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87th Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the
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and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Athens, Greece, 6-7 November 2018

Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for April - September 2018

Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period April - September 2018

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I. Introduction

1. This report covers the activities and outputs carried out between April and September 2018. The Reports by the Secretariat on Specific Issues and on Financial and Administrative Issues are prepared as separate documents, namely UNEP/MED BUR.87/6 and UNEP/MED BUR.87/5 respectively. These documents address in a more detailed manner a number of specific issues to be brought to the attention of the Bureau. Furthermore, the complementing “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP 20 Decisions*”, is presented as document UNEP/MED BUR.87/4.

II. Main Activities/Outputs per Programme of Work (PoW) theme linked to specific outcome

II.1 Overarching Theme: GOVERNANCE

Strategic Outcome 1.1: Contracting Parties supported in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans

Governance meetings

2. The 85th Meeting of the Bureau was held in Athens, Greece, on 18-19 April 2018. The meeting addressed a number of issues, including the development of Host Country Agreements for Regional Activity Centres, the preparation of the meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biodiversity, the process for the preparation of the 2019 State of the Environment and Development Report, and the preparations for COP 21 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. The 86th Meeting of the Bureau was held on 11 July 2018, through teleconference, and addressed mainly the issue of the nomination by Monaco of an Alternate Member of the Compliance Committee.

3. The 35th meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) took place in Paris, France (6 June 2018), back-to-back with the celebration of the World Environment Day and the 40th Anniversary of Plan Bleu. The 36th meeting of the ECP, took place in Split, Croatia (27-28 September 2018) back-to-back with the celebration of the Mediterranean Coast Day and the 40th Anniversary of PAP/RAC.

4. The 19th Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee was held on 20 June 2018 via teleconference. The meeting reviewed and discussed the progress and perspectives in the MCSD/MSSD related developments after the 17th Meeting of the MCSD and COP 20, as well as the work plan of the MCSD Steering Committee for the biennium 2018-2019, with a specific focus on issues related to the implementation of Decision IG.23/4.

5. The 14th Meeting of the Compliance Committee was held in Athens, Greece, on 27-29 June 2018. The Committee discussed, *inter alia*, the Status of Reporting and the Examination of Reports Received under Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention. It also provided the opportunity for exchanges with compliance mechanisms of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

6. INFO/RAC organized its first Focal Points meeting for the current biennium in Rome, Italy (3-4 October 2018), aiming to present the InfoMAP architecture and the Spatial Data Infrastructure components.

Resource mobilization, project proposals recently approved or submitted

7. The GEF funded Medium Sized Project “*Implementation of Ecosystem Approach in the Adriatic Sea through Marine Spatial Planning*” (GEF Adriatic) finalized the inception phase. The Project Inception meeting (Tirana, Albania, 29 May 2018) agreed on the implementation strategy, which aims at restoring the ecological balance of the Adriatic Sea through the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). The meeting, attended by over 100 persons from Albania and Montenegro, the two beneficiary countries of the project, produced a series of recommendations submitted to the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC, held in Tirana, Albania (30 May 2018), approved the inception report including the detailed description and timeline of each activity, the budget and workplan for the financial year 2018-2019. The project completed the preparation of the trainings on the Good Environmental Status (GES) for national experts (institutions) and set up a national team of experts and organization of training workshops on monitoring based on IMAP indicators factsheets in Albania and Montenegro.

8. UNEP/MAP and the co-executing partners of the MedProgramme have focused efforts on (1) recruiting experts to assist in data gathering for the establishment of baseline conditions and design of activities at the national and regional levels; (2) missions to countries to consult with stakeholders on the design of activities; (3) organization of the 1st and 2nd Regional Consultations; (4) drafting relevant portions of the project documents following validation of activities by the GEF Operational Focal Points;

and (5) working with countries to document their co-financing contributions to the Child Projects. Child project “*CP2.1 Mediterranean Coastal Zones: Water Security, Climate Resilience and Habitat Protection*”, executed by UNEP/MAP, PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu, UNESCO IHP and GWP-Med is being reviewed by the UNEP Project Review Committee at the beginning of October and will then be submitted to the GEF Secretariat for final approval. Two Child Projects, namely “*CP1.2 Mediterranean Pollution Hot Spots Investment Project*”, executed by the European Investment Bank and UNEP/MAP, and “*CP4.1 Mediterranean Sea Basin Environment and Climate Regional Support Project*” executed by the European Investment Bank and UNEP/MAP will be at submission stage in November 2018. The remaining Child Projects will be at submission stage in December 2018.

9. UNEP/MAP and the co-executing partners of the “*Enhancing Regional Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean Sea Marine and Coastal Areas*” (SCCF project) focused efforts on (1) organizing stakeholder consultations at the regional level and in the countries where national activities are foreseen; (2) updating the project document and logical framework to take into account the new information and priorities identified during the stakeholder consultations; and (3) preparing the inputs on knowledge management and gender mainstreaming in the project document. These efforts allowed to reach the submission stage for the Project to be validated by the UNEP Project Review Committee at the beginning of October and then submitted to the GEF Secretariat for final approval.

10. The execution of the EC funded Project “*Towards an ecologically representative and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas*” has been blocked for issues related to the Euro-USD exchange rate, which did not allow to manage (register, disburse and allocate) the project funds in Umoja. Discussions have been held with UNEP headquarters to seek a corporative solution to this issue, which is common to other EC funded projects and is related to the limited capacity of Umoja to manage funds in Euro. A possible solution was identified in August 2018. Consequently, a new timeline and budget revision was agreed with DG NEAR to extend the Project execution until the end of September 2019. To support this project extension new legal instruments have been prepared with partners in August 2018. A Project Steering Committee is foreseen as soon as the legal agreement are signed by the partners.

11. UNEP/MAP concluded the negotiation with DG NEAR to support the third phase of the MPA action with a complementary action on IMAp implementation, supported under the GreenMedIII Strategy. The new action aims to address IMAp implementation needs in terms of monitoring environmental parameters not yet systematically assessed, including common indicators on biodiversity, NIS, pollution and marine litter and MPA management challenges. The action will ensure that these parameters will be monitored in coherence with the findings of the 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2017 MED QSR) and the EcAp Funding Strategy. The proposed action also aims to enhance the capacity of national and local administrations to complete and reinforce the required legal framework and regulatory provisions for the extension of the regional network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including strengthening their monitoring capacity. This will accelerate the achievements of the Aichi Target 11, the GES of the Mediterranean Sea and coast and the SDG 14. UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC will develop, in full coordination with DG NEAR and DG ENV, the project document over the last quarter of 2018. The agreed support with DG NEAR is 4 million Euro.

12. In the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS), a voluntary contribution of 2,015,000 EUR has been provided by Italy in support of activities included in the MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019. A number of activities have been undertaken in the current period, including the development of full-fledged activity fiches, the integration of the fiches’ main elements into the approved MAP Components’ Project Documents, the establishment of a coordination mechanism with technical Focal Points nominated by each MAP Component, and the preparation of vision papers for all the activity fiches. The budget for 2018 has been received by UNEP/MAP and transferred to the respective MAP Components as agreed. A concrete work plan is in place and activities’ implementation is ongoing.

13. SPA/RAC and INFO/RAC are members of the consortium that submitted a project proposal “*Support Mediterranean Member States towards implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive new GES Decision and Programmes of Measures and contribute to regional/subregional cooperation*” following the Call for proposals: “*Marine Strategy Framework Directive - Second Cycle: Implementation of the new GES Decision and Programmes of Measures*” – “*DG ENV/MSFD 2018 call*”.

