO/RAC, other components	National focal points, web development agencies	Action 37, 38 and 39 of the Post2020 SAPBIO: COP 23 Decision IG.25/11: Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO).	14.2, 15.1, 17.16	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	60,000	
6.3.4. Streamline shipping and offshore data-sharing and monitoring platform with infoMAP System **(in-house expertise, consultancy, IMAP TF, awareness raising)**	a) Update the Study on the trends and Outlook on the impact of pressures from the maritime and offshore sector and impact assessment of the measures implemented through the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) and the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan.	REMPEC	INFO/RAC, CU, MED POL	IOGP, IMO, EMSA, HELMEPA, EU, HELCOM, OSPAR, BONN	COP 19 Decision IG.22/3 - Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil COP 19 Decision IG.22/ 7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria COP 21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	14.a ; 9.5	20,440.00	0.00	**20,440.00**	0.00	0	
	b) Organise MEDEXPOL 2026 on Data Sharing, Monitoring and Reporting : latest developments and achievements shared, recommendations made for further improvements or alignment.						0.00	41,000.00	**41,000.00**	0.00	37,200	
	c) IMAP CI 19 Guidance Document updated						0.00	0.00	**0.00**		4,500	

6.3.5. Maintain and update InfoMap System towards a fully integration into the Knowledge Management Platform	a) Hardware and software upgrade of the InfoMAP System in order to host in a fully efficient way the datasets collected by UNEP/MAP. b) InfoMap technological infrastructure upgraded into the Knowledge Management Platform: architecture, functionalities and usage.	INFO/RAC				Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	20,000.00	4,000.00	**24,000.00**		20,000	
6.3.6. Ensure effective operation of the BCRS online reporting system.	a) Barcelona Convention Reporting system maintained, tuned and upgraded. b) System management: profiles, users, access rights managed and updated. c) Dedicated assistance and training for access and filling reporting modules d) Towards a full interoperability with EEA ReportNET 3 model with collaborative approach, API integration e) Consolidated dashboard of the data entered in the System. f) Interoperability: possibility of downloading data in different formats.	INFO/RAC				Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	20,000.00	4,000.00	**24,000.00**		20,000	
6.3.7. Ensure effective operation of the NBB reporting system	a) NBB Reporting system maintained, tuned and upgraded. b) Integration of Quality Controls (QCs) c) System management: profiles, users, access rights managed and updated. d) Dedicated assistance and training for access and filling of NBB reporting modules e) Relationship with the PRTR and EU Registry component implemented and assessment functions strengthened at regional, sub-regional, national and river basin scale. f) Summary dashboard of the data entered in the System. g) Interoperability: possibility of downloading files in different formats.	INFO/RAC	MED POL			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	10,000.00	4,000.00	**14,000.00**		20,000	

6.3.8. Ensure Data Centre evolution towards a standardization of the management of the data flows	a) State of the harmonization of dataflows present into the Data Centre. b) Vulnerabilities identified and systems configured to enhance existing security features to prevent cyber attacks. c) System management for Users Directory and Groupware performed and upgraded. d) Dedicated assistance and training for access and use of Groupware and consultation of Data Dictionaries and Data Repository. e) MAP components and regional organizations supported to collect metadata and data in the Metadata Catalogue.	INFO/RAC				Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	10,000.00	4,000.00	**14,000.00**		20,000	
6.3.9. Maintain and update IMAP Info System with all IMAP Common Indicators fully implemented	a) IMAP Info System hardware and software platform upgraded and expanded to ensure fully operational reporting by CPs. b) Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) developed for remaining Candidate IMAP Common Indicators. c) New Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) developed for additional modules related to existing IMAP Common Indicators. d) Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) fine-tuned for IMAP Common Indicators already in place e) QA/QC tool upgraded and developed for all IMAP CIs data flows according to the nature of the indicator. f) Helpdesk human resources dedicated to Daily Support to Contracting Parties in the reporting process. g) Additional automatic "Helpdesk" section implemented into the IMAP Info System to support CPs into the reporting process, recording all the requests to be used for statistical purposes.	INFO/RAC	MED POL, PAP/RAC, SPA/RAC	ACCOBAMS', GFCM EcAp MED PLUS project		Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	15,000.00	0.00	**15,000.00**	65,765	20,000	

