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Second Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter

Barcelona, Spain, 9-10 November 2017

Agenda item 5a: Progress achieved in the Implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean

Report on the Implementation of the Marine Litter MED Project

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Introduction

1. The Marine Litter MED is an EU-funded project implemented and coordinated by UN Environment/MAP, aiming to support the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention from the southern Mediterranean region to implement the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. Most of the project activities are carried out by MEDPOL, SCP/RAC, SPA/RAC and REMPEC.
2. The project was launched on 19-20 July 2016 in Tirana, Albania, in the framework of the MTF-funded Regional Meeting on the Further Implementation of the UN Environment/MAP Regional Plan for the Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean. The project consists of three major outputs, described as follows:
 - Output A: Assisting the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean at sub-regional levels with a particular focus on the up to five most common Marine Litter measures provided in the updated National Action Plans (NAPs).
 - Output B: Strengthening the implementation of harmonized approaches at regional and sub-regional level to reduce and prevent ML generation from land-based and sea-base sources including pilot preventions (EU countries to participate on a no-cost basis).
 - Output C: Assisting the establishment of regional and bilateral cooperation mechanisms with relevant regional actors as well as European Regional Sea Conventions to enhance synergies for the implementation of the ML Action Plans adopted or in process of preparation, with a particular focus on the collaboration with the Black Sea Commission.
3. The present report of the Marine Litter MED project highlights the main activities carried out during the period June 2016 – November 2017.

Activities related Port Reception Facilities

4. Activities were assigned to the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) in consultation with UN Environment/MAP MEDPOL related to the better management of litter from sea-based sources in selected major ports and marinas in the Mediterranean, more specifically:
 - The application of charges at reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable, application of No-Special-Fee system; and
 - The provision of port reception facilities as well as the delivery of ship-generated wastes.
5. Informal contacts were made with representatives from most beneficiary countries in the margins of the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Marine Litter Monitoring (Madrid, Spain, 28 February-2 March 2017), the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (Rome, Italy, 29-31 May 2017) as well as the Twelfth Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC (St. Julian's, Malta, 23-25 May 2017).
6. Currently, work is ongoing in order to establish formal contact with the REMPEC Prevention Focal Points of the beneficiary countries for the selection of the major ports and marinas that will participate in the respective pilots; work is also focused on launching all the administrative process for the recruitment of the consultants that will support REMPEC in the implementation of the corresponding activities with a view to finalising the agreed process by early 2018.

Activities related to the Regulatory Framework for Banning of Single-Use Plastic Bags and promotion of Extended Producer Responsibility

7. Activities related to the enhancement of the regulatory framework on the non-single use of plastic bags and the promotion of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes, have been

assigned to the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC), in consultation with MED POL.

8. SCP/RAC has worked, during the second semester of 2016 and the first semester of 2017, towards the identification of 5 countries to participate to the pilots, through an invitation to express interest addressed to the SCP/RAC Focal Points of six beneficiary countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia). Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt have already expressed interest along with a summary explanation on the national situation regarding the single-use plastic bags. Morocco expressed interest in hosting pilot projects. Efforts have been made to take on-board Algeria to participate to the pilots, but a final confirmation has not been received. Israel is also a candidate for a pilot project.

9. Based on the information provided and the analysis made the situation is the following:

- Lebanon hasn't yet developed any legal framework concerning the use/ban of plastic bags. Therefore the process will have to be initiated from scratch;
- Tunisia has developed a bill for the prohibition of production, marketing, distribution and import on single-use plastic bags. Tunisia requested support from the Marine Litter MED project for the development of the socio-economic study that should accompany the bill;
- Morocco has adopted a law (loi 77-15) in September 2015 concerning the ban of production, importation, exportation, commercialization and use of plastic bags. Morocco has requested support from the Marine Litter MED project for the implementation of this new legal framework, in particular regarding the transition of the formal and informal sectors, the control of its implementation, and on the undertaking of awareness raising and communication activities;
- In Egypt there are already several on-going projects related to the use of plastic bags, in particular in the Cairo area. To this extent, the Marine Litter Med activities will be developed in such a way as to complement and use the results of the previous actions.

10. Based on each situation, specific activities have been designed accordingly and thus, several options for technical assistance to the governments have been offered.

11. Separate activities are also planned related to a "Draft template of legislation/regulation on the non single-use of plastic bags and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)" is assigned to SCP/RAC in consultation with UN Environment/MAP MED POL.

12. These activities include the implementation of pilot projects aiming at reducing single-use plastic bags and the promotion of EPR for this marine litter item and other key ones (e.g. beverage containers).

Activities related to the Development of the IMAP Candidate Indicator 24

13. Activities related to the UN Environment/MAP Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) Candidate Indicator 24¹, have been assigned to the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) in consultation with UN Environment/MAP MED POL. The activities include:

¹ There is a deviation in the number used to describe the corresponding UNEP/MAP IMAP Indicator "Trends in the amount of litter ingested by or entangling marine organisms focusing on selected mammals, marine birds, and marine turtles". In the project document it is stated as Common Indicator 18 (CI 18) while in the Narrative Report (and also on the corresponding deliverables) it is stated as Candidate Indicator 24. Explanation: by the time of the project proposal preparation the corresponding proposal of UNEP/MAP for the described IMAP indicator was Common Indicator 18. However, during COP 19 (Tirana, Albania, July 2016) the described indicator was adopted as Candidate Indicator 24.