14. Project proposals submitted by Plan Bleu between April and September 2018, to support

UNEP/MAP activities are: (a) project submitted to the Agence de l'Eau Rhône Méditerranée Corse with a focus on the impact of economic activities and usages on the marine environment – SoED Chapter 4); (b) project submitted to a Horizon 2020 EU funding on foresight of Climate Change impacts in the Mediterranean - in direct relation / contribution with MED 2050; and (c) project submitted to BlueMed call for Start-up Actions on cruise and recreational boating in the Mediterranean (foresight and associated environmental challenges, innovation potential to foster a transition towards sustainability).

15. The Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil & HNS Pollution Cooperation (West MOPoCo), will support Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia in strengthening their cooperation in the field of preparedness for and response to marine pollution. The two-years project of €868,685.92 is co-financed (75%) by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) and by its Partners (25%). The project will contribute to strengthening the regional cooperation framework, as well as assist the beneficiary Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, in implementing the Regional Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness for and Response to Marine Pollution from Ship (2016-2021), particularly Specific Objectives 17, 19, 20, 21 and 22. The project will complement REMPEC staff with a Project Officer and an Administrative Assistant.

16. Following the publication in 2017 by the IMO of a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) position at REMPEC, in the framework of its JPO Programme, a candidate from the People's Republic of China was selected and joined the Centre as of 20 April 2018.

17. As confirmed by the Italian Government on 30 April 2018, the credit balance coming from the secondment of Ms. Cristina Farchi by the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) to REMPEC between March 2007 and December 2009 amounting to EUR 8,199.09 (Eight Thousand One Hundred and Ninety-Nine 09/100 Euro) is used to complement the Mediterranean Trust Fund budget to hire consultancy services for the preparation of a technical and feasibility study to examine the possibility of designating the Mediterranean Sea or parts thereof as SOx emission control area under MARPOL Annex VI. The voluntary contribution of the French Government is currently being discussed with REMPEC.

18. SCP/RAC is currently involved in the preparation of the 2nd phase of the SwitchMed Project, to be coordinated by UNIDO and implemented by UNIDO, UNEP/Economy Division and SCP/RAC. It is expected to start at the beginning of 2019. The total budget of the project is approximately 17 million Euro.

19. SCP/RAC is starting a direct assignment with EBRD to improve the policy framework and engage with the food and beverage industry in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, for tackling plastic packaging value chains in circular economy. Funds are coming from the Austrian Delivering Resource efficiency InVEstments Fund, within the framework of the UfM labelled project MedRESCP. Synergies will be ensured with activities supported under the cooperation agreement with IMELS.

20. The project proposal of GIMED and CIRCULAR-MED, submitted last year to DG NEAR by SCP/RAC for the call for Standard project of the ENI CBC “Mediterranean Sea Basin” Programme call has successfully passed the first step of selection. They are currently going through the second step and the final decision on the list of projects recommended for funding is expected in January 2019.

21. The PlasticBusters MPAs project (“*Plastic Busters: preserving biodiversity from plastics in Mediterranean MPAs*”) supports the implementation of the UfM Plastic Busters labelled project and SCP/RAC is one of the implementing partners. The total budget of this 48 months project is 5 million EUR. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to maintaining biodiversity and preserving natural ecosystems in pelagic and coastal MPAs, by defining and implementing a harmonized approach against Marine Litter. The project entails actions that address the whole management cycle of Marine Litter, from monitoring and assessment to prevention and mitigation, as well as actions to strengthen networking between and among pelagic and coastal MPAs located in Italy, France, Spain, Croatia, Albania and Greece.

22. In line with the MAP PoW and Budget 2018-2019, the post of Information and Communication Officer in the Coordinating Unit will be also supported by Italy in the framework of the Cooperation Agreement. In this respect, an Individual Contractor was recruited in order to undertake the assigned tasks for a six-month period (15 June 2018-15 December 2018) until the full post is filled. Administrative work is on track for the recruitment of the staff member on 1 January 2019.

23. The Secretariat together with PAP/RAC and INFO/RAC are participating in two projects on MSP approved by DG MARE, related to the Eastern and Western Mediterranean: Supporting Maritime Spatial Planning in the Eastern Mediterranean (SUPrEME) and Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial

Planning in the Western Mediterranean region (SIMWESTMED). UNEP/MAP-led activities aim at developing horizontal approaches and recommendations for key aspects of MSP implementation, including the integration of Land-Sea Interactions (LSI), the consideration of cross-border elements, where appropriate, the involvement of stakeholders and the establishment of permanent and operational network mechanisms among countries. These activities will support the overall objective of ensuring a region-wide coherence in the definition and application of MSP, building on the MAP-Barcelona Convention legal, policy and institutional framework. The projects' results will be presented in the joint final conference, to be held in Venice, Italy, on 12-13 December 2018. Knowledge gathered through the implementation of the projects and best practices identified will feed into the Regional MSP Training that will be held by PAP/RAC, with support from the Cooperation Agreement with IMELS, in early 2019.

24. The final evaluation of the policy component of the SwitchMed programme was conducted by an independent consultant between June and September 2018. The results of the evaluation were positive with an overall project rating equal to Satisfactory. The Evaluator concluded that the policy component of the SwitchMed programme had high strategic relevance for the region, reflected in the highly satisfactory outputs reached at regional and national level. The evaluator recommended to continue to implement thematically related projects and initiatives under the institutional framework for cooperation of UNEP/MAP to address regional challenges of environmental degradation.

Strategic Outcome 1.2: Contracting Parties supported in compliance with the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans

25. INFO/RAC has developed tools to support technically the other MAP Components and has set-up a roadmap of physical meetings to discuss technical solutions, with the first of these meeting organized on 19 July with REMPEC Meetings with the other RACs are planned in October/November 2018.

Strategic Outcome 1.3: Strengthened participation, engagement, synergies and complementarities among global and regional institutions

26. UNEP/MAP provided inputs and participated in the preparation of UNEP's contribution to the Report of the Secretary-General entitled "*Towards a Global Pact for the Environment - Gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments*". It has also contributed to the UNEP involvement in global processes, such as the "*Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects*" (the "*Regular Process*") and the process 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.

27. REMPEC attended the 72nd Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (London, UK, 9-13 April) to integrate global developments at regional level; PolyTalk 2018-Zero Plastics to The Oceans (St. Julians, Malta, 26 – 27 April) to gather the latest information and perspectives on the scientific findings of the impact of plastic litter on the environment and the measures, practices and innovations developed and adopted to tackle the matter; the Common Emergency Communication and Information Systems (CECIS) training for Marine Pollution users (Brussels, Belgium, 29-30 May); the Plenary Conference of the 2018 Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum (Marseille, France, 27 – 28 June); and the International technical workshop "*Data, trends, impacts and benefits associated with the creation of an emission control area by vessels in the Mediterranean*" to present the technical and feasibility study to examine the possibility of designating the Mediterranean Sea or parts thereof as SOx ECA(s) under Annex VI MARPOL.

28. UNEP/MAP will actively participate in the 42nd Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), which will also follow-up on the sub-regional monitoring plan for NIS developed by the Joint GFCM-MAP Sub-regional Pilot Study for the Eastern Mediterranean for NIS.

29. SPA/RAC, together with the Coordinating Unit, is actively following preparatory work for the November 2018 CBD COP 14 in Egypt, including involvement in Working Groups preparation and review of documents (EBSAs follow up, MPAs and OECMs, etc). CBD COP 14 will consider ways to mainstream biodiversity into other sectors and will lay out plans for the post-2020 biodiversity agenda. As such, the GFCM-UNEP/MAP cooperation experience could be also presented at the CBD COP 14. UNEP/MAP is planning various side events at CBD COP 14 to ensure the Mediterranean perspective is highlighted.