	h) IMAP Assistance/Training meetings organized with Contracting Parties (at least un workshop for each beneficiary country) dedicated to the IMAP reporting process. i) Cooperation with relevant Regional Organization (i.e. ACCOBAMS', GFCM, etc.) in order to facilitate the interoperability between IMAP and their Infosystems and databases as appropriate j) A specific section implemented into the IMAP Info System, as webform, to allow the CPs to officially provide information about the state of reporting in the country. k) "User management" system upgraded and adapted to MAP CU and MAP Components needs. l) A Data Analytics dashboard implemented into the IMAP Info System providing aggregation of monitoring data, dedicated to MAP Components assessment and also accessible to public users. m) Geographical section upgraded and customized for IMAP monitoring data visualization into the IMAP Info System and fully integrated in KMP. n) Additional functionalities implemented in the IMAP Info System dedicated to MAP Components: data analysis and data export in different formats through specific tools implemented ad hoc; possibility of queries and layout the results in tables with data filtering; extensive customization, analysis and data visualization through Python modules (Python notebook, ex. Jupiter lab of WEKEO DIAS-CMEMS).											
6.3.10. Ensure full implementation of the InfoMAP Spatial Data Infrastructure for the geographical data and maps	a) InfoMAP Spatial Data infrastructure maintained, tuned and upgraded. Implementation of information layers provided. Interoperability with CPs information systems strengthened.	INFO/RAC	MAP Components			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also	15,000.00	10,000.00	**25,000.00**	50,000.00	40,000.00	

	b) Dedicated assistance and support trainings to CPs to organize, upload and consult Spatial Data c) Creation of user profiles and groups ensured. d) Support training on the implemented Geoviewer for the visualization of geo-referred data delivered. e) Basic and thematic layers collected, developed and visualized. f) Spatial data and metadata from UNEP/MAP, CPs, RACs and other sources integrated and reviewed g) Finalization of the integration of InfoMAPNode into the Knowledge Management Platform					5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15						
6.3.11. Enhance the use new INFO/RAC Cloud tools for document repository and collaboration platform	a) INFO/RAC Cloud further implemented (i.e. Teams) for document repository, networking and information exchange.	INFO/RAC				Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15			**0.00**			
6.3.12. Ensure visualization of integrated data through customized Dashboards integrated into the Knowledge Management Platform	a) Data Analytics dashboards implemented: rationale behind the choice of data fluxes represented (user requirements) and functioning. b) Elaboration of pre-compiled data products as aggregation and integration of data for different targets.	INFO/RAC				Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	10,000.00	4,000.00	**14,000.00**		20,000	
6.3.13. Undertake Copernicus data analysis/integration of Copernicus Service to support indicator and data collection and ingestion	a) Analysis of Copernicus Services products in cooperation with EEA to promote fully exploitation for IMAP data collection. b) Use of Copernicus Services products and integration in IMAP Contracting Parties' national programmes.	INFO/RAC	MAP Components	EEA		Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
6.3.14. Migrate, integrate, harmonize, manage and update upon request of MAP Components, thematic databases, platforms and websites into	a) REMPEC platforms and websites hosted and maintained and updated (minor) (MEDGISMAR, PoSOW, MENELAS etc.)	INFO/RAC	REMPEC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	

InfoMap System towards a fully integration into the Knowledge Management Platform	b) REMPEC platforms and websites hosted by INFO/RAC restructured and consolidated (major developments)	REMPEC	INFO/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		0.00	
	c) Coast Day website hosted, maintained, updated and relaunched for 2026 and 2027 editions	INFO/RAC	PAP/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
	d) CAMP Türkiye website developed, hosted and maintained	INFO/RAC	PAP/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
	e) CAMP Malta website developed, hosted and maintained	INFO/RAC	PAP/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
	f) Adriadapt platform hosted and maintained	INFO/RAC	PAP/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
	g) Adriatic.eco portal hosted and maintained	INFO/RAC	PAP/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
	h) MSP platform hosted and maintained	INFO/RAC	PAP/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
	i) ICZM platform maintained	INFO/RAC	PAP/RAC			Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	

	J) Upgrade and refresh ICZM Platform and PAP/RAC web site	PAP/RAC			Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 25, 27 and 32)	Cross cutting to all SDG 14 targets, especially 14.a but also 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15	0.00	5,289.00	**5,289.00**			
6.3.15. Total renewal of hardware infrastructure for InfoMAP System to allow the reporting of all mandatory and not mandatory data flows (needed every 6 years)		INFO/RAC					0.00	0.00	**0.00**		200,000	
							486,852	**442,701**	**929,552**	**1,364,119**	**1,505,700**	

Programme 6: Shared knowledge-foresight	**MTF Budget 2026 (in €)**	**MTF Budget 2027 (in €)**	**Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**Total funding (in €)**
CU	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
MED POL	**160,000 €**	**220,000 €**	**380,000 €**	**57,000 €**	**434,000 €**	**871,000 €**
REMPEC	**20,440 €**	**41,000 €**	**61,440 €**	**0 €**	**41,700 €**	**103,140 €**
Plan Bleu	**113,912 €**	**23,912 €**	**137,823 €**	**220,000 €**	**200,000 €**	**557,823 €**
SPA/RAC	**65,000 €**	**80,000 €**	**145,000 €**	**726,354 €**	**270,000 €**	**1,141,354 €**
PAP/RAC	**25,000 €**	**45,289 €**	**70,289 €**	**230,000 €**	**20,000 €**	**320,289 €**
CC/RAC	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**	**0 €**
INFO/RAC	**100,000 €**	**30,000 €**	**130,000 €**	**115,765 €**	**540,000 €**	**785,765 €**
SCP/RAC	**2,500 €**	**2,500 €**	**5,000 €**	**15,000 €**	**0 €**	**20,000 €**
TOTAL	***486,852 €***	***442,701 €***	***929,552 €***	***1,364,119 €***	***1,505,700 €***	***3,799,371 €***
Outputs	486,852 €	442,701 €	929,552 €	1,364,119 €	1,505,700 €	**3,799,371 €**
Outcome 6.1	20,000 €	0 €	20,000 €	130,000 €	0 €	150,000 €
Outcome 6.2	140,000 €	260,000 €	400,000 €	1,013,354 €	414,000 €	1,827,354 €
Outcome 6.3	326,852 €	182,701 €	509,552 €	220,765 €	1,091,700 €	1,822,017 €

PROGRAMME 7: COMMON ADVOCACY

Main activity (means of implementation)	Expected deliverable	Lead Component	Other Component(s)	Partners	Related COP Decision	SDG Targets	MTF Budget 2026 (in €)	MTF Budget 2027 (in €)	Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	Comments
Outcome 7.1. Inclusive and participatory foresight activities conducted at regional and national and local levels, with associated capacity-building							**64,000.00**	**46,584.00**	**110,584.00**	**98,000.00**	**312,400**	
	a) Fact sheets/brochures to communicate the impact of biodiversity conservation and priority actions towards 2030 providing background information and summaries (biodiversity, MPAs, etc.); b) Stories incorporating testimonials , videos and infographics on effective management and conservation practices identified and collected; c) Mini social media campaigns on collaborative achievements with partners; Media relations developed	SPA/RAC, INFO/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force	SPA/BD Focal Points, SPAMIs, National authorities, CSOs	COP 21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	20,000	
7.1.1. Disseminate knowledge of the state of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast through indicators (In-house expertise, workshop, publication, translation, web services, social media channels)	d) Communication and advocacy/policy materials (Infographics, videos, reports, etc.) produced and promoted to improve conservation status of vulnerable species at national and regional levels.	SPA/RAC, INFO/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force	ACCOBAMS; GFCM; IUCN-Med ; Agreed Action Plan Partners	COP 21 Decision IG,24/7 - Strategies and Action Plans under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, including the SAP BIO, the Strategy on Monk Seal, and the Action Plans concerning Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Marine Vegetation; Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region, and Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean COP 22 Decision IG.25/13 - Action Plans for the conservation of species and habitats under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean COP 19 Decision IG.22/7 - Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria COP 22 Decision IG.25/11 - Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural	5.5; 14.1; 14.2; 14.4; 14.5	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	30,000	

					Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)							
	e) Reflection on achievements and on the way forward: 50 years of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention contribution to the Mediterranean Region and its people (Publication for policy makers)	INFO/RAC, CU	MAP Components, Contracting Parties			Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	6,000.00	6,000.00	**12,000.00**		20,000	
	f) Communication materials, and posts through media channels and printing/translation of reports in the scope of Plan Bleu Mandate	Plan Bleu, CU	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force	COP21 Decision IG.24/4 - Assessment Studies COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 13 and 14 Targets	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	98,000.00		
7.1.2. Celebrate UNEP/MAP BC System Anniversaries	a) 50th Anniversary of PAP/RAC celebrated during COP25	PAP/RAC, Host Country, CU	CU, MAP Communication Task Force		Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Article 32, 5 and 6) COP 21 Decision IG.24/2 – Governance COP 21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for ICZM	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	0.00	21,989.00	**21,989.00**		10,000	
	b) 50th Anniversary of REMPEC celebrated, in cooperation with IMO and the host Country	REMPEC, Host Country, IMO, CU	CU, MAP Communication Task Force			Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		52,400	
	c) 30th anniversary of SCP/RAC celebrated, in cooperation with Host Country and Government of Catalonia	SCP/RAC, Host Country, CU	CU, MAP Communication Task Force			Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**	0.00	0.00	
7.1.3. Implement MAP Communication Strategy	a) MAP Operational Communication Strategy 2026-27 implemented in the framework of the 2024-2029 MAP Com Strategy b) MAP Operational Communication Strategy updated for the biennium 2028-2029 c) MED News - The MAP Newsletters (New format launched in 2023 released monthly)	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication TF		COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	6,000.00	6,000.00	**12,000.00**		20,000	
	d)SPA/RAC communication strategy implemented and updated	SPA/RAC			COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	10,000	
7.1.4. Position COP 25 of the Barcelona Convention as an important regional conference driving the environmental and	a) Short video capturing the main results achieved during the biennium. b) Special issue of the MAP Newsletter capturing the main	INFO/RAC, CU	MAP Communication TF	ICDN to be checked	COP 21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	6,000.00	6,595.00	**12,595.00**		20,000	

sustainable development agenda forward	achievements of the biennium. c) COP25 website in close cooperation with the host Country. d) COP25 Communication Pavilion in close cooperation with the host Country.											
7.1.5. Towards a MAP Knowledge Management Strategy: develop the Regional Sea KM Platform of the MAP fully integrated in UNEP KM platform and in close dialogue with other initiative as MED Programme KM platform.	a) MAP Knowledge Management Strategy implemented. b) Knowledge Hub fully developed for the harmonization of all the documental heritage of the MAP System (integrated in the Knowledge Platform). c) Connecting MAP and the community through the Knowledge Exchange hub of the Knowledge Management Platform: Update of existing tools and implementation. d) Harmonized data, linked data integrated into the Knowledge Management Platform and interoperability among existing systems ensured. e) MedProgramme KMP harmonized and interoperable with MAP KMP. f) Feasibility study for the future interoperability with WESR. h) Promotion of KMP and its links with global and regional platforms through dedicated events/webinars, participation in conferences, digital campaigns and social media.	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication TF, Data Management Task Force	ACCOBAMS', Pelagos Agreement	COP21 Decision IG.24/2 – Governance COP22 Decision IG.25/10 - MAP Data Policy	12.8	6,000.00	6,000.00	**12,000.00**		20,000	
7.1.5. Towards a MAP Knowledge Management Strategy: develop the Regional Sea KM Platform of the MAP fully integrated in UNEP KM platform and in close dialogue with other initiative as MED Programme KM platform.	a) MAP Knowledge Management Strategy implemented. b) Knowledge Hub fully developed for the harmonization of all the documental heritage of the MAP System (integrated in the Knowledge Platform). c) Connecting MAP and the community through the Knowledge Exchange hub of the Knowledge Management Platform: Update of existing tools	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force, Data Management Task Force	ACCOBAMS, Pelagos Agreement	COP21 Decision IG.24/2 – Governance COP22 Decision IG.25/10 - MAP Data Policy	12.8	6,000.00	6,000.00	**12,000.00**		20,000	

	and implementation. d) Harmonized data, linked data integrated into the Knowledge Management Platform and interoperability among existing systems ensured. e) MedProgramme KMP harmonized and interoperable with MAP KMP. f) Feasibility study for the future interoperability with WESR. h)Promotion of KMP and its links with global and regional platforms through dedicated events/webinars, participation in conferences, digital campaigns and social media.											
	i) Data, reports, and scientific assessments on climate change integrated in the Knowledge Management Platform Hub	CC/RAC	INFO/RAC		COP22 Decision IG.25/4 - Assessment studies Decision IG.26/13 - Assessment Studies: Summary for Policymakers of the MedECC Special Report on Climate and Environmental Decision IG.25/10 MAP Data Policy Decision IG.25/1 UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027"	13.1; 13.3; 17.6	0.00	0.00	**0.00**		20,000	
7.1.6. Promote Mediterranean sustainability awards to shore up advocacy efforts for a transition to sustainable urban management and circular economy in the Mediterranean (In-house expertise, Communication TF, award delivery events)	a) Enhanced participation of coastal municipalities for the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award through the Organization of a regional workshop to enhance their capacity on sustainable management of the cities b) Timely preparation call for application, procedure preparation, selection and award at COP25 c) Timely preparation for the identification, evaluation, selection and presentation of the WeMed Award	CU	INFO/RAC	MedCities	COP19 Decision IG.22/19 - Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	10,000.00	0.00	**10,000.00**		40,000	
		SCP/RAC	INFO/RAC		COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance COP22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure E2 and E5 targeting mainly entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs).	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	20,000.00	0.00	**20,000.00**	0.00	50,000	
7.1.7. Strengthen MAP Advocacy to promote enforcement of and compliance with Barcelona Convention and enlist support of key stakeholders and	a) An integrated social media campaign raising awareness on the importance of SCP & CE in the Mediterranean	SCP/RAC	INFO/RAC		COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance COP22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	0.00	0.00	**0.00**			

policymakers to a green renaissance underpinned by the circular economy and a sustainable Blue Economy. (In-house expertise, consultancy, Communication TF, regional event)					Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure D1 Strengthening access to sustainable products and services / sustainable consumption).							
Outcome 7.2. Citizen and general public awareness and outreach raised through citizen science and digital campaigns							**68,500.00**	**46,983.00**	**115,483.00**	**96,000.00**	**140,000**	
	a) Digital Campaign for enhancing knowledge of UN and MAP Days (i.e. Mediterranean Coast Day, Biodiversity Day, Zero Waste Day, Ocean Day, Environmental Day etc.), through web page; interactive story; hot topics; story map; Infographics; Twitter cards; Video; articles and interviews; focus in section in MED News.	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force		COP16 Decision IG.19/6 - MAP/Civil society COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance COP21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	6,000.00	6,000.00	**12,000.00**		20,000	
7.2.1. Enhance public awareness and outreach on UN and MAP Days observance and their topics	b) SPAMI Day celebrated in collaboration with SPAMI managers and CSOs, through awareness raising activities and digital campaigns with: -2026 SPAMI Day celebrated in presential -2027 SPAMI Day celebrated locally at interested and volunteer SPAMIs	SPA/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force	SPA/BD Focal Points, SPAMIs, National authorities, CSOs	COP 23 Decision IG.26/14 - COP 22 Decision IG 25/11 (Post-2020 SAPBIO) - COP 22 Decision IG. 25/12 (MCPAs & OECMs) - COP 21 Decision IG. 24/06 (SPAMI)	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	30,000.00	10,000.00	**40,000.00**	0.00	50,000	
	c) Mediterranean Coast Day celebrated: Promotional/awareness raising material prepared; Two regional celebrations and two on-line campaigns organised; Support provided to local Coast Day celebrations.	PAP/RAC	CU, INFO/RAC, MAP Communication Task Force, All Components as relevant		Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean (Articles 5, 6, 15 and 32)	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	15,000.00	15,000.00	**30,000.00**			
7.2.2.Enhance public awareness and outreach on key MAP topics for general and specific targets (MAP Partners, Civil Society, Private sector, Youth etc.)	a) Communication materials, awareness campaigns and local events co-created and co-organised with Focal Points, SPAMI managers and partners to demonstrate the socio-economic and ecological benefits of conservation for local communities.	SPA/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force	SPA/BD Focal Points, SPAMIs, National authorities, CSOs	COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance COP21 Decision IG.24/5 - Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management COP22 Decision IG.25/14 - Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI COP22 Decision IG.25/16 - Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	40,000	

				Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)							
b) IV Euro-Med Weeks for Waste Reductions (2024-2025): i) Communication and Marketing Plan 2026-2027 ii) Dissemination campaigns and awareness raising activities to engage action developers in Southern Mediterranean countries iii) Actions developers engaged and supported to develop actions in the southern Med.	SCP/RAC	INFO/RAC		COP19 Decision IG.22/5 - Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Actions 47, 49, 51) COP19 Decision IG.22/2 - Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 [MSSD] (Objective 5) COP22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure D1 Strengthening access to sustainable products and services / sustainable consumption)	Cross cutting especially SDG 12 Target	5,000.00	0.00	**5,000.00**	48,000.00	0.00	
c) Awareness, information materials on marine pollution from ships and offshore installations produced and disseminated.	REMPEC	CU, INFO/RAC	IMO, IOGP, IPIECA and other partners	Prevention and Emergency Protocol	13.1; 13.2, 14	0.00	3,483.00	**3,483.00**		10,000	
d) Digital Communication Campaigns enhancing knowledge about the main topics of Barcelona Convention to strengthen action of CU and MAP Components (i.e. Pollution, Climate Change, Circular economy etc.) through web pages; interactive stories; burning issues; story maps; Infographics; Twitter cards; Video; articles and interviews; focus in section in MED News. e) Web APP for Citizen Science updated and promoted specifically for different targets (citizens, scientists, students). f) Promotion of environmental education courses in schools aimed at increasing knowledge of the role of UNEP/MAP to the younger generation in Italy to be replicated in other Mediterranean countries; Dissemination of the young person guide document.	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force		COP 16 Decision IG.19/6 - MAP/Civil society COP 21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	10,000.00	10,000.00	**20,000.00**		20,000	

	g) Dissemination and awareness-raising campaign on UNEP/MAP's approach addressing the full life cycle of plastic in the Mediterranean, in line with the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) aiming at developing an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.	SCP/RAC	INFO/RAC, MED POL	Government of Catalonia	COP21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance COP22 Decision IG.25/18 - Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (Regional Measure D1 Strengthening access to sustainable products and services / sustainable consumption).	5.5; all targets of SDG 8, and 12.	2,500.00	2,500.00	**5,000.00**	48,000.00	0.00	
Output 7.3: Towards a digital transformation: use of digital technologies to improve networking and MAP visibility							**21,485.00**	**15,000.00**	**36,485.00**	**0.00**	**60,000**	
7.3.1. Towards a digital transformation	a) Digitalisation of REMPEC Forms (To be used in an emergency) and updating of relevant platforms and websites to be used by CPs	REMPEC	INFO/RAC	IMO, IOGP, IPIECA and other partners	Prevention and Emergency protocol	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets	6,485.00	0.00	**6,485.00**		10,000	
	b) Selected Priorities of the MAP Digital transformation strategy as defined by INFO/RAC FP implemented	INFO/RAC				All SDG 14 Targets			**30,000.00**		20,000	
7.3.2. Promote MAP educational capacity through E-Learning in line with INFORMEA	a) E-Learning platform maintained and further developed. b) Online courses on MAP System and Barcelona Convention for general public developed. c) On-line thematic courses on MAP Components main topics for technicians developed.	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication TF		COP 21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	4.7	15,000.00	15,000.00	**0.00**		20,000	
7.3.3. Enable effective MAP communication	a) Directory of all the MAP network maintenance and update (repository of NFPs designations). b) On-line Event Calendar of all the MAP network initiatives maintenance and update. c) MAP Communication Task Force on-line network enhanced. d) Survey tool further developed and maintained. e) Impulse to social media in the MAP system: Social media account followers increased.	INFO/RAC	MAP Communication Task Force		COP 21 Decision IG.24/2 - Governance	Cross cutting especially SDG 14 Targets			**0.00**		10,000	
							153,985	**108,567**	**262,552**	**194,000**	**512,400**	

Programme 7: Common-advocacy	**MTF Budget 2026 (in €)**	**MTF Budget 2027 (in €)**	**Total MTF Budget 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)**	**Total funding (in €)**
CU	**10,000**	**0**	**10,000**	**0**	**40,000**	**50,000**
MED POL	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
REMPEC	**6,485**	**3,483**	**9,968**	**0**	**72,400**	**82,368**
Plan Bleu	**0**	**0**	**0**	**98,000**	**0**	**98,000**
SPA/RAC	**30,000**	**10,000**	**40,000**	**0**	**150,000**	**190,000**
PAP/RAC	**15,000**	**36,989**	**51,989**	**0**	**10,000**	**61,989**
CC/RAC	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**20,000**	**20,000**
INFO/RAC	**55,000**	**55,595**	**110,595**	**0**	**170,000**	**280,595**
SCP/RAC	**37,500**	**2,500**	**40,000**	**96,000**	**50,000**	**186,000**
TOTAL	***153,985***	***108,567***	***262,552***	***194,000***	***512,400***	***968,952***

Outputs	153,985	108,567	262,552	194,000	512,400	**968,952**
Outcome 7.1	64,000	46,584	110,584	98,000	312,400	520,984
Outcome 7.2	68,500	46,983	115,483	96,000	140,000	351,483
Outcome 7.3	21,485	15,000	36,485	0	60,000	96,485

Summary table per program/ per component/ per sourcing funding

PROGRAMMES	PROGRAM 1		PROGRAM 2		PROGRAM 3		PROGRAM 4		PROGRAM 5		PROGRAM 6		PROGRAM 7		TOTAL	
COMPONENT	2026-2027		2026-2027		2026-2027		2026-2027		2026-2027		2026-2027		2026-2027		2026-2027	
FUNDING	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)	External non-secured Funding 2026-2027 (in €)
CU	-	-	492,105	-	-	-	-	-	1,577,600	840,000	-	-	-	40,000	2,069,705	880,000
MED POL	4,566,166	505,000	-	-	-	-	-	60,000	-	20,000	57,000	434,000	-	-	4,623,166	1,019,000
REMPEC	100,800	463,705	-	66,370	-	62,000	-	117,100	-	102,700	-	41,700	-	72,400	100,800	925,975
Plan Bleu	-	20,000	120,000	-	560,000	-	230,000	100,000	10,000	-	220,000	200,000	98,000	-	1,238,000	320,000
SPA/RAC	-	-	993,718	1,207,000	-	-	-	-	5,000	310,000	726,354	270,000	-	150,000	1,725,072	1,937,000
PAP/RAC	-	-	-	-	58,000	309,000	-	371,875	-	10,000	230,000	20,000	-	10,000	288,000	720,875
CC/RAC	-	-	-	-	-	150,000	-	-	-	60,000	-	-	-	20,000	-	230,000
INFO/RAC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,000	115,765	540,000	-	170,000	115,765	720,000
SCP/RAC	628,500	836,000	-	-	5,000	48,000	598,000	80,000	-	10,000	15,000	-	96,000	50,000	1,342,500	1,024,000
TOTAL	5,295,466	1,824,705	1,605,823	1,273,370	623,000	569,000	828,000	728,975	1,592,600	1,362,700	1,364,119	1,505,700	194,000	512,400	11,503,008	7,776,850

Annex 3

Status of Contributions to MTF

Status of Assessed Ordinary Contributions apportioned to the Parties of the Barcelona Convention as of 30th June 2025												
Ordinary Contributions to MTF												
Country	**Unpaid Pledges for 2021 and prior years**	**Unpaid Pledges for 2022**	**Unpaid Pledges for 2023**	**Unpaid Pledges as of 31/12/2024**		**Pledges for 2024**	**Collections for 2024**		**Pledges for 2025**	**Collections for 2025**	**Unpaid Pledges for 2025**	**Deferred Income**
	€	€	€	€		€	€		€	€	€	€
Albania	-	-	-	-		3,704	3,704		3,704	3,704	-	
Algeria	121,095	-	50,469	171,564		50,469			50,469		**50,469**	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	-	-		5,556	5,556		5,556	5,556	-	
Croatia	-	-	-	-		42,135	42,135		42,135	42,135	-	
Cyprus	-	-	-	-		16,669	16,669		16,669	16,669	-	
Egypt	-	-		-		64,360	64,360		64,360	64,360	-	
European Union	-	-	-	-		142,670	142,670		142,670	142,670	-	
France	-	-	-	-		1,999,323	1,999,323		1,999,323		**1,999,323**	
Greece	-	-	-	-		150,482	150,482		150,482	150,482	-	
Israel	-	-	-	-		259,755	259,755		259,755		**259,755**	
Italy	-	-	-	-		1,476,573	1,476,573		1,476,573	1,476,573	-	
Lebanon	67,880	16,669	16,669	101,218		16,669	-		16,669		**16,669**	
State of Libya	664,262	8,334	8,334	680,930		8,334	-		8,334		**8,334**	
Malta	-	-	-	-		8,797	8,797		8,797	8,797	-	
Monaco	-	-	-	-		5,093	5,093		5,093	5,093	-	
Montenegro	-	-	-	-		1,852	1,852		1,852	1,852	-	
Morocco	-	-	-	-		25,466	25,466		25,466		**25,466**	
Slovenia	-	-	-	-		36,579	36,579		36,579	36,579	-	
Spain	-	-	-	-		988,086	988,086		988,086	988,086	-	

Country	Unpaid Pledges for 2021 and prior years	Unpaid Pledges for 2022	Unpaid Pledges for 2023	Unpaid Pledges as of 31/12/2024		Pledges for 2024	Collections for 2024		Pledges for 2025	Collections for 2025	Unpaid Pledges for 2025	Deferred Income
Syrian Arab Republic	121,801	4,167	4,167	130,135		4,167	-		4,167		**4,167**	
Tunisia	-	-	-	-		8,797			8,797		**8,797**	
Türkiye	-	-	-	-		391,252	391,252		391,252		**391,252**	
T O T A L	**975,039**	**29,170**	**79,639**	**1,083,848**		**5,706,788**	**5,618,352**		**5,706,788**	**2,942,556**	**2,764,232**	**-**

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

EU Discretionary Contribution												
						Expected contribution for 2024	**Received contribution for 2024**		**Expected contribution for 2025**	**Received contribution for 2025**	**Open Receivable for 2024**	
						€	€		€	€	€	
European Commission						596,484	596,484		596,484	596,484	-	

Host Country Contribution												
						Expected contribution for 2024	**Received contribution for 2024**		**Expected contribution for 2025**	**Received contribution for 2025**	**Open Receivable for 2024**	
						USD	**USD**		€	€	€	
Greece						400,000	400,000		344,800	-	-	

*Unpaid pledges for 2016 and prior years have been reduced in order for the receivable balances reflected on the current table to be in line with Umoja accounts, as reconciled in liaison with UNEP Contributions Unit: by EUR 42 for Algeria, by EUR 9,804 for the State of Libya and by EUR 1,509 for the Syrian Arab Republic.

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

Annex 4

Statements of Income and Expenditure and Changes in Reserve and Fund Balances

Statement of Income and Expenditure and Changes in Reserve and Fund Balance (MTF) for the Years 2012-2024 (in USD)													
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
REVENUE													
Counterpart Contributions	7,362,724	7,070,854	6,443,750	8,114,437	6,470,281	6,804,154	6,818,146	6,510,603	6,271,196	7,002,194	6,477,625	6,077,516	6,333,838
Miscellaneous income/ Other Revenue	25,670	22,157	39,041	18,789	63,817	74,301	249,094	204,412	634,628	317,801	15,503	413,967	284,305
Total revenue	**7,388,394**	**7,093,011**	**6,482,791**	**8,133,226**	**6,534,098**	**6,878,455**	**7,067,240**	**6,715,015**	**6,905,824**	**7,319,995**	**6,493,129**	**6,491,483**	**6,618,143**
EXPENSES													
Direct Expenses	4,125,914	5,173,251	4,266,582	8,323,357	5,071,005	6,003,895	5,339,282	7,261,565	5,484,758	8,064,762	5,847,730	7,454,680	6,486,950
PSC	389,650	573,413						500,408	737,801	868,130	668,150	806,293	1,213,905
Total expenses	**4,515,564**	**5,746,664**	**4,266,582**	**8,323,357**	**5,071,005**	**6,003,895**	**5,339,282**	**7,761,973**	**6,222,559**	**8,932,892**	**6,515,880**	**8,260,973**	**7,700,855**
Prior period and Other adjustments	53,665	(181)	1,160,193										
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	2,872,830	1,346,347	2,216,209	(190,131)	1,463,093	874,560	1,727,958	(1,046,958)	683,265	(1,612,897)	(22,752)	(1,769,490)	(1,082,712)
Accumulated surplus/ (deficit) at the beginning of the period	(1,676,963)	1,249,532	2,595,698	4,872,100	4,681,969	6,111,343	6,985,903	8,749,400	7,566,057	8,298,283	6,591,929	4,804,213	3,672,460
Reserves				1,100,000	1,100,000	1,133,719	1,133,719	1,098,178	1,234,564	1,185,603	1,256,308	1,314,677	1,373,161
Total Net Assets at the end of period	**1,249,532**	**2,595,698**	**5,972,100**	**5,781,969**	**7,245,062**	**8,119,622**	**9,847,580**	**8,800,620**	**9,483,885**	**7,870,988**	**7,848,237**	**6,118,890**	**5,045,621**
Footnotes													
The figures are based on the audited and certified Financial Statements.													
The Financial Statements from the fiscal year 2014 onwards have been prepared using the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).													
For the fiscal years 2014-2018, the Programme Support Costs are included in the Direct Expenditures.													
From the fiscal year 2014 onwards, the total net assets include IPSAS value of unpaid assessed contributions receivable, i.e., accounts receivable are reduced by the allowance for doubtful accounts for the contributions in arrears.													
From the fiscal year 2015 onwards, the Working Capital reserve is included in the total net assets.													

Interim Certified Financial Statement (32QML - TF Support Mediterranean Action Plan, M1-32QML-000008 EC Discretionary Contribution) for the period 01 January 2014 to 31 December 2021 (in USD)									
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2014-2021**
Income									
Voluntary Contributions pledged	827,896	760,571	633,210	633,210	692,780	609,701	647,648	640,313	5,445,330
Transfers (from)/to Grant	(63,831)	(5,112)					-	68,943	-
Total Income	**764,065**	**755,459**	**633,210**	**633,210**	**692,780**	**609,701**	**647,648**	**709,256**	**5,445,330**
Expenditures									
Total Direct Expenditures	721,577	357,114	517,693	581,728	594,379	88,689	432,884	709,642	4,003,707
Indirect Support Costs	32,785	15,928	21,896	26,344	26,850	4,951	19,480	31,934	180,167
Total Expenditures	**754,362**	**373,041**	**539,589**	**608,073**	**621,229**	**93,640**	**452,364**	**741,576**	**4,183,874**
Net excess/(shortfall) Income over Expenditure	9,704	382,418	93,621	25,137	71,552	516,061	195,285	(32,320)	1,261,457
Exchange Rate (loss)/gain	(31,531)	(59,252)	17,140	23,695	9,457	35,286	(0)	94	(5,111)
Available Balance	**(21,827)**	**323,166**	**110,761**	**48,832**	**81,009**	**551,347**	**195,285**	**(32,226)**	**1,256,346**