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Second Project Steering Committee Meeting of the GEF Adriatic Project
“Implementation of Ecosystem Approach in the Adriatic Sea
through Marine Spatial Planning” GEF ID 9545

15 May 2019, Podgorica, Montenegro

**Agenda item 3: The Way Forward: Request of a no-cost extension until the 30th of September 2020 and related
Draft Revised Project Budget and Workplan**

Request of a no-cost Project extension

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2019

Introduction on the request of a no-cost Project extension

The current document provides a summarized rationale to support the request for a no-cost Project extension till 30 September 2020.

The request of a no-cost Project extension is hereby submitted for the consideration and approval of the Project Steering Committee members of the (as approved by the first PSC meeting on 30th May 2018 - UNEP/MAP WG.449/7).

Rationale

The GEF Adriatic is a complex project in which activities were designed to be fully integrated with each other. The execution of the Project is linked to the wider regional and national processes, e.g., the UN Environment MAP Integrated National Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) and Ecosystem Approach (EcAp). Moreover, in several cases, the finalization of activities fully relies upon the completion and delivery of others.

In this context, the execution of the GEF Adriatic Project had proceeded well after the inception workshop and the first Steering Committee meeting which had been held in May 2018 in Tirana, Albania. Nevertheless, the execution of several activities had been postponed in order to be fully aligned and consistent with the above-mentioned processes, in particular:

Preparation of the national GES reports to include measures for GES achievement

- The major outcome of the GEF Adriatic Project will be the preparation of the complete national IMAPs for Albania and Montenegro. In general terms, and thanks to the support provided by the GEF Adriatic, Albania and Montenegro will be among the first countries in the Mediterranean to prepare and complete IMAPs which are based on the requirements outlined by the Barcelona Convention (Ecological Objectives and related indicators), Decision IG.22/7.
- The activities for the preparation of the thematic monitoring programmes had progressed steadily. International experts had provided extensive training sessions as well as a full-time support to highly competent and motivated national experts for the delivery of their respective outputs. This resulted in 14 national gap assessments (7 Albanian and 7 Montenegrin) of high quality as well as the delivery, last year, of 14 national thematic monitoring programmes. These outputs are instrumental to the preparation of the Albanian and Montenegrin GES reports with measures designed to achieve GES.
- Nevertheless, data from the field surveys and training workshops planned in both countries during Q3-Q4 2019, are also required in order to be in a position to complete the GES reports with measures for GES achievement.

The proposed, no-cost extension to the 30th September 2020, will enable the completion of the preparatory activities including the processing of data for the Albanian and Montenegrin GES reports with measures to achieve GES.

Data collated for marine biodiversity, eutrophication, contaminants and hydrography

- The GEF Adriatic Project will also provide for the collection of required data on marine biodiversity, eutrophication, contaminants and hydrography. This is essential for the future implementation of IMAP in Albania and Montenegro.

- National tendering procedures for such tasks require a significant amount of time which cause a delay in the final delivery of activities.

The proposed, no-cost extension to the 30th September 2020, will allow for the completion of all data collected on marine biodiversity, eutrophication, contaminants and hydrography. This data will be a support to Albania and Montenegro in the finalization of their respective IMAPs.

Maritime Spatial Planning component

- The MSP component of the Project will result in: 1) draft inputs for the national MSP in Montenegro; 2) increased national capacities for MSP in Albania and Montenegro; and 3) contribution to the sub-regional efforts made towards a common approach for MSP.
- The achievement of these outputs also depends upon the joint efforts made for other initiatives, implemented in the framework of both the PAP/RAC and SPA/RAC Programmes of work (PoW), particularly in regard to increasing the regional capacities and in recognition of the common agreement of the Adriatic countries for the utilization of MSP for GES achievement in the region.
- Montenegro is in the early process of initiating MSP, as part of the overall restructuring of the spatial planning system. The GEF Adriatic Project will largely contribute to the on-going national process. However, such approach requires careful planning, in line with the national timeline of activities.

The proposed no-cost extension to the 30th September 2020, will allow for the completion of all required steps in Montenegro, as well as to provide as much support as possible to Albania for the further development of MSP capacity.

Synergies with other processes

- Several reports had been made by PAP/RAC and SPA/RAC on the implementation of the GEF Adriatic Project, as well as on its outputs and activities. Such reports were compiled from the information resulting from the numerous events and other workshops held during the course of the project. This led some additional contributions and supports being provided by other relevant programmes and organizations, e.g. MED POL, GFCM and the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS).
- The major added value of the Project has been noted to be the continuous networking and integration with other national and international initiatives. In particular, careful planning and execution of Project's activities, although at times achieved at a slower pace than planned, are in fact and in effect, enabling better Project synergies and collaboration with other activities, projects and institutions for additional cross-fertilizing of results.

The proposed no-cost extension to the 30th September 2020, will allow for a full stock take to be undertaken on the benefits gained from the ongoing and potentially new partnership with organizations and initiatives external to the GEF Adriatic Project.