30. UNEP/MAP will also participate in the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Regional Workshop for the Mediterranean, organized by the CBD Secretariat in Tangiers, Morocco, on 15-19 October 2018.

31. To strengthen cooperation with the Compliance Procedures and Mechanisms established under other MEAs, representatives of the Compliance Committees of (a) the IMO London Convention/Protocol, (b) GFCM, and (c) the Basel-Rotterdam-Stockholm Conventions, presented the work of their Committees at the 14th Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Compliance Committee (Athens, Greece, 27-29 July 2018). Furthermore, the work of the Barcelona Convention Compliance Committee was presented to the GFCM Compliance Committee Meeting (Madrid, Spain, 5-6 July 2018).

32. The 3rd Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean is organized in Izmir, Turkey (11-12 October 2018) to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the joint 2018 work plan, as agreed by the members of the Platform during their 2nd meeting in November 2017. The meeting will be held back-to-back with the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the EC funded Marine Litter MED project and the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices.

33. Furthermore, UNEP/MAP participated to the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics (Nairobi, Kenya, 29-31 May 2018), organized by UNEP/GPA in response to UNEA-3 resolution on marine litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.3/Res.7). In preparation for the meeting, a position paper was prepared and submitted by the Secretariat. The objective of the Expert Group is to examine the barriers to and options for combating marine plastic litter and microplastics from all sources, especially land-based ones. The second meeting will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 2018.

34. Cooperation has been initiated between Benguela Current Convention (Contracting Parties: Angola, Namibia and South Africa; entry into force in 2015) and UNEP/MAP, on policy integration and ecosystem-based planning and management, with a focus on transboundary MSP in the context of Large Marine Ecosystems. The cooperation is funded through the GEF IW-Learn project.

35. The Secretariat is also participating in the process on Ocean Governance for Africa led by UNEP Headquarters, and, to this end, in the Scoping Workshop on Ocean Governance for Africa (Zanzibar, Tanzania, 23-25 July 2018). The workshop aimed mainly to discuss the scope and preparation of a strategy of Ocean Governance for Africa. In preparation for the meeting, the Secretariat has contributed with comments on the Summary Scoping Study and Gap Analysis.

36. The Secretariat participates in the BLUEMED Working Group, as observer, and in the Advisory Board of the BLUEMED Coordination and Support Action. Funded by the EC, BLUEMED aims to contribute to the creation of new 'blue' jobs, social well-being and sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors through implementing the Euro-Mediterranean Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda.

37. In the context of the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference that will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26-28 November 2018, the Secretariat submitted, in cooperation with the UfM Secretariat, WWF Med and IUCN Med, a side event proposal entitled "*The Regional Dimension of the Transition Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy: The Case of the Mediterranean Sea*".

38. The Secretariat participated in the 2nd Steering Committee meeting of the Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean (WestMed Initiative, Brussels, Belgium, 25 April 2018), in which UNEP/MAP has an Observer Status. The meeting reviewed and approved the Rules of Procedures while several countries reported on their identified priorities, many of them closely linked with the work of UNEP/MAP.

Strategic Outcome 1.4: Knowledge and understanding of the state of the Mediterranean Sea and coast enhanced through mandated assessments for informed policy-making

39. In accordance with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019 and in line with the objectives of the EU funded EcAp-MED II Project, the Secretariat organized a Regional Meeting on IMAP Implementation: Best Practices, Gaps and Common Challenges in Rome, Italy, on 10-12 July 2018. The meeting highlighted progress and challenges faced, including the need on further work on various methodological aspects of monitoring and assessment (both on regional and sub-regional level), knowledge gaps and capacity needs on national level, especially in the Southern Mediterranean. The meeting also provided useful recommendations towards the development of the IMAP Information System and requested the Secretariat to develop the first elements of a data sharing policy for a first review by the upcoming Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs).

40. In line with Decision IG.23/6, the Secretariat has prepared the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment based on the key findings, challenges and recommendations of a Regional

Meeting laid out in UNEP/MED WG.450/3 “*Progress Report on the Implementation of Decision IG.22/7 on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP)*”. This is presented in the Report on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.87/6).

41. The INFO/RAC e-learning platform has been installed and a customization to host multi-courses and a specific landing-page for training programmes will be added to INFO/RAC web site.

42. A consultation was carried out with the Plan Bleu Focal Points and MCSD Members on the outline, approach and methodology of the State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED 2019). A revised Concept Note and Table of Content was shared with the MAP and Plan Bleu Focal Points in June 2018. The SoED 2019 outline was also presented to the 19th Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (teleconference, 20 June 2018). Plan Bleu Focal Points and MCSD Members are kept informed about the progress achieved regarding the SoED 2019.

43. An internal workshop was conducted on the foresight study on environment and development in the Mediterranean at the horizon 2050 (MED 2050) to operationalize the design and communication strategy (Marseille, France, 6 April 2018). A call for interested MED 2050 network participants was launched. MED 2050’s preparation is progressing according to the roadmap approved at COP 20. Collaborations are discussed with existing foresight networks, at the global, regional and national level.

44. The proposed approach for populating and updating the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard was presented to the 19th Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee (teleconference, 20 June 2018). The relevant process considers the SDGs, relevant COP decision and recommendations of the Steering Committee.

45. In coordination with HELCOM (lead Partner), REMPEC organised the 3rd OpenRisk Inter-Regional Workshop on Risk Assessment Methods for Pollution Prevention and Response (Valletta, Malta, 24-25 April 2018) to test the “*OpenRisk Guideline for Regional Risk Management to Improve European Preparedness and Response at Sea*” for its finalisation and approval (Malmo, Sweden, 30 October 2018).

46. An online course on the MAP-Barcelona Convention system is being prepared under InforMEA, with the full involvement of the Coordinating Unit.

Strategic Outcome 1.5: MAP knowledge and MAP information system enhanced and accessible for policy-making, increased awareness and understanding

47. The metadata catalogue based on ISO standard has been embedded by INFO/RAC in the InfoMap portal. A basic template to acquire metadata in the catalogue or to harvest other MAP catalogues and web services has also been implemented in the system.

48. INFO/RAC has activated a prototype of service and data sharing based on data of REMPEC. During the INFO/RAC Focal Points meeting in October 2018 a mechanism on how to engage the regional organization for a data-sharing system will be discussed.

49. The new online BCRS System has been implemented and, after a test phase, is being launched at the beginning of October 2018 to allow the online submission of reports for the period 2016-2017.

50. The Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR) was upgraded and complemented with fifteen (15) new features, including a layer related to illicit discharges, a responsive interface with additional filters, customised access and update by Mediterranean coastal States, running of oil forecasting simulations, etc.

51. The Beta version of the electronic version of the Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents has been developed.

52. SPA/RAC is preparing a call for tender to upgrade the Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform to liaise with the other SPA/RAC databases, such as: Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species Database (MAMIAS), Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Database (MAPAMED) and Standard Data-entry Form for national inventories of natural sites of conservation interest Database, which will also be upgraded. SPA/RAC is also preparing the first report on the status of non-indigenous species in the Mediterranean, which will serve as a baseline assessment against which the success of future actions could be measured.

Strategic Outcome 1.6: Raised awareness and outreach

53. The Coordinating Unit and INFO/RAC are working to implement Decision IG.23/3 on “*Governance*”, in relation to information and communication issues and especially on the preparation of an operational Communication Strategy in line with UNEP’s global vision on communication and with the

MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS).

54. The Mediterranean Coast Day and 40th Anniversary of PAP/RAC were held in Split, Croatia, on 25 September 2018 gathering more than 100 participants. The events were held back-to-back with the Regional Seas annual coordination meeting that took place at the PAP/RAC premises, on 23-24 September 2018. PAP/RAC also supports the Coast Week organised by Slovenia in Izola, on 17-21 September, within EUSAIR. Several local Coast Day events will also be organised with the support of PAP/RAC in the framework of the MAVA-funded projects on coastal wetlands in Albania, Italy and Tunisia.

55. The Coordinating Unit was present through a video message from the MAP Coordinator and participation in a panel on the Blue Economy at the Eco City Forum 2018 focusing on “*Circular Economy in Smart Cities*” (Thessaloniki, Greece, 3-5 October 2018). It also participated with a statement at the Second Sustainability Summit for the South-East Europe and the Mediterranean, organized by The Economist and the Center for SDGs Governance and Public Law (Athens, Greece, 1-2 October 2018).

56. SCP/RAC publication on “*20 solutions to prevent the use of toxic chemicals*” was published and is being disseminated.

57. SPA/RAC has produced a short-animated film on marine biodiversity for children in Arabic, French and English that have been disseminated online (SPA/RAC website) and screened during public events of environmental awareness in Tunisia. Furthermore, SPA/RAC elaborated an operational communication plan, while it is also refurbishing its website to fulfil new technical requirements and to allow dissemination of information related to its activities and outputs.

58. SPA/RAC has issued two publications (“*How to identify and recognize Mediterranean sharks and rays: A training manual*” (in French); “*Defining the most representative species for IMAP candidate indicator 24*”).

II. 2 Core Theme I: LAND AND SEA-BASED POLLUTION

Strategic Outcome 2.1: Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and four pollution-related Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing relevant Regional Strategies and Action Plans

59. Official requests of assistance were received from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Morocco to prepare and update, respectively, their national contingency plans (NCP). A Work Plan to develop and test the NCP of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been agreed between the competent authorities and REMPEC, and has been integrated in the CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina. A call for formal quotation for the provision of the services for the development of the NCP of Bosnia and Herzegovina was published on 30 August 2018, and the related contract was awarded on 12 September 2018.

60. A request from Lebanon was submitted to REMPEC to prepare a sub-regional contingency plan with Cyprus dealing with preparedness for and response to oil and HNS spills from ships, sea ports, oil handling facilities and offshore installations. Discussion are ongoing with the competent authorities.

61. Following the signature of the “*Implementation Agreement on the Sub-Regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan between Cyprus, Greece and Israel*” (Nicosia, Cyprus, 8 May 2018), REMPEC has been supporting the preparation of the First Meeting of national Operational Authorities responsible for the implementation of the Sub-regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan between Cyprus, Greece and Israel, to be held back to back to a Sub-regional seminar on compensation for oil pollution damage (Nicosia, Cyprus 4-6 December 2018).

62. REMPEC has been supporting Algeria in the preparation of the Fifth Meeting of the Operational Authorities of responsible for the implementation of the Sub-regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan between Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (20-21 November 2018, Alger, Algiers).

63. The renewal of REMPEC’s Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ISPRA was discussed at a meeting in June 2018, whilst the MoU with Sea Alarm was signed during INTERSPILL 2018. The MoUs between REMPEC and Federazione Nazionale dell’Industria Chimica (FEDERCHIMICA), as well as between REMPEC and the Mediterranean Operational Network for the Global Ocean Observing System and Cedre are in force.

64. Following the deployment of two experts from the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) from 8 to 14 October 2017, to provide technical support to the Greek authorities in the aftermath of the sinking of

the oil tanker “AGIA ZONI II”, off Piraeus, Greece, in September 2017, REMPEC submitted a claim, in March 2018, to recover the expenses related to this deployment which was financed through the established MAU special revolving fund managed by REMPEC. The claim was approved and paid in accordance with the international system of Compensation established by the Civil Liability Convention 1992.

65. Following the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Second Meeting of MENELAS, which was held in Valletta, Malta from 28 to 29 November 2017, the REMPEC Circular Letter related to the establishment of the MENELAS Working Group is under preparation. The Third Meeting of MENELAS is tentatively planned to be held on 7-8 February 2019 in Malta.

66. MED POL is coordinating the implementation of “*Fishing-for-litter*” pilots in Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco, and “*Adopt-a-beach*” pilots in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. A number of legal agreements are already in place with the Contracting Parties, and some few need to be finalized.

Strategic Outcome 2.2: Development or update of new/existing action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines

67. The First Consultative Meeting to Consider the Main Elements of Six Pollution Reduction Regional Plans (Municipal WWTP; Sewage Sludge Management; Agriculture Nutrients Management; Aquaculture Nutrients Management; Urban Storm Water Management and Marine Litter - revision) under the Land Based Sources Protocol was held in Athens, Greece, on 4 – 5 September 2018. Discussions were focused on best practices, available baseline information and key technical measures. The first Regional Expert Meeting to consider main elements of six Pollution Reduction/ Prevention Regional Plans, will be held on 20-22 November 2018 and the Second Regional Expert Meeting in May 2019. MED POL prepared a road map to lead the process towards revision of the existing Regional Plans (mercury, BOD, ML) and to propose the elements for preparation of the new Regional Plans.

68. A consultation process launched in September 2017 for the development of offshore common standards and guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment, disposal of oil and oily mixtures, the use and disposal of drilling fluids and cutting and analytical measurements; and special restrictions or conditions for Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) was concluded in May 2018. The final Drafts will be disseminated to the Offshore Focal Points and MAP Focal Points, for future considerations including their adoption at COP 22 or submission to the most relevant governing body.

69. Within the framework of the “*Marine Litter-MED*” Project funded by the EC as well as the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP, coordinated by UNEP/MAP, progress was made in relation to: a) Visit by Port Authorities representatives to the Antwerp Port (30-31 October 2018); b) Selection of the major ports and marinas; c) Study on existing best practices for the application of charges at reasonable costs and No-Special-Fee system for the use of port reception facilities; d) Relevant documents submitted to the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (9-10 October 2018, Izmir, Turkey); e) Implementation of the pilots as well as the national meetings in the beneficiary countries.

70. A first draft of the guidelines on phasing out single-use plastic bags in the Mediterranean region was prepared and will be presented to the countries during the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices - Marine Litter Med project (Izmir, Turkey, 9-10 October 2018)

71. Work on the development of the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR), in line with the PoW and Budget 2018-2019, is undertaken in the framework of the ENI SEIS II South Project. With the support of a Regional Expert, MED POL developed the updated PRTR Guidelines and prepared draft legislation in all SEIS countries. The Implementation of the PRTR pilots in five partner countries, which will be followed by regional training, is streamlined with the 4th National Baseline Budget (NBB) update process which will expedite the work of the Contracting Parties to comply with their legal obligation under Art.13 of the Land Based Sources Protocol.

Strategic Outcome 2.3: Strengthening and implementation of marine pollution prevention and control legislation and policies at national level, including through enforcement and integration into sectorial processes

72. A call for expressions of interest to Mediterranean coastal States for the preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) was disseminated on 24 April 2018 to select the Mediterranean coastal States that will benefit from the technical support, through

the provision of national consultancy services. Upon evaluation of the national submissions, Albania, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey have been selected. Following the selection, communication is ongoing with the above countries to initiate the work.