- i. A regional consultation to define the most representative species for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24;
- ii. The development of a specific protocol and capacity building on monitoring of sea turtles, with the view to harmonizing methods and data collection;
- iii. The assessment of available data to propose Good Environmental Status (GES) and related Targets for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24;
- iv. The development of an operational strategy for monitoring of IMAP Candidate Indicator 24; and
- v. The creation and improvement of a Mediterranean network on IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 and exchange of best practices. In this respect, a marine litter expert has been selected from SPA/RAC to work on the preparation of a report/study related to a proposal of the most representative species to be used for the assessment of the amount of marine litter ingested by or entangling the marine species/biota.

14. The first deliverable of this set of activities is the preparation of the report “Defining the most representative species for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24”. The report has become available in both English and French and has been briefly presented in the Meeting of the Correspondence Group (CORMON) on Marine Litter Monitoring (Madrid, Spain, 28 Feb. – 2 Mar. 2017), and also included as Information Document to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting (Rome, Italy, 29 – 31 May 2017, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.439/Inf.12). The report has been also presented to the 6th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (Athens, Greece, 11 Sept. 2017; UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.444/Inf.11).

15. A training session and sharing of technical skills on marine litter ingestion by sea turtles was successfully organized in Portici, Naples on 6 July 2017. SPA/RAC through the Marine Litter MED project supported the participation of 6 sea turtles experts from Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt, and Israel to this session, which were trained in performing a necropsy on sea turtles, dissect the parts of interest, and identify marine litter and related items. A training session in French will be organized in Montpellier, France (Nov. 2017-February 2018, tbc) where sea turtle experts from Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon will participate. Further details on the English training session can be found in the “Report on Synergies and Collaboration with other Projects”.

16. In addition, SPA/RAC is working in the development of a specific Protocol on monitoring the amount of litter ingested by or entangling the selected species to harmonize methods and data collection.

17. Moreover, the development of guidelines and training material to prevent the generation of plastics and wastes ending up as marine litter, with a particular focus on plastics bags, will be developed by SCP/RAC in the framework of the Marine Litter MED project.

Activities related to the Implementation of “Fishing-for-Litter” and “Adopt-a-Beach” Pilots

18. Important steps have been undertaken by UN Environment/MAP MED POL towards the implementation of Activities 4.10, 4.11, 4.12a, 4.12b, related to the implementation of “Fishing-for-Litter” and “Adopt-a-beach” pilots. UN Environment/MAP and its MED POL Programme, after negotiating with the beneficiary countries have agreed to implement pilots, as follows:

- “Fishing-for-Litter” pilots in Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco.
- “Adopt-a-beach” pilots in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Israel, Libya, and Morocco.

19. UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) – MED POL is also developing a risk assessment tool for identifying areas in the Mediterranean where the accumulation of ghost nets pose a threat and should be removed.

Strengthen Cooperation among Regional Seas Programmes

20. An agreement has been also established with the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat (BSC PS) to implement the activities related to the development of a Monitoring Programme and an Action Plan on Marine Litter for the Black Sea Region, and also to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two Secretariats.

21. A Coordination meeting between UN Environment/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat and the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat (BSC PS) was organized in Athens, Greece on 24 July 2017, to assess the progress achieved and set the way forward in developing the Black Sea Monitoring Programme and Action Plan on Marine Litter, in the framework of the Marine Litter MED project. UN Environment/MAP was represented by Gaetano Leone (Coordinator), Tatjana Hema (Deputy Coordinator), Jelena Knezevic (MED POL Programme Management Officer), Erol Cavus (MED POL Programme Officer), Christos Ioakeimidis (MED POL Marine Litter MED project expert), and Lobna Ben Nakhla (SPA/RAC Programme Officer). BSC PS was represented by Ms Iryna Makarenko (Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer).

22. The BSC PS representative presented the progress achieved from the BSC PS on the activities envisaged in the framework of the Marine Litter MED project, and particularly related to:

- The development of the Action Plan on Marine Litter for the Black Sea region;
- The development of the BS IMAP Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter.

23. Both documents were submitted to the 33rd Ordinary Commissioners Meeting of Bucharest Convention (Istanbul, Turkey, 6 October 2017). Documents were well received by the meeting participants and countries are invited to provide comments to the next Extraordinary Commissioners Meeting of Bucharest Convention in November 2017.