73. MED POL is working to provide financial and technical assistance to the following Contracting Parties in relation to the 4th cycle of the NBB reporting: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. Terms of References for such assignments were prepared in line with UN Rules and Procedure and advertised. In line with NBB and PRTR Guidelines, preparation for development of the specific national guidelines to strengthen national capacities to collect and report quality assured data through the PRTR/NBB system are on the way and for this purpose a draft MED POL PRTR Implementing Guide was prepared and will be shared with the Contracting Parties the 2nd Regional Workshop on Indicators.

74. In the framework of Marine Litter Med project, SCP/RAC continued its technical support to the countries to improve their legislation to reduce Marine Litter. Targeted countries are Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt and Algeria. In the case of Morocco and Tunisia, the legislation is already in place, the technical support aims at supporting the implementation. In the rest of countries, as no legislation is in place, the focus will be rather on the development of voluntary agreement with the private sector.

75. In the framework of the SWIM H2020 Supporting Mechanisms project, SCP/RAC is coordinating the preparation of two technical studies that aim at screening the best practices, circular economy measures and technologies for the target countries. The olive oil and the cement sectors are selected, with focus on best practices for the waste minimization, water and energy consumption and valorisation of the sub-products of the olive oil production, and on best practices for the waste to energy process to avoid or minimize environmental issues, respectively.

76. SCP/RAC is also providing technical support to Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia for the development of SCP/circular economy/pollution abatement measures. ToRs for the specific activities for each country have been prepared with the focal points of the project. A regional training on Green Economy is planned for November 2018 in Barcelona, Spain (focusing on technical support on SCP for SMEs with emphasis on whole life cycle of services and products - circular economy, eco-design, eco innovation).

Strategic Outcome 2.4: Marine Pollution Monitoring and Assessment

77. With support from the Secretariat and MAP Components namely MED POL, SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC, work is ongoing by all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to progress on national implementation of IMAP, building on the existing MAP monitoring programmes and on lessons learnt from other regional and/ or global processes. The initial phase of IMAP implementation up to date (2016-2018) showcases a high level of progress by all Contracting Parties.

78. The work has progressed in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Montenegro, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey on the update of the national monitoring programmes. Turkey has been also progressing on IMAP implementation, with most recent efforts to strengthen the integration of IMAP provisions into the national monitoring programmes through the implementation of the EC-funded Project entitled “*Technical Assistance for capacity building on Marine Strategy Framework Directive in Turkey (2015-2017)*”. In this respect, the instrumental role of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is noted regarding the national monitoring programmes established by the Contracting Parties, which are also EU Member States. The country monitoring programmes established in line with the MSFD provide a solid basis for implementation of IMAP requirements considering national specificities.

79. A meeting of INFO/RAC with the Secretariat and MAP Components have been organized in Rome, Italy, on 13 July 2018 to agree on concrete actions to open the MED POL InfoSystem for submission of new national monitoring data and to finalize the operationalization of the NBB InfoSystem, as well as to ensure finalization of the IMAP compatible pilot InfoSystem. Up to now, data submissions have been received by Croatia (2011-2014), Cyprus (2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016), Egypt (2012, 2013 and 2015), France (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016), Israel (2012, 2013 and 2015), Montenegro (2014, 2015, 2016), Morocco (2013, 2014 and 2015), Slovenia (2014, 2015 and 2016), Tunisia (2014) and Turkey (2014 and 2015). The preparation of the 2017 MED QSR was instrumental in promoting the reporting of new data series related to marine pollution by Contracting Parties.

80. A new Memorandum of Understanding between MED POL and IAEA for 2018-2019 has been signed. Nomination of national laboratories and representatives for participation in the two 2018 Proficiency Tests (inorganic and organic contaminants in marine sample), and the two 2018 Training Courses on the Analysis of Organochlorine Pesticides (OCs) and on the Analytical Techniques for the Determination of Trace Elements in Environmental Samples, has been completed. Final reports of the 2017 proficiency tests on trace metals and organics in sediments have been prepared and shared with MED POL Focal Points and their main findings and recommendations will be submitted to the CORMON meetings.

81. MED POL is working under SEIS II Project to develop H2020/NAP indicators and related factsheets on three thematic areas namely water, industrial emissions and waste management including marine litter. For this purpose, the 2nd ENI SEIS South Support Mechanism Regional Meeting on Indicators was held in Athens, Greece (17-18 April 2018). The meeting was organized by UNEP/MAP, Plan Bleu and MED POL, in collaboration with the European Environment Agency (EEA). The regional meeting discussed the current progress on H2020 indicator development and related assessments on wastewater, industrial emissions and solid waste, including marine litter. The meeting also reviewed the proposed indicators' methodological specifications and reporting processes, including regional infrastructures, and agreed on a set of recommendations. The final list of H2020/NAP indicators and their specifications were reviewed and agreed accordingly.

82. The 1st ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism Regional Workshop on Infrastructure and Data Management is held in Rome, Italy (4-5 October 2018). This workshop is organized by INFO/RAC and the MED POL, in collaboration with EEA. The goal of the workshop is to propose, debate and agree the data dictionaries developed for H2020/NAP indicators, and provide to national experts training activities to collect and submit data and to use SDI and reporting infrastructure by INFO/RAC including existing information systems, such as the NBB information System relevant to H2020/NAP Indicators.

Strategic Outcome 2.5: Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including assistance and capacity building

83. The regional Workshop on Response to Spill Incidents involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) (MEDEXPOL 2018) took place in Valletta, Malta (20-21 June 2018). Participants agreed upon the revised "*Guide for risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime accidents*" as amended by the Workshop for its submission to the 13th Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, June 2019) for approval; they also endorsed a set of recommendations for future developments on HNS response guidelines and tools, including the production of a Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual between the Bonn Agreement, HELCOM and REMPEC.

84. REMPEC initiated the preparation of a national IMO Model Introductory Course on the Response to HNS in the Marine Environment, to be held in Turkey, in November 2018. The training is financed by IMO ITCP and targets Administrators and Senior Managers responsible for determining preparedness and strategy for the conduct and management of an effective response to a marine HNS incident.

85. In the framework of SwitchMed demonstration component, five projects are being finalised in the following areas: tourism, agro-food, textile and organic waste. A final publication on the results of the two tourism projects in Tunisia has been released. The project on the use of downgraded dates and implementation of the circular economy principles in a small textile workshop are being finalised, with a capitalisation workshop held in Algiers, Algeria (18 September 2018). A final mission is about to be organised for the marketing component of the olive oil project in Tunisia. Two pilot projects on the composting of organic waste from wineries in Lebanon and on the production of biogas from animal manure in Morocco are starting. Two pilots project on DEHP and PVC in medical devices (Morocco) and on the use of lead in paints (Tunisia) were finalised (SwitchMed policy component).

86. SCP/RAC, in coordination with MED POL, prepared the report on baseline scenario, baseline projects and alternative scenario on PCBs/POPs and mercury in the framework of the preparatory phase of the Child Project 1.1 "*Reduction of Land Based Pollution in priority Coastal Hotspots, and measuring progress to impacts*" of the GEF-funded MedProgramme.

87. The two marine litter pilot actions developed in Morocco in the framework of SwitchMed, have ended: the first focused on the development of Alternatives to single-use plastic bags, and the second on the collection and recycling of beverage containers: a study aiming to find out about the collection and recycling circuits of plastic bottles and aluminium cans. A Marine Litter Forum on the prevention of

Marine Litter was organised (Rabat, Morocco, 10 May 2018) to present the results of the pilot actions.

Strategic Outcome 2.6: Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub-regional and national levels to prevent and control marine pollution

88. The Secretariat participated to the 2018 PolyTalk Conference (St Julian's, Malta, 26-27 April 2018), which was organized by the PlasticsEurope Association. The aim of the conference was to engage stakeholders in a transparent, forward looking dialogue aiming to effectively tackle the problem of marine litter in the region. The Coordinator of the UNEP/MAP participated in the panel about the “*Shared Strategies for the Mediterranean region: issues and challenges*”, showcasing the importance deriving from the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. The marine litter-related activities of the Secretariat were also presented during the informal meeting of EU Water and Marine Directors (Sofia, Bulgaria, 11-12 June 2018).

89. UNEP/MAP hosted the Fifth European Regional Seas Coordination Meeting on Marine Litter (Vrachati, Greece, 4-5 July 2018). The meeting was attended by the European Regional Seas (i.e. OSPAR, HELCOM, Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat and UNEP/MAP), European Commission (DG ENV), Regional Office of UNEP for Europe, UNEP/GPA, Contracting Parties that are members in more than one Regional Sea Conventions (including France, Germany, Spain, Turkey) and PlasticsEurope. It aimed to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Action Plans on Marine Litter and to discuss synergies. A proposal for a Regional Workshop on Synergies with the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter was discussed, focused on enhancing synergies between the Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes and the corresponding Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

Strategic Outcome 2.7: Identifying and tackling new and emerging issues, as appropriate

90. REMPEC secured an additional Euro 20,000 from IMO's ITCP to complement the funds available under the MTF (i.e. Euro 25,000) and launched a new call for tenders for consultancy services for the preparation of a technical and feasibility study to examine the possibility of designating the Mediterranean Sea or parts thereof as SOx emission control area under MARPOL Annex VI. In accordance with the IMO procurement procedures, the selection committee awarded the contract on 24 July 2018. In parallel, the SOx ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts was consulted on the draft generic questionnaire prepared by REMPEC in support of the technical and feasibility study.

II.3 Core Theme II: BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS

Strategic Outcome 3.1: Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention, and its relevant Protocols and other instruments

91. A virtual meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for MPAs in the Mediterranean (AGEM) is being organized in late September/early October 2018, to agree on the AGEM programme, deliverables and calendar for the period September 2018-May 2019.

92. SPA/RAC is working with the Coordinating Unit on the launching of a project supported by IMELS with contribution by MTF to achieve Spatial info data compilation on pressures and impacts in a sub-region where an EBSA exists and PSSAs can be developed; to undertake in 2019 an exchange meeting on management measures in ABNJ and PSSAs, in Adriatic and eventually other Sub-region, and to provide coordinated support to Contracting Parties in identifying and planning relevant joint management measures at sub-regional level to achieve GIS in ABNJ or where the limits of jurisdiction have not yet been defined.

Strategic Outcome 3.2: Development of new action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines for the conservation of Coastal and Marine biodiversity and ecosystems

93. The discussions will resume shortly with Morocco and Montenegro on the development of their respective National Ballast Water (BWM) Management Strategies, as well as with Malta and Italy with regard to the pilot on mutually granted exemptions under the BWM Convention, making use of the same risk area concept for short sea shipping trade between the two neighbouring countries.

94. The Interreg Med ACT4LITTER project is progressing well and the end of the project is approaching in October 2018. The 4th Steering Committee meeting was held in July 2018 and an associated partners meeting took place (Pisa, Italia, 16 May 2018). Specific action plans including measures to prevent Marine Litter in MPAs are being developed for nine voluntary pilot MPAs (Kornati National Park (Croatia), Miramare MPA and the MAB-UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Miramare and coast

of Trieste (Italy), MPA of Torre Guaceto (Italy), MPA Torre del Cerrano (Italy), Axios-Loudias-Aliakmonas Delta National Park (Greece), Ebro Delta Nature Park (Spain), MPA Cala Ratjada – Balearic Islands (Spain), Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park/UNESCO Global Geopark – Andalusia (Spain), Strunjan Landscape Park (Slovenia)). The final conference of the project will take place in Athens, Greece (23-24 October 2018), organized back-to-back with the EU SWIM-H20202 SM workshop on marine litter, ensuring the participation of national and local authorities from the Southern Mediterranean countries.

95. SPA/RAC launched a call for applications to evaluate and update the Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea, the Regional strategy for the conservation of monk seal, the Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles, and the Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea. The revised draft updated Action Plans/strategy are expected to be ready to be presented to the 14th SPA/BD thematic focal points meeting.

96. SPA/RAC is progressing for the finalization of the classification of benthic marine habitat types for the Mediterranean region and the Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean. This task will consist of: (i) undertaking a review of all the available national list of marine habitats officially adopted at national level by Contracting and compiling them to update the classification of benthic marine habitat types for the Mediterranean region adopted by COP 11; (ii) finalizing the criteria and the methodology to select the reference habitat type in consultation with designated experts; and (iii) finalizing the draft reference list and diffuse it to the national experts for comments. A meeting of national experts will be organised in January to review, discuss and endorse the classification of benthic marine habitat types and the Reference List of Marine Habitat Types.

97. In the framework of the MedKeyHabitatsII project, SPA/RAC is assisting six Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Cyprus, Malta, Tunisia, Turkey and Morocco) to establish a mapping inventory of marine key habitats and to assess their sensitivity to fishing activities. Two firms have been hired for the mapping activities in Tunisia and Morocco, through a call for tender launched for the mapping in Algeria.

98. Within the implementation of the MAVA financed project for the conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean, SPA/RAC has set-up national teams in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia to monitor the known nesting areas and to explore the new areas in their respective countries.

99. SPA/RAC, as ACCOBAMS sub-coordination unit for the Mediterranean area, collaborates to the implementation of the following actions and Projects: ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI) Boat survey training workshop, Samos, Greece (June 2018), the ASI Air campaign workshop, Cuers, France (May 2018), awareness day on ASI, Bizerte Tunisia, (August 2018), mitigating interaction between fishing activities and endangered marine species (Pilot studies in Tunisia), update of MEDACES, and organization of training courses on photo id, expert's and GIS databases in collaboration with IUCN Med, MedPAN and Lebanese CNRS (Lebanon, 1-5 October 2018).

Strategic Outcome 3.3: Strengthening national implementation of biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and legislation measures

100. The Turkish Focal Point of SPA/RAC has been contacted to launch the elaboration of the National Action concerning species introduction and invasive species. Within the framework of the Medkeyhabitats II project, SPA/RAC will recruit in collaboration with the Cypriot Focal Point the consultant to elaborate the National Action Plan (NAP) for the conservation of marine vegetation. The NAP for the conservation of marine turtles in Tunisia is under preparation within the framework of the MAVA Marine Turtle Project.

101. As part of the bycatch project, SPA/RAC has produced an awareness leaflet on bycatch of vulnerable species (in English, French and Arabic), which is also published on the SPA/RAC website. The document is made in coordination with BirdLife International, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN Med, MEDASSET, as well as the Tunisian national institutions: The National Institute of Sea Science and Technology and the General Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Tunisian NGO “*Association des Amis des Oiseaux*”. A training manual on cartilaginous fishes has been produced as set by the Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes in the Mediterranean.

102. Within the framework of the MedMPA Network Project implementation, a consultation workshop on the diagnosis-assessment phase for the elaboration of the management plan for the North-Eastern part of the Kerkennah Islands in Tunisia was organised on 19 April 2018, bringing together 35 representatives of national and local stakeholders, including local people, fishermen and local civil society organisations.

103. The process for the elaboration of the Jbel Moussa area management plan is underway. The draft management plan is to be submitted to the Moroccan authorities by the end of September 2018 in order to hold a consultation workshop by the end of October 2018. The elaboration of a management plan for the Sallum MPA (Egypt) is being launched on September 2018.

104. SPA/RAC is developing, by the end of November 2018, a Management Plan of the marine sites suitable to be declared as deep-sea MPAs in Lebanon in the framework of the “*Deep-Sea Lebanon*” Project. Within the framework of the MAVA Kuriat Project implementation, monitoring programmes for seabirds, marine turtles and human activities (fishing and tourism) in Kuriat Islands, Tunisia are underway. The first stakeholder meeting was organized on 12 March 2018; the communication strategy for the Kuriat Islands MCPA is expected to be ready in November 2018.

105. In coordination with BirdLife International, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN Med and MEDASSET, SPA/RAC organised the technical launch workshop of the MAVA funded Bycatch project (Understanding Mediterranean multi-taxa 'bycatch' of vulnerable species and testing mitigation - a collaborative approach) in Tunisia (Monastir, 8 May 2018) and contributed to the technical launch workshop of the project in Turkey (Istanbul, Turkey, 9 July 2018) and in Morocco (Tangier, Morocco, 17 July 2018). SPA/RAC is progressing smoothly with Tunisian national authorities to set up a bycatch data collection program by October 2018 (Schedule, port selection, national priorities identification, data collection methodology) and a Tunisian bycatch observer team to collect Data.

Strategic Outcome 3.4: Monitoring, inventory and assessment of biodiversity with focus on endangered and threatened species, non-indigenous species and key habitats

106. SPA/RAC is updating the common indicators guidance factsheet and elaborating the relevant documents to ensure a successful implementation of the first phase of the IMAP cycle. These documents will be discussed during the next meeting of the CORMON on Biodiversity and Fisheries in January 2019.

107. The SPA/RAC Focal Points of the countries concerned by the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) ordinary reviews in 2018 and 2019 (France, Italy, Lebanon, Monaco, Spain and Tunisia) have been contacted to schedule this activity properly and start setting up the mixed (national/independent) Technical Advisory Commissions that will be entrusted with the review.

108. A call for tenders was launched during the first week of August 2018 to hire consultants that will be entrusted with running the evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed Marine Protected Areas to achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean. Contracting Parties and regional/international partner organizations have been mobilized and contributing to the MPA Roadmap evaluation process.

109. SPA/RAC is evaluating the most appropriate MPA/SPAMI that will host the joint monitoring programme on Biodiversity in line with the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) recommendations. Results of this pilot monitoring programme will be uploaded in the Info/MAP Platform to contribute to the elaboration of the 2023 MED QSR)

110. SPA/RAC contributed in the elaboration of the CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina agreement by defining the Sub-activity 2 on Marine habitats and protected area, in order to undertake, together with the relevant stakeholders: (a) a gap analysis on information needed for the identification and characterization of marine key habitats and their conservation and management in Bosnia and Herzegovina territorial waters; (b) an overview of the marine biological diversity along the Bosnia and Herzegovina coast, through a rapid assessment survey following the IMAP ecological objectives related to biodiversity (EO1) and non-indigenous species (EO2); and (c) a preliminary mapping of the marine key habitats and flagship species (marine mammals, sea turtles and seabirds) distributional range (linked to 2023 MED QSR).

Strategic Outcome 3.5: Technical assistance and capacity building at regional, sub-regional and national levels to strengthen policy implementation and compliance with biodiversity -related national legislation

111. In the framework of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine vegetation, coralligenous, dark habitats and NIS, SPA/RAC launched the organisation in Antalya, Turkey (14-18 January 2019) of the marine key habitats and NIS symposia (the 6th Mediterranean Symposium on Marine Vegetation; the 3rd Mediterranean Symposium on Coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions; the 2nd Mediterranean Symposium on Dark Habitats; the 1st Symposium on Marine Alien Species).

112. The first ODYSSEA Summer School on “*Operational Oceanography for Science, Business and Society*” was held in Kavala, Greece (3-12 September 2018). SPA/RAC has supported five students from the North African Countries involved in ODYSSEA. The first ODYSSEA training workshop dedicated to Observatories Managers and Technical Staff will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 23-25 October 2018, simultaneously with ODYSSEA’s 1st General Assembly. SPA/RAC has prepared the outlines of the Training Program and has coordinated the contribution of the speakers.

113. Within the framework of the improvement of the national capacities for the conservation of endangered species, SPA/RAC has organised the following training sessions: (a) Sea turtles' courses with the technical support of DEKAMER (Dalyan, Turkey, 20-27 June 2018); (b) Courses for the identification of rays and sharks, with the support of INSTM and ASCOB-Syrtis (Sfax, Tunisia, 23-25 April 2018); (c) National course on marine turtles' studies and monitoring (Kuriat Islands, Tunisia, 8-12 August 2018) with the support of INSTM, APAL, NGB; and (d) Week of “*Grand Bleu*” (Monastir, Tunisia, 13-16 August 2018) organised in close collaboration with the NGO NGB.

114. SPA/RAC has planned two workshops on marine litter and illegal trade of marine turtles, within the 6th Mediterranean conference on marine turtles scheduled on 16-19 October 2018 in Croatia.

115. The final version of the study “*Long term Evaluation of SPA/RAC Training Programmes and Recommendations for Future Training Programmes*” was finalised by the consultants. SPA/RAC will use it to improve the training activities that it is providing to Mediterranean countries.

Strategic Outcome 3.6: Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub-regional and national levels to protect and conserve biodiversity and ecosystems

116. The creation by Spain of a new 46,385 km² Marine Protected Area (the Cetaceans Migration Corridor) is a very positive development. The corridor will be submitted to formalize at COP 21 its final inclusion in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance ([SPAMI](#) List).

117. The Coordinating Unit and SPA/RAC are contributing to the preparatory work for the Fish Forum 2018, organized by GFCM (Rome, Italy, 10-14 December 2018).

Strategic Outcome 3.7: Identifying and tackling with new and emerging issues, as appropriate

118. The CBD Secretariat, GFCM and UNEP/MAP are following and contributing to the process for the development of the international legally binding instrument on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), which is expected to improve coherence to better support conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ, by establishing standards for environmental impact assessments, MPAs and marine technology transfer, while preserving the rights and obligation guaranteed by the UNCLOS.

II.4 Core Theme III: LAND AND SEA INTERACTIONS AND PROCESSES

Strategic Outcome 4.3: Strengthening national implementation

119. Significant progress has been made with regard to the CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina Agreement, the draft of which is ready for final clearance by the national Ministry. The Agreement was prepared in close cooperation with all MAP Components involved (INFO/RAC, MED POL, REMPEC, SCP/RAC and SPA/RAC) and largely discussed with relevant national and local authorities and institutions. Two working meetings were organised in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 16 April and 5 July, with the participation of PAP/RAC representatives.

120. The possibility of a transnational CAMP was announced to the Albanian and Italian PAP/RAC focal points whose first reactions were positive. The Mediterranean Coast Day is used as an opportunity to have a first trilateral exchange on the subject.

Strategic Outcome 4.4: Monitoring and assessment

121. A step-by-step guide on LSI for the implementation in MSP pilot cases was drafted. Consultations with project partners (SIMWESTMED and SUPREME) are ongoing. Based on the developed approaches for addressing MSP/ICZM, implementation of two pilots (Tyrrhenian and Var) within the SIMWESTMED project is on-going.

122. A simplified version of the Hydrography Indicator “*Location and extent of the habitats impacted directly by hydrographic alterations*” was prepared; contribution to the development of the information standards and dictionary for the implementation of IMAP was provided in collaboration with INFO/RAC.

123. A concept note and template for case studies on SDG14 and Blue Economy was developed, a

network of relevant actors was identified, and the identification of case studies is in progress. Furthermore, a coastal risk index (CRI) is being further developed in collaboration with the RAMOGE Convention.

Strategic Outcome 4.5: Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building

124. Preparatory activities for training workshops on coastal/marine monitoring, based on IMAP indicators' fact sheets is on-going.

II.5 Cross-cutting Theme I: INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT (ICZM)

Strategic Outcome 5.1: Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing Regional Strategies and Action Plans

125. The Working Group on the Common Regional Framework (CRF) for ICZM met for the second time in Athens, Greece, on 30-31 May 2018. Based on the distribution of work agreed at their first meeting, the WG members contributed to specific chapters of the CRF. The second meeting worked on individual chapters. Further work was agreed on refining some specific elements, in particular the guidance to be provided on how ICZM can support EcAp Ecological Objectives. To this end, a working meeting was organised in Rome, Italy, on 17 July 2018. The first proposal related to this guidance was presented and discussed together with the draft text of the CRF at the Regional Consultation Meeting, held back-to-back with the Mediterranean Coast Day celebration in Split, Croatia, on 26-27 September. Further work is ongoing, especially in relation to the elaboration of the methodological guidance of the CRF.

126. Preparatory activities for the 2nd training course on ICZM/MSP for the Co-Evolve project partners planned to be held in Barcelona, Spain, on 29-31 October 2018 have been progressing. A summary of the Governance Report (Output 3.12) was prepared for wide dissemination.

127. A capitalisation conference on sustainable tourism projects in the Mediterranean was organized ("Re-connecting tourism: Promoting evidence-based policies for sustainable development; Rome, Italy, 29-30 May 2018). Existing regional tools on sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean are currently examined.

128. Following the discussions held in the 85th meeting of the Bureau (Athens, Greece, 18-19 April 2018), the Coordinating Unit and MAP Components are discussing through the Executive Coordination Panel ways to enhance coordination between projects related to specific issues and the relevant activities funded by MTF and voluntary contributions. To this end, PAP/RAC prepared a draft concept note on its work to ensure coordination of efforts and synergistic links between relevant projects and the CRF on ICZM; the concept note is now being revised following comments by the Coordinating Unit.

Strategic Outcome 5.2: Development of new action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines

129. Recommendations and guidelines to support common understanding and integration of the Barcelona Convention principles in MSP activities were prepared and adopted by the SUPREME project Steering Committee. The corresponding document for the West Mediterranean is under finalization.

Strategic Outcome 5.3: Strengthening national implementation

130. At the official request of GEF NFPs from Lebanon and Egypt PAP/RAC has included their national ICZM strategies in the GEF MedProgramme proposal. Furthermore, a whole range of the activities aiming to provide support for ratification and implementation of the ICZM Protocol has been envisaged with special emphasis to the land use and land use change analysis. ProDoc for consideration and approval by GEF Managing Authorities has been completed and is presented at the 2nd Regional Consultation meeting (Paris, France, 20-21 September 2018).

Strategic Outcome 5.5: Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building

131. A 3-month run of the MedOpen Advanced on-line training course on ICZM was concluded in June 2018. It was attended by graduate students with specialization in coastal management at the National Superior School for Marine Sciences and Coastal Management (ENSSMAL) in Algeria. The extraordinary group of ENSSMAL students made this 3-month training exceptional, dynamic and rich in interesting forum discussions. The novelty of this run was also the inclusion of a real pilot site of the Algerian coast, the marine part of the National Park of Gouraya (NPG) - the future MPA. With great support of the NPG,

the Commissariat national du littoral (CNL) and the Port authorities of Béjaia, three workshops were organized for students with the participation of local actors at the pilot site.

Strategic Outcome 5.6: Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub-regional and national levels

132. The ICZM Platform has been launched within the renewed PAP/RAC web site. The Platform has been populated with lots of material but still needs some updating.

II.6 Cross-cutting Theme II: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SCP)

Strategic Outcome 6.3: Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building

133. In the framework of the SwitchMed Green Entrepreneurship and Civil Society component, the following activities are being developed (with support from the SwitchMed project): (a) Training programme targeting 800 Green Entrepreneurs to develop their Green Business Model in eight countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Israel and Lebanon) is organized; (b) 15 selected Green Entrepreneurs are being incubated and supported to launch their green businesses in eight countries; (c) Support provided for access to finance for 60 Green Entrepreneurs through national investor-ready pilot activities in eight countries; (d) Development of an access to finance guide for green entrepreneurs started; (e) National Synergy Workshop developed in Egypt and Palestine to identify opportunities and recommendations to support green entrepreneurship and social eco-innovation; preparation of white Paper with recommendations to support green entrepreneurship and social eco-innovation; (f) Eight civil society organizations' initiatives supported to launch and/or strengthen their SCP projects.

Strategic Outcome 6.4: Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub-regional and national levels to prevent and control marine pollution

134. In the framework of the SwitchMed Networking Facility, the following activities are currently being developed: (a) “*Investors Meet Switchers*” event held in Lebanon and Israel; (b) Bilateral meetings held between Investors and Switchers in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine; (c) Development of the UfM funded regional publication “*Opportunities and Challenges of Financing for Green and Circular Economy Entrepreneurship in MENA*” in partnership with FEBEA/SEFEA; (d) Preparation of the second round of the Switchers Fund Grant Scheme; (e) Fundraising meetings for grant-making scheme; (f) Strategic partnership with EVPA and engagement with members; (g) Regional roadmap for scaling-up of green entrepreneurship support tools in the Mediterranean (the Switchers Support Programme) under preparation; (h) Management of the SCP Hub and of social media accounts; (i) Side events and workshops at major regional happenings organised; (j) Strengthening and development of Switchers platform ongoing (more than 220 stories on www.theswitchers.eu); (k) Organisation of the 3rd edition of the SwitchMed Connect (Barcelona, Spain, 13-15 November 2018) with more than 350 participants.

II.7 Cross-cutting Theme III: CLIMATE CHANGE

Strategic Outcome 7.1: Strengthening the regional implementation of the obligations under the BC and its Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing Regional Strategies and Action Plans

135. The SCCF project has been completed for submission. Two coastal adaptation plans are proposed to be prepared, in a way to expand the ICZM plans from the MedProgramme and to fully encompass adaptation to climate change issues. The locations will be Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region in Morocco and the Kotor Bay area in Montenegro.

136. SPA/RAC and Plan Bleu are elaborating a cost analysis for the implementation of a SAP BIO priority activity on a monitoring network for climate change impact on biodiversity.

Strategic Outcome 7.2: Development of new action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines

137. Partnerships are developed on the utilization of Nature-Based Solutions as a strategy to adapt to climate change in Mediterranean areas (UICN Med, Tour du Valat, Conservatoire du littoral, etc.). A workshop presenting case studies and recommendations is to be organized in Marseille, France (January 2019). Identification of case studies and speakers is in progress.

Strategic Outcome 7.4: Monitoring and assessment

138. SPA/RAC and Plan Bleu started to build synergies to favour the increase in the use of harmonized vulnerability and impacts indicators for biodiversity in SPAMIs along 2019.