24. Moreover, the follow-up on the establishment of the bilateral cooperation between UN Environment/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat and the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat (BSC PS) was also discussed. In that respect, a detailed joint work plan of activities among UN Environment/MAP and BSC PS was drafted to be implemented in the following three (3) years, and was circulated among UN Environment/MAP MED POL and BSC PS colleagues for further development and finalization. The joint work plan was structured in two different pillars; one related to general elements and another one related to marine litter related elements. All elements are hereunder listed:

25. The General elements of the joint work plan are:

- Development of indicator specification/factsheets to monitor and assess GES;
- Assessment of needs/gap analysis of the countries to implement the monitoring;
- Collaboration in sharing information on emerging pollutants and related studies;
- Collaboration in supporting definition and assessment of GES for a number of common indicators;
- Development of guidelines for BSIMAP based on the Mediterranean experience (Ecosystem management, fisheries, MPA, and invasive species);
- Development of the ICZM indicators (ref. to ICZM decision);
- Development of BSIS (information system policy document) based on MEDPOL/IMAP info system experience;
- Capacity building, networking and exchange of best practices;
- Joint meetings (CORMON-EcoQOs) on Marine Litter, Biodiversity, etc.

26. The Marine Litter elements of the joint work plan are:

- Collaboration on how to streamline marine litter Monitoring on MPA Management as well as selected measures e.g. Fishing-for-Litter;

- Collaboration in preparing and validating a risk assessment tool to identify marine litter hotspots based on the Mediterranean experience;
- Introduction of Fishing-for-Litter, Adopt-a-Beach, and banning of single-use plastic bag pilots in the Black Sea based on the Mediterranean experience;
- Share of best practices and Marine litter guidelines on key selected marine litter prevention and reduction measures adapted to the Black Sea needs;
- Collaboration in the development of the BS Node on Marine Litter based on the Mediterranean experience.

27. Cooperation among the European Regional Sea Conventions on marine litter has been also a priority for the project. The Secretariat participated in all informal meetings related to the collaboration for the implementation of the Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter (RAP ML) across the Regional Sea Conventions (RSC), including the last one held in Madeira (30 June 2016). The next meeting is planned to be held in Brussels on 30 November 2017.

Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean

28. Another important achievement during the examined period has been the establishment of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean. A roundtable discussion meeting “Enhancing Regional Coordination on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean” was organized at the invitation of UN Environment/MAP (Athens, Greece, 6 September 2016) where the Regional Cooperation Platform was established (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2/Corr.1²). The Regional Cooperation Platform aims to facilitate the implementation of the “Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean” adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in their COP 18, held in Istanbul, Turkey 2013 (Decision IG.21/7³).

29. Important marine litter Mediterranean actors are members of the platform (i.e. UNEP/GPA, UNEP/MAP (incl. MEDPOL), REMPEC, SCP/RAC, SPA/RAC, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, CIEM, EEA, IWRS, IUCN/ IUCN-MED, SWEEP-NET, GRID-ARENDALE, SDSN-MED, HELMEPA, MEDASSET, MIO-ECSDE, WASTE FREE OCEANS, PRINCE ALBERT II MONACO FOUNDATION, JRC/MSFD TG ML, MEDITS, PLASTICSEUROPE, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ GmbH) and additional members are also considered upon their express of interest. More information can be found at: <http://web.unep.org/unepmap/regional-cooperation-platform-marine-litter-established-mediterranean>.

30. The second meeting of the Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean will be held on 9-10 November 2017 in Barcelona, Spain.

Inter-linkages and Synergies with other Projects

31. The project ensures complementarities with UN Environment/MAP Mid Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021, EU MSFD Common Implementation Strategy, UfM H2020 Initiative, and other marine litter and Ecosystem Approach related regional and national ongoing projects contributing to the achievement of the Marine litter reduction targets adopted by COP 19 in February 2016.

32. With regards to the linkages with other Projects, a detailed working document (WG.3) has been prepared entitled “Report on Synergies and Collaboration with other Projects”. Under the present section, only brief information is provided.

33. The project is being implemented in close cooperation with the EU-funded INDICIT project on the development of the UN Environment/MAP IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 of the 10th Ecological Objective. Detailed activities have been described under the “Output A” section.

² <https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/bitstreams/54015/retrieve>

³ <https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/bitstreams/8222/retrieve>

34. Moreover, the project is in close cooperation with other EU-funded projects i.e. EcAp MED II and Med Sea Litter projects. Specifically, Marine Litter MED is developing the IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 through the activities envisaged in the project, as no relevant activities are included in the EcAp MED II project. Contacts have been also established with the MedSeaLitter project, synergies are most welcomed. Further contacts/communication should be established in the future in order to identify additional areas of joint activities and synergies.

35. Synergies are also envisaged in the Adriatic region, in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Montenegro, where countries are supported from UN Environment/MAP through the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry of Environment Land and Sea (IMELS) to implement identical to the Marine Litter MED “Adopt-a-beach” pilots and pilots related to the development of the national regulatory framework for banning of single-use plastic bags.

36. The project is also establishing synergies with the ENI-SEIS II South project aiming at supporting the implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles in nine beneficiary countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) on pollution related issues including also marine litter.

37. Synergies are also in place with the Mediterranean Node on Marine Litter which UN Environment/MAP is currently developing with the support of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), aiming to support the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean.