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and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019

Agenda Item 5: Ministerial Session

Progress Report on Activities Carried Out during the 2018-2019 Biennium

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I. Introduction

1. This report is a summary of activities and outputs carried out for the implementation of the 2018-2019 Programme of Work (PoW) of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) adopted by the 20th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 20). The progress report highlights activities delivered in the period between January 2018 and September 2019 by the Coordinating Unit and the MAP Components, aggregated at strategic outcome level.
2. Information is organized by the strategic outcome under the seven themes of the POW 2018-2019, corresponding to the overarching theme, the core themes, and the cross-cutting themes of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021 as well as information on Financial, Personnel, and Administrative matters. More detailed information on process, activities and midterm results can be found in the Bureau Meetings Reports and in the reports of the MAP Components' Focal Points meetings (UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.3 and UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.7).

II. Main Activities/Outputs per PoW Theme

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

Ratification of Barcelona Convention and its Protocols by all Contracting Parties supported

3. During the current biennium, there has been a steady progress in the rate of ratifications. Since the last meeting of the MAP Focal Points, the Depository has communicated to the Secretariat the deposit of the following instruments of ratification or accession: (a) the instrument of accession to the Prevention and Emergency Protocol by Lebanon, dated 3 November 2017; the Protocol entered into force for Lebanon on 3 December 2017, (b) the instrument of ratification of the Offshore Protocol by Croatia, dated 8 February 2018; the Protocol entered into force for Croatia on 10 March 2018, (c) the instrument of ratification of the ICZM Protocol by Malta, dated 10 April 2019; the Protocol entered into force for Malta on 10 May 2019.
4. Furthermore, the amendments to Annex II to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol), as adopted by COP 20 Decision IG.23/10, entered into force on 14 September 2018, as officially transmitted by the Depository on 20 September 2018.
5. Efforts continued in order to achieve the universal ratification of the Barcelona Convention and the entry into force of the Dumping Protocol Amendments. The Secretariat pursued further discussions with the one country that has not yet ratified the amendments to the Barcelona Convention. Increased policy direction is needed to facilitate the Ratification of the Amendments to the Dumping Protocol, in particular, and of all other Protocols by the remaining Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

Table 1: Summary of Status of Ratification

21 Contracting Parties have accepted the amendments to the Convention, 1995;
15 Contracting Parties have accepted the amendments to the Dumping Protocol, 1995;
17 Contracting Parties have accepted the amendments to the LBS Protocol, 1996;
8 Contracting Parties have ratified the Offshore Protocol, 1994;
17 Contracting Parties have ratified the SPA and Biodiversity Protocol, 1995;
7 Contracting Parties have ratified the Hazardous Waste Protocol, 1996;
17 Contracting Parties have ratified the new Prevention and Emergency Protocol, 2002;
12 Contracting Parties have ratified ICZM Protocol, 2008.

Table 2: Ratification of Barcelona Convention and Protocols by individual Contracting Parties

<i>Contracting Parties</i>																							
	Albania	Algeria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Cyprus	European Union	Egypt	France	Greece	Israel	Italy	Lebanon	Libya	Malta	Monaco	Montenegro	Morocco	Slovenia	Spain	Syria	Tunisia	Turkey	
Barcelona Convention																							
and Amendments																							
Dumping Protocol																							
and Amendments																							
Emergency Protocol																							
Prevention and Emergency Protocol																							
LBS Protocol																							
and Amendments																							
SPA Protocol																							
SPA and Biodiversity Protocol																							
Offshore Protocol																							
Hazardous Wastes Protocol																							
ICZM Protocol																							

Instrument of ratification, adhesion approval or accession deposited and Convention or Protocol entered into force
No instrument of ratification, adhesion, approval or accession deposited
Instrument of ratification, adhesion, approval or accession deposited but Protocol has not entered into force yet

Effective legal, policy and logistic support provided to MAP decision-making process including advisory bodies meetings

6. In line with the decision-making process, the regular meetings of the governing and advisory bodies of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system have been convened with an active participation of representatives of Contracting Parties (CPs) and stakeholders, while in some cases efforts should be made in order for meetings to be attended by all CPs, to the extent possible.

7. During the current biennium, the Coordinating Unit and MAP Components organized the following main governance meetings:

- (a) The 85th (Athens, Greece, 18-19 April 2018), 86th Extraordinary (Teleconference, 11 July 2018), 87th (Athens, Greece, 6-7 November 2018) and 88th (21-22 May 2019, Rome, Italy) Meetings of the Bureau;
- (b) The 13th (Athens, Greece, 26-27 September 2017), 14th (Athens, Greece, 27-29 June 2018) and 15th (Athens, Greece, 25-26 June 2019) Compliance Committee Meetings;
- (c) The MAP Components' Focal Points meetings, as follows: Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points Meeting (Marseille, France, 28-29 May 2019); SCP/RAC Focal Points Meeting (Barcelona, Spain, 14-15 May 2017); PAP/RAC Focal Points Meeting (Split, Croatia, 8-9 May 2019); 14th SPA/Biological Diversity (BD) Thematic Focal Points Meeting (Portorož, Slovenia, 18-21 June 2019); REMPEC Focal Points Meeting (Floriana, Malta, 11-13 June 2019); INFO/RAC Focal Points Meetings (Rome, Italy, 3-4 October 2018 and 16-17 April 2019) and MED POL Focal Points Meeting (Istanbul, Turkey, 29-31 May 2019);
- (d) The 18th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June 2019) and the 19th (Teleconference, 20 June 2018) and 20th (Athens, Greece, 23-24 January 2019) Meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee;
- (e) The 2nd Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact (Athens, Greece, 27-28 June 2019);
- (f) The 5th and 6th Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO) National Correspondents Meetings (Marseille, France, 13-14 February 2019 and Portoroz, Slovenia, 18 June 2019);
- (g) Five meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP), namely ECP 34 (Sophia-Antipolis, France, 5-7 February 2018), ECP 35 (Paris, France, 6 June 2018), ECP 36 (Split, Croatia, 27-28 September 2018), ECP 37 (Geneva, Switzerland, 9-10 January 2019) and ECP 38 (Marseille, France, 7-8 March 2019);
- (h) The 7th Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Coordination Group Meeting (Athens, Greece, 9 September 2019);
- (i) The Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019).

8. The above meetings reviewed progress achieved and provided policy and technical guidance for successfully delivering key outputs mandated by COP 20. They contributed to the effective implementation of the Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021, the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-2019 and the relevant COP Decisions and moved forward the preparations for the 2019 MAP Focal Points Meeting and the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 21) (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019). More information on the above meetings can be found in documents UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.3, Inf.4, Inf.5, Inf.6, Inf.7 and UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.7.

Resource mobilization

9. The Coordinating Unit, in close collaboration with the MAP Components, has made every effort to channel a coordinated mobilization of external resources by the MAP-Barcelona Convention system in line with the priorities of the Mid-Term Strategy (MTS), the biannual Programme of Work and Budget and the existing Resource Mobilization Strategy (RMS). To this end, each MAP Component is required to develop a Project Fiche for each approved external project, which includes general information on the project but also a justification and comments on the MAP Component's involvement and the added value to MAP-Barcelona Convention system. The current compilation of Project Fiches is presented in document UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.9.

10. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Project "*Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Adriatic Sea through Marine Spatial Planning*" (GEF Adriatic), progressed consistently with the programme of work approved by Albania and Montenegro at the first Project Steering Committee (Tirana, Albania, 30 May 2018). The second Project Steering Committee (PSC) has been held in Podgorica, Montenegro on 15 May 2019. The Second PSC approved the no-cost extension of the project execution till 31 December 2020. In addition, the meeting approved the revised workplan and

budget distribution to cover the new agreed project execution period. This decision of the PSC will allow to complete all the activities and achieve all agreed targets.

11. UNEP/MAP and the co-executing partners of the MedProgramme completed the development of the information required by the GEF to mobilize and make available the funds allocated for the Programme (USD 37,7 million). The development of the full programme package was finalized before the agreed deadline and submitted on 29 March 2019. The work was done in full coordination with the GEF Operational Focal Points of the participating eligible countries, namely Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia. The relevant project information will be circulated as soon as the formal communication on the GEF CEO endorsement is received. The MedProgramme is expected to kick start its execution by the end of 2019.

12. The project "*Enhancing Regional Climate Change Adaptation in the Mediterranean Sea Marine and Coastal Areas*", financed with USD 1 million by the GEF Special Climate Change Fund, was submitted to the GEF Secretariat on 26 October 2018. Formal comments from the GEF Secretariat were received on January 2019 and the project has been resubmitted for CEO endorsement on February 2019. Following these steps, the GEF CEO endorsed the project on 22 May 2019. It is expected that the SCCF Project will begin its execution together with the MedProgramme during the last quarter of 2019.

13. The execution of the European Union (EU)-funded Project "*Towards an ecologically representative and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas*" has proceeded well. A Project Steering Committee meeting was held (Brussels, Belgium, 13 February 2019), which took stock of the progress made and approved the work plan, budget and logical results framework for the completion of the Project by 23 September 2019.

14. UNEP/MAP successfully concluded the negotiation with the the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) for a new project supported by the European Commission (EC) GreenMedIII Strategy. The Secretariat together with SPA/RAC is advancing in the development of the project document and related annexes, to be finalized in May 2019 and become operational in the summer of 2019. The focus of this new project will be on integration aspects of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) implementation in further Mediterranean countries and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). It is expected that the project legal agreement between UNEP and the EU will be signed over the third quarter of 2019 to begin the execution of the Project in the same period.

15. MED POL continues to support the Contracting Parties in implementing their respective national marine pollution monitoring programmes. Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) were concluded with Egypt, Israel, Lebanon (pending), Libya and Morocco, and Tunisia. They are financed through the Mediterranean Trust Fund, including support of the EcAp-MEDII and Marine Litter MED Projects. They aim to: i) support ongoing implementation of the MED POL IV Monitoring Programme, avoiding discontinuity in submitting and assessing data related to marine pollution; ii) ensure gradual transition to new IMAP-based monitoring programmes of marine environment; and iii) support implementation of pilot projects which include marine litter monitoring. Project includes capacity building workshops to support national implementation of IMAP and related criteria for pollution and marine litter.

16. The EU-funded European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) II South Project in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Horizon 2020 (H2020) Initiative aims to improve the availability and access to environmental information to the benefit of effective and knowledge-based policy-making in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) South region. The implementation of the ENI SEIS II South project is ongoing. The project is led by the European Environment Agency (EEA), and UNEP/MAP leads the project's in-country support package aimed at developing and populating the agreed set of marine pollution pressure indicators, preparing national and regional assessments, and developing reporting tools and Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI). Work is also ongoing for the preparation of the Horizon 2020 Initiative report jointly prepared by EEA and UNEP/MAP.

17. In the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS), a voluntary contribution of EUR 2,015,000 was provided by Italy to support activities included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for 2018-2019. The last Steering Committee meeting (Athens, Greece, 4-5 March 2019), reviewed the progress made during the period January 2018-January 2019, and agreed that the implementation is on track. The financial provisions for 2019 were confirmed and the respective funds are being transferred to the Secretariat. The coordination mechanism established for the implementation of the 2018-2019 work plan has been operational with the designation of Technical Focal Points from both MAP and IMELS. A set of indicators to measure the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement were proposed and are being further elaborated and populated. Discussions have been launched for the possible key priorities of a potential renewed cooperation beyond December 2019, when the current Agreement ends.

18. The Secretariat is working with UNEP/Vienna Office, under the financial support of the Government of Italy (IMELS), on an initiative aiming to provide assistance to the Western Balkans in Pollution Prevention, Monitoring and Reduction, under the overall aim to support the Western Balkan Region in the Implementation of Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements through Strengthening of Institutional Framework and Capacity Building.

19. The “*Marine Oil & HNS Pollution Cooperation in the Western Mediterranean Region Project*” proposal (West MOPoCo Project) was approved by the EC Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). The consortium led by France includes partners from Mediterranean coastal States (Algeria, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia). The approved budget of EUR 868,685.92 includes a contribution of 75% from the European Commission (€651,506.00), out of which EUR 386,676.60 are allocated to REMPEC. The two-year project started on 2 January 2019 and includes the recruitment of one administrative assistant by REMPEC.

20. During 2018, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) allocated a budget of 91,176 USD to REMPEC, while additional funding from IMO ITCP amounting to 86,875 USD has been secured for activities to be implemented in 2019. REMPEC submitted a proposal to the IMO ITCP for potential activities to be implemented in the framework of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021.

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, kicked-off on February 2018, is 5 million EUR. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to maintaining biodiversity and preserving natural ecosystems in pelagic and coastal Marine Protected Areas, 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. The Secretariat together with PAP/RAC and INFO/RAC participated in two projects on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) approved by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (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 aimed 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. The projects' results were presented in the joint final conference (Venice, Italy, 12-13 December 2018). Knowledge gathered through the implementation of the projects and best practices identified fed into the Regional MSP Trainings held by PAP/RAC, with support from the Cooperation Agreement with IMELS.

23. 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.

24. The 2nd phase of SwitchMed (SwitchMed II) was approved by the European Commission at the end of 2018. The project is coordinated by UNIDO and implemented by UNIDO, UNEP/Economy Division and SCP/RAC. The total amount of EU budget contribution is EUR 15,000,000 for 4 years. SCP/RAC budget amounts to EUR 6,352,000. The beneficiary countries are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. SCP/RAC leads 3 sub-components on the regional policy framework under the Barcelona Convention for the development of circular and green economy businesses, and, at the national level, the creation and development of green and circular businesses and the Networking Facility.

25. REMPEC contributed to the drafting of a project proposal to support the development of the Adriatic/Ionian Sub regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan (ASOSCoP), in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). A voluntary contribution of the French Government amounting to EUR 8,000 was pledged to co-finance the Regional Workshop on Ratification and Effective Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI (Valletta, Malta, 11-13 December 2018).

26. Plan Bleu/RAC has mobilized a large range of voluntary contributions from technical partners and scientists, as well as additional funding for several activities in the PoW, as follows: (a) application to BlueMed Start-up Actions call was successful and will allow to hold three expert meetings on cruise and recreational boating in the Mediterranean; (b) financial support has been secured from the French Environment and Energy Management Agency, the French Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition and Agence de l'Eau Rhône Méditerranée Corse to help prepare assessment reports, including the holding of two face-to-face meetings of the SoED 2019 Steering Committee, in January and March 2019; (c) financial support has also been secured from the French Environment and Energy Management Agency and the French Ministry to start renewing communication tools and practices; and (d) LabexMed supported the preparation of MED 2050 Module 1. Applications for three horizontal capitalization projects on sustainable tourism, blue growth, and biodiversity protection were submitted to the European Union for the funding of a second phase, with further transversal and regional activities.

27. INFO/RAC, SPA/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC will participate to the implementation of MEDREGION (Support Mediterranean Member States towards the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Good Environmental Status (GES) Decision and programmes of measures and contribute to regional/subregional cooperation) project under the leadership of Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR). Plan Bleu will lead the subtask: *“Supporting the identification and monitoring of effects of PoMs on human activities and well-being”*.

28. The project ADRIADAPT *“A Resilience information platform for Adriatic cities and towns”* was approved for funding by the European Regional Development Fund - ERDF). The project, to which PAP/RAC is a partner, has a duration of 24 months, from 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2020.

29. SCP/RAC signed a direct assignment with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) that will complement the activities developed within the Cooperation with IMELS. The activities are aiming to improve the policy framework and engage with the food and beverage industry in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro for tackling plastics' packaging value chains in a circular economy. Funds are allocated through the Austrian DRIVE (Delivering Resource efficiency InVEstments) Fund, set up within the framework of the UfM labelled project MedRESCP.

30. SCP/RAC is working on the development of a pilot project in Egypt entitled *“Protecting the marine environment from land-based pollution through strengthened coordination of global action”*. The pilot activity consists in the development of business challenges to provide solutions to

phase-out single use plastic bags.

31. The project proposal of GIMED (Green Impact MED Project-Positive Investments for Positive Impacts), successfully selected by ENI CBC/MED Secretariat, will start on 1 September 2019. The project will last 3 years with a total budget of EUR 4,460,000. The countries involved in the project are Egypt, Italy, Lebanon, Palestine, Spain, and Tunisia. SCP/RAC is the project coordinator and its budget amounts to EUR 435,000.

32. The consortium led by LDK, with SCP/RAC as partner was selected for the implementation of the Water and Environment Support (WES) project (Call EuropeAid/139671/DH/SER/MULTI). The project will last 4 years (May 2019-May 2023). Beneficiary countries are southern Mediterranean countries. SCP/RAC will develop capacity building activities related to plastic pollution prevention and circular economy.

33. A first draft compilation and analysis of existing regional tools on sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean is prepared by Plan Bleu/RAC, PAP/RAC, SCP/RAC and SPA/RAC, while BlueMed project funding for a Start-Up Action on sustainable cruise and recreational boating has been secured. Three capitalization events on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean were held (Rome, Italy, 29-30 May 2018; Marseille, France, 20-21 November 2018; Split, Croatia, 27-28 March 2019). A large capitalization conference on Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean was held in Barcelona, Spain, on 4-5 June 2019. In the framework of the European Week of Cities and Regions, an event will be held on “*Fostering sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean region*” (Brussels, Belgium, 9 October 2019). Four policy factsheets on sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean have been produced and a Policy Paper and Advocacy Strategy are under finalization. An expert webinar and an expert workshop on sustainable cruise and recreational boating were held on 14 May 2019 (webinar) and on 19 June 2019 (Genova, Italy) respectively, a third meeting will be held in November 2019 (Marseille, France).

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

34. The revised reporting format was made available on the new online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), launched on 4 October 2018 for Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2016–2017. As of 9 July 2019, 19 Contracting Parties initiated their reporting under the new BCRS, while 11 Contracting Parties have officially submitted their reports. Progress was also achieved in relation to the submission of outstanding national implementation reports for the biennia 2012-2013 and/or 2014-2015.

35. The work of the Compliance Committee is well progressing. The relevant Draft Decision is presented in document UNEP/MED IG.24/4. The Compliance Committee met twice during the current biennium (Athens, Greece, 27-29 June 2018 and 25-26 June 2019). The Compliance Committee adopted its Programme of Work for the biennium 2020-2021, agreed on a set of recommendations to promote compliance with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and agreed to confer admissibility of the communication from Ecologistas en Acción de la Región Murciana regarding the implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean in Spain, on the basis of the Admissibility Criteria of Relevant Information Sources and Procedure under Paragraph 23.bis of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

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

36. Engagement with stakeholders (NGOs, local authorities, civil society, scientific community, etc.) and identification of potential synergies with global and regional organisations in order to increase the effectiveness of work are crucial elements for strengthening UNEP/MAP governance. This is realised, *inter alia*, through the involvement in relevant international initiatives and the operationalising or conclusion of legal agreements. In this context, the initiatives described below play a significant role in implementing COP Decision IG.19/6 on MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership. By

promoting cooperation and partnership, UNEP/MAP also responds to the call from UNEP Headquarters to encourage programmatic cooperation and coordination with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) or international and regional organizations, given the importance of enhancing synergies with other actors.

37. Cooperation with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat was actively pursued and led to an amended Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with these Conventions to work on common areas of interest, including the environmental sound management of chemicals and marine litter and microplastics. The amended MoU was signed in Geneva, Switzerland, on 7 December 2018.

38. Following the call for new MAP Partners issued by the Secretariat, and its promotion by the Coordinating Unit and MAP Components through a series of activities, the Secretariat has received and assessed nineteen new applications for MAP Partners. Furthermore, 18 applications for the renewal of accreditation of MAP Partners endorsed at the 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 18) (Istanbul, Turkey, 3-6 December 2013) were received. More information is presented in the Draft Decision on Governance (UNEP/MAP IG.24/5), as well as in the Information Document UNEP/MAP WG.468/Inf.24.

39. Work is continuing on the implementation of the MoU between UNEP/MAP and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS). A bilateral meeting was held at the UfMS premises, in Barcelona, Spain, on 19 July 2018. A second meeting is arranged to take place through teleconference, on 29 July 2019. The UNEP/MAP Secretariat participated in the third meeting of the UfM Environment Task Force, held in Brussels, Belgium, on 9 April 2019.

40. The Secretariat (Coordinating Unit and Plan Bleu) joined forces with UfMS and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) to organize a side event at the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya (26-28 November 2018). The side event was entitled "*The Regional Dimension of a Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy: The Model of the Mediterranean*". SPA/RAC also participated at the Conference.

41. Work is also continuing on the implementation of the MoU between UNEP/MAP and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in 2012. In this respect, a bilateral meeting was held in Athens, Greece, on 1 October 2018. The meeting, *inter alia*, identified priorities for the next year, including cooperation in the Adriatic, Marine Litter, NIS and the updating of the MoU.

42. The Coordinating Unit and SPA/RAC participated and contributed to GFCM Fish Forum 2018 (Rome, Italy, 10-14 December 2018) through the following events: a workshop on "*Complementarity among Area based Conservation tools in the Mediterranean Sea*"; a side event on "*Cross-sectorial cooperation among Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery management Bodies and added values of SOI Global Dialogue*" presenting "*the Mediterranean showcase on bilateral cooperation among UNEP/MAP and GFCM Secretariats*"; the side event co-organized by UNEP/MAP and GFCM on the sub-regional pilot project on fishery related to Non-Indigenous Species in the Eastern Mediterranean implemented within EcApMEDII project; and a stand shared with ACCOBAMS where outreach material on UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC were displayed. UNEP/MAP participate in the 42nd GFCM Session (Rome, Italy, 22-26 October 2018), which also followed-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.

43. The Coordinator and representatives of SCP/RAC participated in UNEA-4 (Nairobi, Kenya, 11-15 March 2019). The Coordinator contributed as panelist/keynote speaker/resource person to a number of events, such as the Meeting with the Heads of the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements on inter-cluster synergies of the two ongoing Post-2020 processes of the Biodiversity and Chemicals Agendas; the side event Addressing Pollution in South East and Southern Europe - Outcome of the Ministerial Conference "*Innovative Solutions to Pollution in South East and Southern Europe*"; the Media Roundtable on the SWITCH to Green; Global Partnership on Marine Litter Networking Luncheon – Marine Litter Node; the Regional Seas Roundtable on Marine Litter and

Microplastics; the Breakfast Dialogue event: “*Marine litter financing instruments: Are we focusing where it hurts?*”; and the Annual Network of Women Ministers Breakfast. During UNEA-4, SCP/RAC gave visibility to the SCP activities of MAP through a SwitchMed programme stand at the “*UNEA Foyer exhibition*”, where impact videos and publications were showcased.

44. 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.

45. The preparation of the 2nd edition for the Simplified Peer Review Mechanism (SIMPEER) of National Strategies for Sustainable Development continued. Progress was presented for review and comments to the two meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee, the Plan Bleu Focal Points Meeting and the 18th MCSD Meeting (Budva, Montenegro, 11-13 June). Confirmations have been received by all three participating countries (Albania, Egypt and Tunisia), national reports are in preparation with the consultant expert team, and in country missions on-going. Countries having participated in the first pilot edition confirmed their willingness to participate in the review of the second edition (to be held in November 2019) and provide inputs on progress made for the capitalisation report (to be published in December 2019).

46. SPA/RAC participated at COP 14 of the CBD in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt (17-29 November 2018) with an information booth presenting Mediterranean biodiversity activities under the Barcelona Convention and the SPA/BD Protocol. SPA/RAC presented the current work to conserve the biodiversity of the Mediterranean coasts of Egypt, through a dedicated workshop organized in collaboration with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency. SPA/RAC also presented its activities related to marine environment data collection and associated services of data processing and modelling, undertaken in the framework of the ODYSSEA project financed by the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 programme. To this end, a side event was organized with UNEP-WCMC, RAED and Deltares. SPA/RAC, also, participated in the side event organized by the CBD Secretariat on the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue and organized a stand to exhibit UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC outreach material.

47. REMPEC attended, inter alia, the 72nd, 73rd and 74th Meetings of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of IMO (London, UK, 9-13 April 2018, 22-26 October 2018 and 13-17 May 2019), to present the progress related to the Prevention and Emergency Protocol. Noting the potential global implications of the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Area as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, the work of REMPEC on this matter was presented at MEPC 72 and 73 and at the International technical workshop “*Data, trends, impacts and benefits associated with the creation of an emission control area by vessels in the Mediterranean*” (Marseille, France, 6-7 September 2018), the Intersessional meeting on consistent implementation of regulation 14.1.3 of MARPOL Annex VI (ISWG-AP 1) (London, United Kingdom, 9-13 July 2018); and the Workshop on “*Sulphur Regulation: awareness raising for the upcoming 0.50% Sulphur requirement and consistent implementation as of 2020*” for Mediterranean Countries (Lisbon, Portugal, 13-14 February 2019). Information on UNEP’s Regional Seas Programme, and the significant support provided by the associated inter-governmental organizations and the Regional Activity Centers (RACs) to the implementation of the OPRC Convention and OPRC- Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Protocol worldwide, and the outcome of MEDEXPOL 2018 were presented at the 6th session of the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR6 - London, 18-22 February 2019).;

48. In accordance with Decision IG.22/18 on Cooperation and Partners, REMPEC also participated at meetings organized by the European Commission and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to coordinate and share information on the Centres’ activities in the Mediterranean region,

namely the Fourteenth Inter-Secretariat Meeting between the Regional Agreements Secretariats, DG ECHO and EMSA (Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 February 2018); the Common Emergency Communication and Information Systems (CECIS) training for Marine Pollution users (Brussels, Belgium, 29-30 May 2018); the Plenary Conference of the 2018 Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum (MCGFF) (Marseille, France, 27-28 June 2018); the Second and Third Steering Committee for the SAFEMED IV Project (Aqaba, Jordan, 9-10 October 2018 and Lisbon, Portugal, 3-4 September 2019); EMSA Workshop on ship-source pollution (Implementation of Directive 2005/35/EC) (Lisbon, Portugal, 13 November 2018), and the Stakeholder workshop on lost containers (Brussels, Belgium, 4 September 2019) .

49. UNEP/MAP and the French G7 Presidency jointly organized, with support from the Italian Government, a Workshop on the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter in synergy with the Regional Seas Convention (Metz, France, 5-6 May 2019). The main objective of this workshop was to strengthen complementarities between the implementation of the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter and the work undertaken by regional organizations, such as the Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). Key outcomes from the workshop were transmitted to the G7 Environment Ministers Meeting (Metz, France, 5-6 May 2019) and fed its discussions.

50. The 3rd Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean was 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 was 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.

51. 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 Global Programme of Action (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.

52. The Secretariat is also participating actively 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) and the Consultative Meeting on the Development of an African Strategy for Ocean Governance (Nairobi, Kenya, 29-30 November 2018).

53. The Secretariat participated actively at the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 26-28 November 2018 and organized, in cooperation with the UfM Secretariat, WWF Med and IUCN Med, a successful side event entitled "*The Regional Dimension of the Transition Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy: The Case of the Mediterranean Sea*".

54. The Secretariat participated in the first Steering Committee of the EU-funded SwitchMed II Programme (Vienna, Austria, 3-4 April 2019). A common understanding on the programme's main objectives was reached among implementing partners, the first year's work plan was reviewed and agreed, and the role of Focal Points was validated. Building on the outcomes of the first phase of SwitchMed, its second phase is expected to have an even greater contribution to the switch towards SCP patterns and circular economy in the Mediterranean, in line with the MAP-Barcelona Convention framework. The programme will be structured around six outputs: (i) greener and circular industry – Med Test iii; (ii) support for the creation and development of circular and green businesses; (iii) improved regional policy framework under the Barcelona Convention; (iv) support the implementation of SCP National Action Plans (NAPs); (v) networking facility; and (vi) programme management.

55. The Closing Conference of the SWIM and Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism (SM) was held in Brussels, Belgium (8 April 2019). The meeting reviewed the project's key results, achievements and on the ground impact and highlighted its contribution to the regional coherence and cooperation. The

Secretariat acknowledged the very good work undertaken with support from the Project towards the implementation of NAPs under the LBS Protocol and stressed that an even more important contribution is expected when the time comes for Contracting Parties to report on the implementation of NAPs.

56. The Secretariat participated in the 3rd Steering Committee meeting of ENI SEIS II South Project and the 9th meeting of the H2020 Review and Monitoring (RM) Group, jointly held in Vienna, Austria (6-7 November 2018). The meeting acknowledged the progress at regional and national levels, including on agreement of H2020 sets of indicators, the preparation of indicator factsheets and the development of infrastructure for data reporting. Concrete steps towards the next H2020 assessment were agreed, highlighting the need to avoid duplications and build on information coming from key MAP Assessment Reports. The regional plan of activities until 2020 was concluded with a specific focus on strengthening in country-support, further supporting the population of H2020 Indicators, and enhancing capacities for data management and infrastructure.

57. The Coordinator attended and delivered a presentation at the conference “*Before the Blue COP*” organized by the Ministry for the Ecological Transition of Spain in preparation for the UNFCCC COP 25 in Chile, “*The Blue COP*”. He made a presentation on the relevance of the institutional/regulatory/implementation framework of the MAP system for climate change and its impact on the Mediterranean, in particular the ICZM Protocol, the progress on Marine Spatial Planning, and the work on Marine Protected Areas. He explained the strategic emphasis that UNEP/MAP is putting on delivering at the regional level the goals, commitments and ambitions of global Multilateral Environment Agreements and other intergovernmental mechanisms, and emphasized the strong role being increasingly recognized to the regional dimension.

58. In the context of the GEF-funded Inter-project Collaboration Opportunity (ICO) between the Benguela Current Convention (BCC-Angola, Namibia and South Africa) and the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system, Coordinating Unit and PAP/RAC representatives visited Namibia on 18-21 February 2019, to meet with the BCC Secretariat and discuss the application of the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the two regions. The goal of this collaboration, which will also involve a visit to PAP/RAC by the BCC Secretariat in September 2019, is to exchange and transfer knowledge and experiences on the application of MSP in country and cross-border Large Marine Ecosystems.

59. 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) the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (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). These exchanges have led to closer collaboration on areas of mutual interests, such as the establishment of criteria for assessing compliance.

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

60. The preparation of the 2019 State of Environment and development Report (2019 SoED) was one of the main deliverables under this outcome. Three meetings of the Steering Committee for the 2019 SoED were convened in the period between October 2018 and March 2019 (Teleconference, October 2018; Geneva, Switzerland, 11 January 2019; Marseille, France, 28 March 2019). The first draft of the 2019 SoED was presented at the Meetings of the Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points and then at the 18th MCSD meeting (28-29 May and 11-13 June 2019, respectively). A workshop on 2019 SoED was held back-to-back with the Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points meeting (Marseille, France, 27 May). The 2019 SoED is addressed in the Draft Decision on Assessment Studies (UNEP/MED IG.24/7), while the full Report is presented in document UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.11.

61. Progress on the MED 2050 Phase I and on the revised MED 2050 roadmap were presented for review and comments at the Plan Bleu Focal Points Meeting and at the 18th MCSD Meeting. The

roadmap is addressed in Draft Decision on Assessment Studies (UNEP/MED IG.24/7). The consolidation of regional trends is in progress, in view of a first MED 2050 report by November 2019 (MED 2050, Module 1).

62. The Secretariat prepared the draft 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment, based on the key recommendations of the Decision IG.23/6, its key findings and challenges, recommendations laid out in document 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)*” and the conclusions and recommendations of the IMAP Best Practices Meeting. The document was shared with the Bureau and the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group members for comments; it was also discussed during the CORMON meetings, and a revised version will be presented at the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meeting (Athens, Greece, 9 September 2019).

63. The proposal for the update of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard was finalized, considering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the relevant COP Decisions and the recommendations of the MSCD Steering Committee. The roadmap on the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard until COP 21 was discussed at the 20th Meeting of the MCSDD Steering Committee. The populated 2019 dashboard and recommendations for the future were presented at the Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points Meeting and the 18th MCSDD Meeting. More information is presented in document UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.17.

64. The preparation of the draft scientific assessment report on environmental and climate change in the Mediterranean is continuing, in collaboration with UfM. Peers were invited to participate in the peer review of the first draft. Plan Bleu/RAC participated in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 24 in Katowice, Poland (2-14 December 2018), and contributed to a side-event by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC). The preliminary Assessment by the MedECC Network is presented in document UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.18.

65. Five capitalization events on ecosystem-based management experiences and tools for biodiversity protection were held (Podgorica, Montenegro, 16-17 May 2018; Marseille, France 23 October 2018; Brussels, Belgium; Rome, Italy, 6-7 May 2019; Malaga, Spain, 14-16 October 2019). Numerous factsheets were published. Four capitalization events were held on blue growth (Athens, Greece, 20-21 June 2018; Barcelona, Spain, 22-23 November 2018; Marseille, France, 16-17 April 2019; Brussels, Belgium 19-20 September 2019).

66. INFO/RAC implemented and launched an eLearning platform to support training material in different topics.

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

67. The new BRCS System, which includes the Barcelona Convention and all seven Protocols, was completed and launched. With the same procedure the National Baseline Budget (NBB) Data flow was reviewed and implemented in the InfoMAP System. A Metadata catalogue and editor was realised and incorporated in a geoportal with a search engine and harvesting system fully implemented.

68. INFO/RAC, based on the InfoMAP platform and reviewed data flow, prepared a document on the Main Elements and Roadmap for the Preparation of a UNEP/MAP Data Management Policy, which was discussed at the INFO/RAC Focal Points Meeting and is addressed under the Draft Decision on Governance (document UNEP/MED IG.24/5).

69. The prototype and structure of the new REMPEC’s website was discussed with IMO, UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC for online deployment and content development. Continuous exchange with INFO/RAC is in place for the hosting and transfer of REMPEC’s tools into INFO/RAC’s server as well as for the development of REMPEC website. Within the approved EU Funded West MOPoCo Project, the project website (www.westmopoco.rempec.org) and other promotional material were launched in September 2019.

70. SPA/RAC started collecting data on various biodiversity components based on the metadata template already prepared in the framework of the Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform (MBP). New data has also been integrated in the MBP catalogue. Furthermore, SPA/RAC will issue two calls for tenders to upgrade the MBP and redesign the other SPA/RAC databases with the INFO/RAC technical support.

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

72. INFO/RAC developed, within InfoMAP, the Spatial Data Infrastructure and set-up the reporting system for the H2020/NAP data flows and the corresponding repository InfoMAP Data Centre. This includes the infosystem for reporting National Baseline Budget (NBB) data relevant for the H2020/NAP indicators on industrial emissions. Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for populating H2020/NAP indicators were developed and distributed to ENP South countries. The H2020 NAP Data Call was launched in December 2018. Following feedback received from countries, Data Standards and Data Dictionaries were revised. INFO/RAC undertook technical assistance missions to Morocco and Tunisia to train relevant national policy-makers and experts in using the above-mentioned reporting tools and platforms.

Strategic Outcome 1.6: Raised awareness and outreach

73. The Secretariat, in close collaboration with INFO/RAC and with the full involvement of the Information and Communication Task Force, prepared the Operational Communication Strategy, which was discussed at the INFO/RAC Focal Points Meeting and is addressed under the Draft Decision on Governance (UNEP/MED IG.24/5).

74. The 2018 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. The 2019 Mediterranean Coast Day was held in Ayia Napa, Cyprus, on 25 September 2019. It was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, gathering some 100 participants from the host country and abroad. In addition to the main event hosted by Cyprus, several celebrations took place in other Mediterranean countries, including a Coast Week in Slovenia, beach cleaning activities in Ulcinj (Montenegro), as well as events in Oristano (Sardinia, Italy); Ghar el Melh (Tunisia) and Velipoja (Albania).

75. To enhance MAP's visibility, a stand has been set up by SPA/RAC and INFO/RAC at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 14 in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt (17-29 November 2018), to present UNEP/MAP activities on the ecosystem approach implementation in the Mediterranean. The CBD COP 14 was attended by 3,800 participants from all over the world and offered the opportunity to enhance MAP visibility. Another stand has been set up in collaboration with ACCOBAMS during the FishForum in Rome, Italy (10-14 December 2018). This event was attended by 428 participants from 45 different countries and offered the opportunity to strengthen MAP's position as a key stakeholder in marine biodiversity conservation, working in close collaboration with fisheries bodies and the scientific community.

76. The Secretariat co-organized with the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy, in cooperation with France and Montenegro, a side event at the 2019 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region, held in Geneva, Switzerland (21-22 March 2019). This side event aimed at (i) showcasing all the analogs of global mechanisms for sustainable development that are in place in the Mediterranean region; and, (ii) introducing testimonies from France, Greece and Montenegro on peer learning activities related to national frameworks established for implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

77. The Secretariat (Coordinating Unit and SCP/RAC) contributed to the Annual Conference of the Arab Forum on the Environment and Development (AFED) (Beirut, Lebanon, 8-9 November 2018),

with a specific session on Circular Economy and Sustainable Consumption and Production.

78. A regional conference on “*Environment and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*” (Paris, France, 5 June 2019) was held.

79. During the 2nd session of the “*Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction*” (New York, USA, 25 March-5 April 2019), Spain, participating at the meeting, made on behalf of UNEP/MAP two presentations prepared by the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) at a side event on “*Application of area-based management tools under the regional seas programmes*”.

80. A travelling photos exhibition to inform and raise awareness on Mediterranean marine key habitats and non-indigenous species has been designed. The exhibition was held for the first time in Antalya, Turkey, during the SPA/RAC Symposia on Marine Key Habitats and NIS, on 14-18 January 2019. Communication material (tote bag, thermos, USB stick) have been produced and distributed.

81. SPA/RAC supported ENVIROFEST (19-23 March 2019), the first environmental film festival in Tunisia, through its participation in films projections and debates, and in the organization of an educational workshop for children on marine biodiversity. SPA/RAC also adapted from French to Arabic the FAO/GFCM-ACCOBAMS-SPA/RAC good practices guides for the handling of vulnerable species (Sea Birds, Cetaceans, Sea turtles, Sharks and rays) caught incidentally in Mediterranean Fisheries.

82. SPA/RAC co-organized in partnership with the Youth for Science Foundation a scientific camp for children in Kerkennah, a future marine protected area in Tunisia, to raise awareness on marine biodiversity within the support of the EU funded project MedMPA Network.

83. During the last quarter of 2019, SPA/RAC is supporting the Syrian Ministry of Environment in organizing three awareness workshops targeting various stakeholders, such as fishermen, women, university students, local communities and NGOs. These workshops are focusing on the following topics: (i) international agreements on biodiversity conservation, (ii) Impacts of debris on marine biodiversity, and (iii) the Fishers workshop.

84. Publications of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system include the following: State of Mediterranean Forests 2018, Plan Bleu co-published with FAO, November 2018; 20 case studies on how to prevent the use of toxic chemicals frequently found in the Mediterranean Region, SCP/RAC, June 2018; Regional workshop: “*Human impacts on Mediterranean marine ecosystems and the economy*”, (Plan Bleu Note n°36), April 2018; Climagine, co-construisons le littoral de demain, (Note du Plan Bleu n°37), August 2018; How to identify and recognize Mediterranean sharks and rays: A training manual (in French), SPA/RAC; Defining the most representative species for IMAP candidate indicator 24, SPA/RAC; Science-Policy Interface (SPI) to support monitoring implementation plans and sub-regional and regional policy developments regarding EcAp clusters on pollution, contaminants and eutrophication, marine biodiversity and fisheries, coast and hydrography (Plan Bleu Paper n°18), February 2019; Enabling access to finance for green entrepreneurs in southern Mediterranean countries – Available options and potential innovations, produced jointly by SCP/RAC and UfM, with the financial assistance of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA); SwitchMed Magazines for Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia; The Switchers Support Programme: Regional and National Scaling Up Roadmaps; The heroes of the Mediterranean disembark against single-use plastics, produced jointly by SCP/RAC and Zero Zbel (Zero Waste Morocco). Additional publications are expected by the end of the biennium.

85. SCP/RAC developed the SwitchMed traveling exhibition, that was set up at in Sant Pau site during the last SwitchMed Connect and stayed open for the visitors of the Sant Pau modernist site in Barcelona for two months. This expo is showing the concrete results of SwitchMed I Project. The exhibition “*Circular Economy in the Mediterranean*” focuses on explaining the principles of Circular Economy and its implementation through the success stories of entrepreneurs and companies that, with support from SwitchMed, implement circular economy principles in the Southern Mediterranean countries. The exhibition revolves around the main principles of circular economy such as resource

efficient and cleaner production, eco-design practices and reduce-reuse-recycle (3R) strategies.

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

86. MED POL undertook the evaluation of the implementation of the existing Regional Plans for Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), Mercury and Marine Litter. A consolidated draft report was submitted at the MED POL Focal Points Meeting.

87. REMPEC supported the organization of the Fifth Meeting of the Competent National Authorities in charge of the implementation of the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan between Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Algiers, Algeria, 27-28 November 2018). REMPEC facilitated further collaboration and exchange of experience between the South-Western Mediterranean Contingency Plan and the RAMOGE Agreement and contributed to the discussions held at the RAMOGE Working Group Meeting (Monaco, 15 November 2018) to explore synergies on areas of common interest. REMPEC also facilitated the organization of the Sub-regional seminar on compensation for oil pollution damage and the 1st Preparatory Meeting for the implementation of the Sub-regional marine oil pollution contingency plan between Cyprus, Greece and Israel, (4-6 December 2018, Larnaca, Cyprus). The assistance of REMPEC was formally requested to elaborate a Trilateral Agreement (Sub-regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan) between Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, the draft of which is expected to be discussed by the competent authorities during two meetings organized by REMPEC (Piraeus, Greece, 9-10 October 2019 and Nicosia, Cyprus, 20-21 November 2019).

88. On 15 October 2018, the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) established by COP 8 celebrated its 25th anniversary. The MAU (MONGOOS) was activated during the ULYSSE/VIRGINIA collision (France, October) with regular submission of oil spill forecasting models and upon request of Tunisia, (March 2019), to predict the movement of a lost offloading hose. The agreement in the framework of the MAU between the newly established Adriatic Training and Research Centre for Accidental Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (ATRAC) and REMPEC was signed, in Malta, on 12 June 2019.

89. The strengthening of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Port State Control (PSC) in the Mediterranean region (have been supported by the European Maritime Safety Agency within the framework of the EU funded SAFEMED IV project.

90. The Reports on the Activities of MENELAS, as requested by Decision IG.21/9, were submitted to the MAP Focal Point Meeting and COP 21 (documents UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.14 and UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.9, respectively). REMPEC established contact with INTERPOL and EUROPOL to enhance cooperation, as a follow-up to the operation “30 Days at Sea”, the report of which was submitted to the Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC.

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

91. MED POL organized two Regional Meetings of Experts on the Six Pollution Regional Plans which were held in November 2018 and May 2019. A “*Preliminary Report*” on new elements of the Regional Plans was produced for the first meeting which was updated and presented to the second meeting. The Regional Meetings approved the main elements/outline of the Regional Plans, including a timetable for their preparation until 2025. The final draft document on the main elements was submitted to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting for their review and approval. The issue is addressed under Working Document UNEP/MED IG.24/13.

92. The MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2018-2019 (Decision IG.23/14) requested from the Secretariat to prepare a proposal to update the annexes of the Pollution-Related Protocols. In line with this mandate and based on the work undertaken during the previous biennium 2016-2017, MED POL undertook the analysis and identified the sections of the annexes of the LBS, Dumping and Hazardous Waste Protocols that maybe amended. Further information is provided in document UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.22.

93. Work on the development of the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) was undertaken in the framework of the ENI SEIS II Project. MED POL developed updated PRTR Guidelines; prepared PRTR Regulation and proposed a methodology for developing and applying national emission factors, strengthening the ability of national operators to collect, evaluate and report all pollutants released into the environment on a regular basis to the national authorities.

94. MED POL is coordinating the implementation of “*Fishing-for-litter*” pilots in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco, and “*Adopt-a-beach*” pilots in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

95. MED POL developed regional guidelines addressing key marine litter prevention and reduction measures. The “*Adopt-a-Beach*” Guidelines were reviewed in two Regional Meetings on Marine Litter Best Practices (Izmir, Turkey, 9-10 October 2018; Seville, Spain, 8-10 April 2019). The proposed Guidelines were also presented and reviewed during the MED POL Focal Points Meeting, during which they were approved for submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting (UNEP/MED IG.24/14).

96. MED POL also contributed to the preparation of three additional guidelines prepared by SCP/RAC and REMPEC. These include Guidelines to Phase out Single-Use Plastic Bags in the Mediterranean; Operational Guidelines on the Provisions of Reception Facilities in Ports and the Delivery of Ship-Generated Wastes in the Mediterranean; and Guidance Document to Determine the Application of Charges at Reasonable Costs for the Use of Port Reception Facilities or, when Applicable, Application of No-Special-Fee System in the Mediterranean. All three Guidelines were presented and reviewed during the respective Focal Points meetings and were endorsed by the MAP Focal Points Meeting for submission to COP 21 for adoption. In the same context, REMPEC carried out a field visit for Port Authority representatives to the Port of Antwerp (Antwerp, Belgium, 30-31 October 2018), in collaboration with the Antwerp Port Authority.

97. The Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC adopted the “*2019, Guide for risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime accidents*”. The Meeting also agreed upon the initial draft table of content of the Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual prepared in consultation with ITOPF, Cedre, HELCOM, OSPAR/BONN Agreement and REMPEC in the framework of the West MOPoCo Project.

98. The common offshore standards and guidelines prepared by UNEP/MAP with substantive contribution from REMPEC on i) the disposal of oil and oily mixtures, the use and disposal of drilling fluids and cutting and analytical measurements, ii) Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) from offshore activities, and iii) Special restrictions or conditions for Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), were simultaneously submitted to the Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC and to the 14th Meeting of SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points. Comments from these Meeting were considered by Second Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact (Athens, Greece, 27-28 June 2019), in addition to the review of the status of Implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan and proposed recommendations for further streamlining of the Ecosystem Approach and other regional and global developments and the possible amendments to the Annexes of the Offshore Protocol. The MAP Focal Point Meeting reviewed the offshore standards and guidelines on i) the disposal of oil and oily mixtures, the use and disposal of drilling fluids and cutting and analytical measurements, and ii) Special restrictions or conditions for Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), and endorsed them as amended for further submission to COP 21 for adoption.

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

99. MED POL initiated the NBB Update data call in August 2018 and provided financial and technical assistance to several Contracting Parties in relation to the implementation of the 4th Cycle of the NBB reporting. In parallel, PRTR pilots are under implementation in five partner countries (Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia) to be followed by regional training.

100. UNEP/MAP through MED POL completed a Small-Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) with the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Central Europe in Slovakia (BCRC-Slovakia) to strengthen the effectiveness of joint reporting under Basel and

Barcelona Conventions and enhance the regulatory system in the region for better data handling.

101. 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 and in particular single-use plastics. Targeted countries are Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt and Algeria. The support provided is highly different from one country to another: support for the development of a norm for reusable plastic bags, feasibility study for the setup of an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Scheme at the national or regional level, multi stakeholders' consultation event. A consultation meeting took place in Tunisia in June 2019 on the development of a norm for reusable bags. In September, the national event organized in Egypt on the national initiative to reduce single-use plastic bags consumption was highly attended and opened by the Minister of Environment. The presentation of the feasibility study on an EPR schemes for beverage packaging organized in September in Rabat also received a high attention of the Ministry of Environment.

102. In the framework of the SWIM H2020 Supporting Mechanisms (SM) project, SCP/RAC coordinated the preparation of two technical studies that aimed at screening the best practices, circular economy measures and technologies for the target countries of SWIM-H2020 SM. The selected sectors were the olive oil sector and the cement sector, with focus on the best practices for the waste minimization, water and energy consumption and valorization of the sub-products of the olive oil production, and on the best practices for the waste to energy process to avoid or minimize environmental issues, respectively. SCP/RAC provided technical support to Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia for the development of SCP/circular economy/pollution abatement measures. SWIM H2020 SM project was finalized at the end of April 2019 with a closing conference that took place back-to-back with the H2020 Core Group Meeting (Brussels, 8-9 April 2019).

103. REMPEC provided technical support to Albania, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey further to their expressions of interest for the preparation of NAPs for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ship (2016-2021).

Strategic Outcome 2.4: Marine Pollution Monitoring and Assessment

104. MED POL is coordinating with SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC to support the Contracting Parties to progress on national implementation of IMAP, building on the existing monitoring programmes and on lessons learnt from other regional and/ or global processes. Small-Scale Funding Agreements were concluded with Egypt, Israel, Libya and Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. To date, national integrated monitoring and assessment programmes (national IMAPs) with regards to EO5, EO9 and EO10 have progressed in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Montenegro, Libya, Morocco and Turkey.

105. MED POL organized two CORMON meetings: (i) Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring held in Podgorica, Montenegro from 2 to 3 April 2019; and (ii) Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Marine Litter Monitoring and ENI SEIS II Assessment of Horizon 2020/National Action Plans of Waste Indicators also held in Podgorica, Montenegro (4-5 April 2019). These meetings were preceded by an IMAP Best Practices Regional Meeting which was held 10 to 12 July 2018 in Rome, Italy.

106. A document was prepared on several cross-cutting issues related to GES integrated assessment; assessment criteria; and scale of assessments, and reopened discussions with the aim to capture the recommendations of the IMAP Best Practices Regional Meeting (of July 2017) addressing interaction of pressures, impacts and state elements in assessing GES and the interrelation among different relevant Ecological Objectives of the coastal and marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea, within methodological approaches for integrated marine assessments. Furthermore, an initial proposal was prepared for consideration of the scales of monitoring and scales of assessment, as a condition to define the adequate nested approach of the monitoring units into assessment scales for IMAP Common Indicators. This document aims to present concrete guidance and propose the steps forward in the selection of the scales of monitoring and assessment under IMAP in relation to current practices.

107. During the 2018-2019 biennium, MED POL prepared 24 new/updated pollution assessment

criteria related to 2017 MED QSR. The updated assessments which are related to EO5 and EO9 are based on further estimated sub-regional Mediterranean background assessment concentrations (Med BACs) calculated from the background concentrations recommended at sub-regional scale for heavy metals in biota.

108. The database related to Common Indicators 13, 14 and 17 has been updated, during the period 2016-2018, with new datasets submitted by several Contracting Parties. Accordingly, MED POL prepared an update of the spatial regional assessments performed during the elaboration of the Med QSR 2017, as the first holistic assessment of the marine environment based on IMAP Common Indicators EO5 and EO9. A Guidance on Application of the Water Typology and related Monitoring and Assessment Aspects for concentration of chlorophyll a (CI 14) in the water column was also prepared. Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20 and 21 related to the Ecological Objective 5 (Eutrophication) and Ecological Objective 9 (Contaminants) were updated. MED POL proposed for the first time Guidance Factsheets for the Candidate Indicators 26 and 27 related to Ecological Objective 11 (Energy including underwater noise) that were approved by the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points.

109. During the period 2016-2018, MED POL database was updated with new datasets related to eutrophication [Egypt (2012, 2015), France (2013-2016), Israel (2013, 2015, 2017), Montenegro (2016-2017), Morocco (2013-2015), Tunisia (2015), Turkey (2014-2015)] and contaminants [France (2015-2016), Israel (2015, 2017), Montenegro (2016-2018), Morocco (2016-2018), Slovenia (2016) and Turkey (2014 -2015)]. There is ongoing process of these datasets upload into IMAP Pilot Info System further to quality checking; along with transfer of present MED POL online database to IMAP (Pilot) Info System.

110. With regards to emerging issues in marine litter, MED POL prepared a preliminary proposal of the “*Methodological Elements for Monitoring Floating Microplastics*” that will be further elaborated.

111. An updated List of Priority Contaminants under UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention was prepared; coordinated efforts continue to fill in the gaps related to knowledge on priority contaminants with the view to their potential consideration in the framework of IMAP.

112. A synthesis of past evolution, current state and future trends of marine litter in the Mediterranean, with a particular focus on the main sources and drivers as well as on the responses to prevent it, was prepared by SCP/RAC.

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

113. MED POL organized capacity building workshops to support national implementation of IMAP and related criteria for pollution and marine litter in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco, as well as for Albania and Montenegro; Bosnia and Herzegovina. The workshops addressed the methodological and practical aspects related to monitoring and assessment of marine environment with regards to pollution and marine litter clusters of IMAP.

114. Under the EU-funded ENI SEIS II Project, national meetings/workshops were organized for Algeria, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia on integrated assessment of H2020 industrial emissions and waste indicators. Under the EU-funded Marine Litter MED Project, MED POL organized national training workshops in Egypt, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia to enhance their capacities on the implementation of Fishing-for-Litter and Adopt-a-Beach pilots and on IMAP marine litter monitoring.

115. The Regional Meeting on Reporting of Releases to Marine and Coastal Environment from Land Based Sources and Activities and Related Indicators (Tirana, Albania, 19-20 March 2019) had a strong capacity building dimension on tools such as NBB and PRTR. Additionally, during the meeting, in coordination with EEA, meeting participants were provided with comprehensive information on development principles and main elements of the H2020 Assessment Outline focusing on the details and characteristics of integrated environmental assessment.

116. Capacity building activities for flag State inspection officers in relation to relevant international instruments, in particular MARPOL, have been supported by the European Maritime Safety Agency within the framework of the EU funded SAFEMED IV project.

117. Based on the National IMO training course on response to HNS in the marine environment (13 - 16 November 2018, Istanbul, Turkey), using the newly developed IMO model course, REMPEC in collaboration with IMO and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) scheduled in the first week of December 2019, a new session of the training (in Istanbul, Turkey). REMPEC organised the National oil spill response training course (IMO OPRC Model Course Levels 2, Montenegro, 19-21 June 2019), financed by IMO's ITCP, and supported the 4th edition of the Adriatic Oil Spill Conference (ADRIASPILLCON 2019) (Croatia, 28- 30 May 2019), which discussed on the development of a sub-regional oil spill contingency plan for the Adriatic Sea region. REMPEC organised the Regional Workshop on Response to Spill Incidents involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) (MEDEXPOL 2018) (Valletta, Malta, 20-21 June 2018). Within the approved EU Funded 2019-2020 West MOPoCo Project, REMPEC organised a Sub regional training on the use of the Readiness Evaluation Tool for Oil Spills RETOS™. Through IMO funding, REMPEC facilitated the participation of representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and Morocco, to INTERSPILL 2018 Conference and Exhibition (12-15 March 2018, London, UK).

118. The organisation of up to 13 national pilots related to the provision of reception facilities in ports and the delivery of ship-generated wastes in one marina selected per target country in collaboration with national authorities has been initiated. As part of the national pilots, national meetings are organised with relevant stakeholders to raise awareness on the need to better manage sea-based litter in ports and to provide ships using their ports with updated information relevant to the obligation arising from MARPOL Annex V and from their legislation applicable in the field. A Regional Workshop will tentatively be organised by REMPEC (Valletta, Malta, 26-29 November 2019) to discuss the outcome of the national pilots and follow-up measures.

119. REMPEC is organizing in coordination with IMO the Regional Workshop on the AFS Convention and the Biofouling Guidelines (Valletta, Malta, 12-14 November 2019) co-funded by the IMO's ITCP. Furthermore, up to five (5) National Workshop on MARPOL Annex VI are expected to be implemented by the end of 2019 to support the implementation and ratification processes.

120. In the framework of SwitchMed demonstration component, seven pilot projects have been finalized at the end of 2018 in the following areas: tourism, agro-food, textile and organic waste and in the following countries Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

121. SCP/RAC, in coordination with MED POL, prepared the report on baseline scenario, baseline projects and alternative scenario on Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)/Persistent Organic Pollutants (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.

122. INFO/RAC developed and tested a digital system, composed by a platform and a smartphone app, for classification, geo-localization, continuous updating and dynamic exchange of Marine Litter.

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

123. SCP/RAC prepared the Terms of Reference for the Development of a Web-Portal offering Green Business Development Tools which will provide online resources and services to develop green business ideas to Business Development Service Providers and Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean countries. A range of tools will be available through the Web-portal such as a Green Business Model Development Toolkit, a Green Business Plan Development Toolkit, an Access to Finance Guide, an Eco-Design Tool, a Methodology on Alternatives to Hazardous Chemicals, etc. The creation of new green businesses will prevent the generation of waste ending up as marine litter and promote the shift to safe alternatives to POPs and toxic chemicals.

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

124. The final draft Technical and Feasibility Study to examine the possibility of designating the Mediterranean Sea, or parts thereof, as SO_x ECA under MARPOL Annex VI, as well as the revised draft recommendations, including a revised draft road map, and an initial revised draft submission to the IMO were submitted to the Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC. The Meeting agreed that the proposed Med ECA should cover the Mediterranean Sea area, as defined in Article 1 of the Barcelona Convention, agreed that further studies were necessary and should be carried out, recognised the need to extend the mandate of the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts to oversee the preparations and coordination of the above-mentioned studies and agreed in principle with the road map for the possible designation of the proposed Med ECA within the framework of the Barcelona Convention. The draft roadmap addressed in document UNEP/MED WG.468/11 was reviewed by the MAP Focal Point Meeting and is submitted for further consideration to COP 21.

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**

125. In the framework of the EU-funded “*MedMPA network*” project, SPA/RAC has set up on a pilot basis, the Ad hoc Group of Experts on MPAs in the Mediterranean (AGEM). The second meeting of the AGEM was convened in Tunis, Tunisia, on 15 March 2019. It discussed technical documents that constitute the main AGEM deliverables during its trial period (2018-2019). The main activities and deliverables of the AGEM in support to the SPA/RAC mandate on marine and coastal protected areas, were presented to the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting, which expressed appreciation of the work and of the relevance of AGEM and agreed on its continuation. They also agreed on a number of tasks to be entrusted to the group starting from 2020. A Report on the AGEM during its trial period was presented to the MAP Focal Points meeting for information (UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.13).

126. The SPAMI Twinning Programme “*Developing and strengthening an effective management of marine protected areas and particularly Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance*”, is implemented by SPA/RAC in the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP/MAP. The twinning partners have been identified based on proposals from Albania, Algeria, Slovenia and Tunisia. The kick-off meeting took place in Torre del Cerrano MPA, Italy, on 26 February 2019 and twinning agreements were signed between four Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)/MPAs from Italy and four SPAMIs/MPAs from Mediterranean sub-regions of which Italy is part (Albania, Algeria, Slovenia and Tunisia). The project activities started in March 2019 and has been scheduled according to the availability of the SPAMIs/MPAs managers participating in the project and other national and local partners contributing to the project implementation.

127. A training on standardized, adaptive management systems (ISEA) was delivered on 11-12 March 2019, in Tunis; and four exchange visits to the Karaburun Sazan SPAMI (Albania), Kneiss Islands SPAMI (Tunisia); Strunjan MPA (Slovenia) and Torre del Cerrano MPA (Italy) were made.

128. Within the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP, REMPEC and SPA/RAC have been cooperating on the preparation of their respective terms of reference on the provision of guidance on Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) identification in relation to SPAMIs and the strengthening of the capacity building in enhancing scientific description of Ecologically/Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) or PSSAs. This activity is expected to be completed by December 2019.

129. REMPEC’s technical support for the development of the National Ballast Water Management Strategy for Morocco is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

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

130. In accordance with Decision IG.23/8, SPA/RAC held a Meeting of Experts on 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 (Rome, Italy, 22-23 January 2019). The meeting was organized at the kind invitation of the Government of Italy and financial support of the MAVA Foundation for Nature. The 14th Meeting of SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points endorsed the draft updated classification and the reference list of marine habitat types and invited SPA/RAC to submit them for adoption by the Contracting Parties (UNEP/MED IG.24/10).

131. During the biennium 2018-2019, SPA/RAC has worked on the update of the following Action Plans and Strategy, based on a participative and consultative approach: (a) The Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea; (b) The Regional strategy for the conservation of monk seal in the Mediterranean; (c) The Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean; and (d) The Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean. The 14th Meeting of SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points endorsed the draft Action Plans and Strategy, and invited SPA/RAC to submit them for adoption by COP 21 (UNEP/MED IG.24/10).

132. The updated classification and the reference list of marine habitat types, the updated Action Plans for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans), the marine turtles and the marine vegetation in the Mediterranean as well as the Regional strategy for the conservation of monk seal in the Mediterranean, were submitted for the consideration of the MAP Focal Points which endorsed them for submission to COP 21.

133. In the framework of the MedKeyHabitats II project, the elaboration of distribution and sensitivity maps of the main habitats in Algeria, Tunisia, Malta, Morocco and Turkey, is ongoing. Field work was undertaken early June 2019 in Tunisia, early February 2019 and in the end of July 2019 in Morocco, and from 20 June to 4 July 2019 in Algeria. Regarding Malta and Turkey, the mapping activities are planned from the late summer to the end of November 2019.

134. In the framework of the Med Bycatch project, SPA/RAC contributed to the elaboration of the Mediterranean and Black Sea bycatch data collection protocol "*Monitoring incidental catch of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: methodology for data collection*", elaborated by GFCM, with ACCOBAMS, IUCN Med, BirdLife, and MEDASSET contributions. The document was published on the FAO website.

135. As provided for in the Action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea, SPA/RAC launched the elaboration of the guidelines for the assessment of environmental impact on coralligenous/maërl assemblages. The draft guidelines are planned to be ready by December 2019 and shared with the Contracting Parties for comments.

136. SPA/RAC will launch the updating of the Marine Mediterranean invasive Alien Species database (MAMIAS) and the elaboration of the first Mediterranean report on the status of non-indigenous species as provided for in IMAP. The draft report is planned to be ready by the end of 2019.

137. SPA/RAC is coordinating in close collaboration with the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS and GFCM, the implementation of the pilot study "*Mitigation of negative interactions between endangered marine species (Delphinidae and Marine Birds) and small pelagic fishing activities in the Kelibia*" developed as part of the project "*Towards solutions to the interactions between fishing communities and cetaceans in Moroccan and Tunisian waters*" (MAVA Depredation project) Funded by the MAVA Foundation.

138. A dedicated session on possible steps towards common approaches for MSP at the Adriatic level took place in Split, Croatia, on 27 November 2018, back-to-back with the Sub-Regional Workshop on Stakeholders' Involvement in MSP in the framework of the SUPREME project. Close collaboration towards synergies and complementarities of activities between the EUSAIR and UNEP/MAP in the

Adriatic-Ionian subregion has been confirmed in a bilateral meeting (Split, Croatia, 5 February 2019), and concrete outputs and related activities were proposed. A first Adriatic-Ionian meeting towards drafting recommendations for a common approach on MSP was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 10 April 2019, back-to-back with the regional MSP training.

139. The Interreg Med ACT4LITTER project successfully ended on 30 October 2018. In this framework: (a) More than 100 measures to address Marine Litter in Mediterranean MPAs were identified with a special emphasis on upstream preventive measures, (b) nine Specific Action Plans including measures to prevent Marine Litter in MPAs were developed with 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-Andalucia (Spain), Strunjan Landscape Park (Slovenia)); (c) four editions of the ACT4LITTER Marine Litter Watch Month were organized, and; (d) a Joint Plan gathering the top 10 priority actions to curb marine litter in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas was developed.

140. The Interreg Med Plastic Busters MPAs that kicked off in April 2018 is progressing well. SCP/RAC is leading the communication work-package of the project and is preparing pilot actions to support the implementation of the Marine Litter Action Plan in 2/3 MPAs of Spain and Italy. Furthermore, in the framework of the Cooperation Agreement with IMELS, an agreement was signed in June 2019 with the Karaburun-Sazan National Marine Park MPA to develop a Marine Litter Action Plan, based on ACT4LITTER methodology, and implement a specific measure. The selected measure will target plastic waste generated by beach bars.

141. Within the framework of the “*MSP Pilot project*” implemented within the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS), the SPA/RAC is implementing an IMAP/MSP field study in the coastal and marine area of Vlora Area in Albania. The study planned to be achieved by December 2019, will provide an assessment report of the Ecological Status of the study area and an MSP preliminary initial assessment report.

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

142. In the framework of the EU-funded “*MedMPA network*” project, SPA/RAC finalized the management plan for the North-Eastern part of Kerkennah Islands (Tunisia), that was presented and endorsed by concerned stakeholders during a workshop, held on 4 January 2019, in Kerkennah, that gathered representatives of national and local stakeholders. A training workshop on the financial strategy and business plan for the same stakeholders was held on 9 September 2019 in Kerkennah. The business plan is being developed and will be finalized by the end of September 2019.

143. The report of the diagnosis-assessment phase for the elaboration of the Jbel Moussa (Morocco) management plan has been endorsed by the representatives of national and local stakeholders. The management plan was also endorsed during a final workshop held in July 2019. A training workshop on the financial strategy and business plan for the same stakeholders was held in July 2019 in Jbel Moussa. The business plan is being developed and will be finalized by the end of September 2019.

144. The diagnosis-assessment phase for the elaboration of a management plan for the Sallum MPA in Egypt has been launched in May 2019. The diagnosis report was finalized. The management plan will be endorsed by the end of September 2019.

145. Within the MAVA funded MedKeyHabitats II project SPA/RAC elaborated an updated report on the coralligenous in the Mediterranean and started the elaboration of a report on marine caves biocenosis. Within the MAVA funded Med Bycatch project, and in collaboration with BirdLife International, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN Med and MEDASSET, a scientific committee for bycatch was set up and its 1st meeting was held in Rome, Italy, on 13 December 2018, during the GFCM Fish Forum. The sampling methodologies and the multi taxa observer programmes of incidental catches of vulnerable species for Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey were agreed by the bycatch scientific committee. The 2nd Scientific Committee meeting is planned for December 2019. Within the same project,

SPA/RAC, in collaboration with AAO/BirdLife Tunisia, started the implementation of the bycatch observation programme in Tunisia (Duration: March 2019-June 2020, 24 fishing ports concerned).

146. A coordination meeting to improve synergy among different organizations implementing MAVA projects addressing fisheries sustainable management and conservation in the Strait of Sicily-Tunisian Plateau subregion was organized by SPA/RAC in Monastir and Kuriat Islands, Tunisia, on 22-24 May 2018. The exchanges allowed pursuing better effectiveness of the different projects taking place in this broad area, which include also other partners such as APAL, WWF North Africa, Marine Stewardship Council, Notre Grand Bleu, and the LIFE Platform.

147. Within the framework of its assistance to Contracting Parties, SPA/RAC is supporting the elaboration of the National Action Plans (NAPs) concerning species introduction and invasive species for Libya and Turkey and the preparation of the NAPs for the conservation of Marine Turtles in Libya, Lebanon and Spain. The NAP for the conservation of marine turtles and the National strategy to reduce illegal trade of marine turtles in Tunisia have been prepared, discussed and approved during a national consultation workshop held on 20 December 2018. SPA/RAC is also supporting the preparation of the NAP for the conservation of marine vegetation in Cyprus through MedKeyHabitats II project.

148. Within the MAVA Species Project, SPA/RAC (as the Project's Coordinator) and the Partners (ACCOBAMS, BirdLife Int., ICUN-Med, MEDASSET) are working on enhancing the knowledge on marine megafauna species (Marine Mammals, Sea Birds, Sea turtles and Elasmobranchs) in key areas of the Mediterranean. A gap analysis was carried out to identify the priorities and, a call for small projects has been launched in 18 February 2019. The achievement of eight selected small projects in November 2021, will provide a complementary data for the MAVA Med Bycatch Project.

149. Within the Deep-Sea Lebanon Project, SPA/RAC elaborated a Management Plan for future deep sea MPAs (Jounieh Nature Marine Reserve) that was presented and endorsed by concerned stakeholders during a workshop held on 11 December 2018 in Beirut, Lebanon.

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

150. SPA/RAC developed the monitoring protocols on common indicators related to biodiversity and non-indigenous species. Protocols were discussed during the Ecosystem Approach CORMON meeting on biodiversity and Fisheries (Marseille, France, 12-13 February 2019 and Rome, Italy, 21 May 2019). Updated protocols were further discussed during the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting.

151. Within the MAVA Marine turtles project, SPA/RAC supported the implementation of the monitoring nesting programmes in Egypt Lebanon, Libya, Spain and Tunisia. The programme aimed to monitor and assess beach quality, threats and pressures on the known nesting areas and to explore new areas.

152. SPA/RAC in close consultation with MED POL has prepared the report "*Defining the most representative species for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 and its monitoring protocol*" which has been reviewed and amended during a set of meetings: Marine Litter and Biodiversity CORMON (Marseille, France, February 2019; Podgorica, Montenegro, April 2019) as well as during the MED POL Focal Points Meeting and the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting. Moreover, an assessment of available data to propose GES Targets concerning the amounts of litter ingested by or entangling the sea turtles has been achieved, the development of an operational strategy for monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 is ongoing. These documents are part of the EU funded project Marine Litter MED.

153. Within the GEF Adriatic Project, SPA/RAC contacted international experts (November 2018) on EO1 (Marine Habitat, Sea turtle, Seabirds, Marine mammals) and EO2 (NIS) who provided support to both Albanian and Montenegrin project team of experts (contracted by PAP/RAC) to elaborate the national knowledge gap assessment for EO1 and EO2 for Albania and Montenegro and draft the respective national monitoring programme. Additionally, in March 2019, Albanian and Montenegrin fishery experts (contracted by PAP/RAC) started the elaboration of a knowledge gap assessment

related to EO3 “fishery” with SPA/RAC support and GFCM contribution. Both national knowledge gap assessments and thematic monitoring programs, in line with the IMAP, had been elaborated and related to EO1 Biodiversity (Habitat and species), EO2 NIS, EO5 Eutrophication, EO7 Hydrography, EO9 Contaminants and EO10 Marine litter. The national gap assessments have been finalized and the national monitoring programmes are under revision by the international experts, for finalization. The integration process of all thematic monitoring programmes in a National IMAP Monitoring programme for Albania and Montenegro is ongoing. Additional exchanges are also ongoing with GFCM, related to the Ecological Objective 3 “Fisheries”. Within the GEF Adriatic project, SPA/RAC is initializing the process for a field survey in a pilot site in Albania. The study will focus on IMAP data collection for marine biodiversity, eutrophication, hydrology and pollution. This activity receives additional financial support from MED POL. The field survey is planned to be achieved in 2020.

154. In conformity with COP 20 Decision IG.23/9, SPA/RAC collaborated with the relevant authorities in France, Italy, Lebanon, Monaco, Spain and Tunisia in order to carry out, through mixed independent/national technical advisory commissions (TACs), the ordinary periodic review for the following 19 SPAMIs: Blue Coast Marine Park (France); Embiez Archipelago - Six Fours (France); Porto Cesareo Marine Protected Area (Italy); Capo Carbonara Marine Protected Area (Italy); Marine Protected Area of Penisola del Sinis - Isola di Mal di Ventre (Italy); Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Lebanon); Palm Islands Nature Reserve (Lebanon); Port-Cros (France); Pelagos Sanctuary for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (France, Italy and Monaco); Alboran Island (Spain); Natural Park of Cabo de Gata-Níjar (Spain); Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria (Spain); Natural Park of Cap de Creus (Spain); Medes Islands (Spain); Mar Menor and the Oriental Mediterranean zone of the region of Murcia coast (Spain); Columbretes Islands (Spain); La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia); Kneiss Islands (Tunisia); and, Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia). The site visits and meetings of the various TACs took place during March 2019. The outcomes of this review were brought to the attention of the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting. The meeting approved the results of the ordinary review of the 19 SPAMIs and recommended that COP 21 includes the following five SPAMIs in a period of provisional nature: Palm Islands Nature Reserve (Lebanon); Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Lebanon); Kneiss Islands (Tunisia); La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia); and, Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia). This issue is addressed in document UNEP/MED IG.24/9.

155. The ordinary review of the Pelagos Sanctuary allowed for testing the SPAMI online evaluation system for transboundary high-sea SPAMIs. A Draft updated Format for the periodic review of SPAMIs, based on the comments by the technical advisory commissions in charge of the 2018-2019 ordinary reviews and mainly that responsible for evaluating the Pelagos Sanctuary, was submitted to the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting. The meeting reviewed the draft updated format and invited SPA/RAC to submit it for adoption by the Contracting Parties (UNEP/MED IG.24/9).

156. SPA/RAC undertook, in close collaboration with the Contracting Parties, an evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO), after fulfilling 15 years since its adoption. The elaboration aimed to assess the actions achieved, existing gaps and pending issues at regional and national levels, calibrating the added value of SAP BIO for all Mediterranean countries, and providing options for a new post-2020 SAP BIO structure, elaboration steps and timeline. The evaluation was discussed with delegates at the Fifth and Sixth meetings of National Correspondents of SAP BIO. The conclusions and recommendations for a follow-up SAP BIO 2020 elaboration were presented to the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting, where they were revised and agreed. The issue is addressed under document UNEP/MED WG.468/10.

157. SPA/RAC undertook an evaluation of the “Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed MPAs to Achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean” to assess the progress made (including success and possible failure) by the Mediterranean countries towards achieving the Aichi Target 11. The results of such evaluation, along with post-2020 recommendations for the Mediterranean region, were presented to the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting. The meeting welcomed the report, emphasized its quality and submitted written proposals for amendments. The final version of the report was submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting (UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.12) and COP 21 for information, as per COP 20 Decision IG.23/9.

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

158. SPA/RAC organized the Mediterranean Symposia on Marine Key Habitats and NIS, in Antalya, Turkey, as follows: (a) 6th Mediterranean Symposium on Marine Vegetation (14-15 January 2019); (b) 3rd Mediterranean Symposium on the Conservation of Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-Concretions (15-16 January 2019); (c) 2nd Mediterranean Symposium on the Conservation of the Dark Habitats (16 January 2019); and (d) 1st Mediterranean Symposium on the Non-Indigenous Species (17-18 January 2019).

159. SPA/RAC organized the 6th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles (Porec, Croatia, 16-19 October 2018), in close collaboration with Bern Convention, the Bleu World Institute (Croatia) and the University of Primorska (Slovenia). Furthermore, SPA/RAC cooperated with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat for the organization of the 4th Biennial Conference for the conservation of cetaceans in the South Mediterranean countries (Oran, Algeria, 11-13 November 2017) as well as the organization of dedicated workshops during the European Cetaceans Society conference (La Spezia, Italy, April 2018). In the framework of the implementation of the EcAp-MEDII project activities, and in synergy with the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI), three capacity building workshops (including exchange of best practices on monitoring the IMAP agreed common indicators) were organized in collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat of ACCOBAMS (Beirut, Lebanon, 2-5 October 2018; Bizerte, Tunisia, 25-28 February 2019; Jounieh, Lebanon, 24-27 June 2019). Those events were mainly dedicated to reporting quality assured data on the common indicators 3,4 and 5 related to cetaceans.

160. In order to strengthen national capacities for the monitoring and conservation of threatened and endangered species, SPA/RAC has organized: A sub-regional training on the biology and Monitoring of marine turtles in the Mediterranean, Dalyan, Turkey, June 20-27, 2018 (Project Turtles Marine); a National training on the identification and conservation of cartilaginous fish (Sfax, Tunisia, 23-25 April 2018 in collaboration with INSTM); Sub-regional training on monitoring marine biodiversity (Kuriat Islands, Tunisia, 8-12 August 2018, 8-15 August 2019); Training session on marine turtle monitoring techniques for Algerian managers and scientists (Monastir, 17-24 September 2019).

161. Within the MAVA Med Bycatch project, a training on bycatch for Tunisian bycatch observers and representatives of national institutions and NGOs (Tunis, Tunisia 3-6 October 2018) was jointly organized by SPA/RAC, the direct Bycatch Project partners (BirdLife International, ACCOBAMS, IUCN Med and MEDASSET) and the Tunisian National partners (AAO/BirdLife, INSTM and DGPA). Furthermore, within the GEF Adriatic Project, SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC jointly organized an EcAp national training workshop on EO1, EO2, and EO7 in Kotor (Montenegro) on 26 and 27 November 2018. The training aimed to enable a team of experts from Albania and Montenegro to start a gap knowledge assessment and draft a national monitoring programme aligned with the IMAP.

162. SPA/RAC co-organised and implemented with the CBD Marine Team the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Capacity Building Workshop for Northern Africa and the Mediterranean (Tangier, Morocco, 15-19 October 2018). The event showcased efficient cooperation among a Regional Seas Convention and a Regional Fisheries Management Organization with a Global Environment Convention, commonly aimed to provide support towards achieving Aichi Target 6 and 11 at national level in the countries of the region. National experts and practitioners from marine biodiversity conservation and Fisheries and marine resources management public administrations worked together with regional active organizations, with the support of CBD Secretariat, UNEP/MAP and GFCM on: a) Undertaking self-assessment of progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 6 and 11; b) Exchanging experiences on how to use sector-based and cross-sectoral tools and approaches for conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and ; c) Getting introduced on developing strategies and action plans to enhance cross-sectoral approaches to conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity.

163. SPA/RAC is actively participating in the ODYSSEA project. The first ODYSSEA training workshop dedicated to Observatories Managers and Technical Staff held in Lisbon, Portugal, 23-25

October 2018, simultaneously with ODYSSEA 1st General Assembly. SPA/RAC has prepared the outlines of the Training Program, based on a survey conducted within the project stakeholders, and has coordinated the contribution of the speakers.

164. In the framework of the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement between UNEP/MAP and IMELS, SPA/RAC is preparing a joint action with REMPEC to compile information on pressures and impacts in a sub-region where an EBSA and SPAMIs exists and PSSAs can be developed to undertake, in December 2019, a training workshop on management measures and PSSAs declaration processes in the Adriatic, and to provide coordinated support to Contracting Parties in identifying areas where PSSAs declarations could be promoted.

165. A sub-regional training session on Sea Turtle litter ingestion was organized in the rescue center of Monastir, Tunisia, in 1-2 November 2018, with the participation of 10 experts in sea turtle, veterinarians and scientists from Algeria, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The training session, that was organized in cooperation and in synergy with the EU-funded INDICIT project, aimed at providing tools for technicians who will carry out the monitoring of marine litter ingested by sea turtles in the Mediterranean.

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

166. The Coordinating Unit and SPA/RAC provided a revised draft of the Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial based Protection and Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity Among the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IUCN-Med, and UNEP/MAP. The draft was discussed during the Bureau meetings and further elaborated. The resulting final Draft Strategy was presented at the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points Meeting, and then to the MAP Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019).

167. SPA/RAC is participating in relevant meetings of the CBD on the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework elaboration. It is leading a UNEP/MAP Secretariat Task Force set with members of all RACs and the Coordinating Unit, also compiling their contributions with views and proposals on this future Global Framework for biodiversity conservation, which were provided on April 2019 to the CBD Secretariat.

168. Within the framework of the implementation of the MAVA Marine turtles project, SPA/RAC organized, as coordinator of the project the first and the second steering committee meetings held respectively in 5 May 2018 in Tunisia and 21-22 of March 2019 in Turkey. The following partners, in addition to the MAVA representative, took part to the mentioned meetings: Archelon, Dekamer, MedPAN, WWF Greece, WWF Turkey, WWF North Africa, National Marine Parc of Zakynthos, MEDASSET and IUCN Med.

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

169. SPA/RAC, on behalf of UNEP/MAP, is participating in the ongoing process towards the adoption of an implementing agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) (namely concerning marine genetic resources, marine protected areas BNJ, and Social Impact Assessment (SIA)), where UNEP Regional Seas Programme is contributing. This resulted to a presentation on the procedures to declare SPAMIs embracing BBNJ for a side event on Application of Area-based management tools under the Regional Seas Programme, within the last BBNJ IGC-2 meeting (New York, USA, 3 April 2019).

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

Strategic Outcome 4.2: Development of new action plans, programmes of measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines

170. Based on an overview of the existing practices with EIA and SEA in a transboundary context, the Draft Guidelines for Environmental Assessment in a Transboundary Context were prepared, presented and discussed during the PAP/RAC Focal Points meeting. The meeting welcomed the document, suggested some minor modifications and recommended to continue the work on the topic, in particular through regional/sub-regional workshops, and asked the Coordinating Unit and other MAP

components to include appropriate initiatives to this aim in the next biennium PoW.

171. A Sub-regional workshop for the Eastern Mediterranean EU Member States within the SUPREME project was held in Split, Croatia, on 26-27 November 2018. Training material was prepared, and the Regional Training Workshop on Marine Spatial Planning was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 9-10 April 2019, with the participation of 14 Contracting Parties' representatives and with the contribution of IOC-UNESCO.

Strategic Outcome 4.3: Strengthening national implementation

172. Following consultations with the Albanian and Italian Ministries, the preparation of the Feasibility Study for a transboundary CAMP project for the Otranto Area was initiated. The first screening of the area was done, and the draft Feasibility Study was prepared (document UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.21). The Feasibility Study will be completed in 2019, to proceed with the negotiation of the CAMP Agreement early next year.

173. Agreement was reached between Cyprus and Israel to prepare the Feasibility Study for a transboundary CAMP between these two countries and the process is currently under preparation.

174. The CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina was submitted for signature in September 2018. Consultations are held with the National Ministry of Bosnia and Herzegovina to expedite signature; the process is expected to be completed by the summer of 2019.

Strategic Outcome 4.4: Monitoring and assessment

175. Testing of a step-by-step guide for Land-Sea Interaction implementation within the pilot cases of SIMWESTMED and SUPREME projects was finalised. The pilot cases produced the following outputs with the coordination role of PAP/RAC: i) Definition of approaches for implementation of pilot actions in Var (France) addressing LSI; and ii) Feedback on the utilization of a methodology for assessing land-sea interactions (LSI) in the pilot area of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County (Croatia).

176. The CORMON meeting on Coast and Hydrography was held in Rome, Italy, on 21-22 May 2019, with the participation of the representatives of 15 Contracting Parties, INFO/RAC, MEDPOL, SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC. The meeting discussed and provided guidance on data standards and data dictionaries for IMAP Common Indicators related to coast and hydrography, agreed on minor details related to Guidance Fact Sheets for the EO7 and EO8 common indicators and discussed the cross-cutting issues. Contracting Parties had the opportunity to report on the status of their national IMAPs.

177. Case studies on SDG14 and Blue Economy are in progress with the involvement of a network of relevant actors. The draft case studies and the recommendation report were submitted to the Plan Bleu Focal Points Meeting and the 18th MCSD Meeting. A successful workshop was held on the case studies and the relevant recommendations (Budva, Montenegro, 13 June 2019), back-to-back with the 18th MCSD Meeting. A publication is planned by December 2019.

178. The Coastal Risk Index (CRI) was 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

179. Several trainings based on IMAP indicators' factsheets were organized (in Podgorica, Montenegro), for Albania and Montenegro as a part of the GEF Adriatic project: i) IMAP training for EO5, EO9 on 2-3 October 2018; ii) IMAP training for EO 10 on 22 November 2018; and iii) IMAP training for EO1, EO2, and EO7 on 26-27 November 2018. Additional hands-on trainings were organised in Podgorica, Montenegro, on 28 November 2018 (for Montenegrin experts for contaminants and eutrophication) and in Tirana, Albania, on 17-18 December 2018 (for Albanian experts for eutrophication, contaminants and marine litter).

180. The Adriatic GEF project supported the organization of the CORMON meeting for EO5, EO9 and EO10 (Podgorica, Montenegro, 2-5 April 2019), where Albanian and Montenegrin experts also participated.

Strategic Outcome 4.6: Enhanced cooperation at regional, sub-regional and national levels

181. Criteria for labelling of ICZM projects and an on-line tool to facilitate networking were prepared, presented and discussed at the PAP/RAC Focal Points Meeting.

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

182. Two meetings were organized on the Methodological Guidance for Reaching GES through ICZM: i) Working meeting of PAP/RAC, MED POL and SPA/RAC (Athens, Greece, 24-25 January 2019); and ii) 3rd meeting of the Working Group for drafting the Common Regional Framework for ICZM (Rome, Italy, 27-28 February 2019). Both the Common Regional framework on ICZM and the Methodological Guidance document were presented and discussed at the PAP/RAC Focal Points Meeting, which introduced some minor modifications and recommended their submission to the MAP Focal Points meeting (UNEP/MED WG.468/8). The Methodological Guidance was also presented at and supported by the 14th SPA/RAC Thematic Focal Points Meeting.

183. The draft methodology for the analysis of the coherence between the SAP BIO and ICZM Protocol provisions with the view to contribute to the SAP BIO revision was presented and discussed during the SAP BIO meeting, organized by SPA/RAC in Marseille, France (13-14 February 2019). The methodology was updated in line with the meeting recommendations, and the draft analysis was prepared and presented at the PAP/RAC Focal Points Meeting and the 14th Thematic SPA/RAC Focal Points Meeting. Both meetings endorsed the document (UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.20) as an important contribution towards better coherence within the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system.

184. A report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the ICZM Protocol 2012-19 was prepared and presented at the PAP/RAC Focal Points Meeting (UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.19).

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

185. A conceptual methodology for addressing Land Seas Interaction and its relationship with ICZM was developed in synergy between the SIMWESTMED and SUPREME projects and presented at the projects' final conference in Venice, Italy, on 11-13 December 2018.

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

186. The MedOpen Basic programme is being continuously updated and running in English, French and Italian. A special session of MedOpen Advanced was delivered in the first half of 2018 for the students of the Algerian High School of Marine Sciences and Coastal Management as a part of their academic curriculum. In 2019 the same arrangement has been made for the Master's Degree students of the Moroccan University of Al Hoceima and the Tunisian University of Bizerte.

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

187. The ICZM Platform has been launched within the renewed PAP/RAC website. The Platform has been populated with several material and is in the process of being updated.

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

Strategic Outcome 6.1: Development of new action plans, programmes of measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines and implementation of current ones

188. The process for the development of the draft version of the SCP National Action Plan for Turkey is in progress. The assessment and scoping study have started based on the suggestions for priority

value chains. An inter-ministerial meeting is planned for 14-15 November 2019, and a multi-stakeholders event will follow in November with contributions from UNEP's Economy Unit and One Planet Network.

Strategic Outcome 6.2: Monitoring and assessment

189. The set of indicators on SCP mainstreaming and streamlining in the Mediterranean, in accordance with the Regional SCP Action Plan, will be updated and populated in the framework of SwitchMed II project.

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

190. Activities in the framework of the first phase of SwitchMed's Green Entrepreneurship and Civil Society component have been concluded. At the end of the first phase, SCP/RAC has supported and strengthened local networks of trainers and business support organizations in 8 southern Mediterranean countries. More than 2,200 Green Entrepreneurs (38% women) have been supported to develop their green business models and 48 green entrepreneurs (44% women) have received one year incubation services to launch their circular businesses. Likewise, more than 160 civil society and grassroots organizations have been trained to develop their eco-innovation projects.

191. SCP/RAC has been laying the foundation for the implementation of the Green Business Development programme in the framework of the 2nd phase of SwitchMed. The concept and content of the Green Business Development Online Platform, which will be an essential piece of the programme, have been fully produced and the tender is under development. The tender for the development of the Eco-design tool, which will be added to the set of methodologies available in the Platform, is also under development and about to be launched.

192. Regarding the set-up of the Switchers Support National Partnerships, SCP/RAC has been engaged in consultations with the Focal Points and potential Local Partners in the target countries in order to identify the best strategies and actors to be involved in each country. In some countries, SCP/RAC is already negotiating agreements with Local Partners (Morocco, Tunisia and Palestine). An important opportunity for the dissemination and transfer at global level of SwitchMed Green Business Development Methodology has arisen from contacts established by SCP/RAC with the United Nation's Development Programme (UNDP) (Global Programme on Nature for Development). UNDP has expressed great interest in adopting SwitchMed's methodology within a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) targeting 5-10 thousand learners in 140 countries.

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

193. In the framework of the SwitchMed Networking Facility, a number of activities have been developed, including the 3rd edition of SwitchMed Connect (Barcelona, Spain, 13-15 November 2018) with more than 400 participants. The Networking Facility was also represented at UNEA-4 (Nairobi, Kenya, 11-15 March 2019) to: share the results achieved during the first phase of the programmed, which ended in December 2018; develop joint outreach activities together with other regional SWITCH programmes; and, give an insight about the second phase of the SwitchMed programme.

194. SCP/RAC has developed the Switchers Fund strategy. The strategy's outcome is to increase the amount of investment facilitated in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) region to finance circular economy solutions.

195. A work plan for the facilitation of deals at the value chain level was prepared in collaboration with the associated partner United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Sustainable tourism value chains in Lebanon and Tunisia were selected with the consent of the Focal Points of these Contracting Parties and in line with the feasibility analysis.

196. In addition, the SwitchMed Networking Facility discussed the collaboration with the SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility on the SWITCH-Products platform and received their commitment. The Facility also prepared a concept note suggesting actions for the relaunch and management of the website

including the strategic objective of facilitation of deals.

197. Concerning the Switchers community, the number has grown up to 386. All Switchers stories were well presented on the platform. The platform has undergone a technical review to improve the user experience.

198. The platform has also facilitated four collaboration deals between Switchers and other organisations, such as a UNICEF project to recycle fishing nets. Outreach efforts resulted in Switchers being featured in Communication outlets of other organisations, such as Revolve, IEMed and EU Neighbours South. Switchers also got access to funding and visibility opportunities, such as the “*Mediterranean Open House*” organised by DEFISMED.

II.6 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

199. Following the approval of the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) project “*Enhancing regional climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas*” in June 2019 PAP/RAC has started developing detailed programme of work and budget of the project in which two coastal adaptation plans are proposed to be prepared in Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region in Morocco and the Kotor Bay area in Montenegro.

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

200. Work is ongoing on “*Nature-Based Solutions*” as a means to adapt to climate change in the Mediterranean, through capitalization on the best practices workshop organized by Plan Bleu/RAC, IUCN Med, IUCN France, Tour du Valat, Conservatoire du Littoral, MedWet, Wetlands International (Marseille, France, 22-24 January).

201. A Policy Paper on integrating natural based solutions in the methods of adapting to climate change was prepared and presented at the Plan Bleu Focal Points Meeting. The policy paper and its summary were published (*Outsmart climate change: work with nature. Enhancing the Mediterranean’s climate resilience through Nature-based Solutions*; Plan Bleu, June 2019) and videos were posted.

Strategic Outcome 7.4: Monitoring and assessment

202. SPA/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC work together on indicators on vulnerability and impact of climate change on biodiversity and natural resources, also addressing socio-economic trends. Through this cooperation, indicators of climate change impact on socio-economic trends linked to biodiversity and natural resources are being developed. A cost effectiveness analysis for the implementation of a monitoring network for climate change impact on biodiversity within SPAMIs is also being prepared.

III. Financial, Personnel and Administrative Matters

203. According to the audited and certified Statement of Financial Position, the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) balance amounted to USD 8.1 million as at 31 December 2017. The balance reflects the accumulated surplus for MTF and the amount put aside for the Working Capital Reserve (WCR). It represents the total net assets as at the end of the financial year and as such it includes the assessed contributions receivable (arrears), the WCR and advance transfers to implementing partners.

204. According to the audited and certified Statement of Financial Position, the host country contribution (CAL) fund balance amounted to USD 393,930 as at 31 December 2017. This balance reflects the accumulated surplus for CAL. It represents the total net assets as at the end of the financial year. The balance of the host country contribution will be utilized for the relocation of MAP premises and for expenses related to the setting up of the new offices.

1. Financial Matters

205. The status of MTF as at 1 July 2019, as reflected in detail in Annex I, is summarized below:

- *Total annual pledges of ordinary contributions for 2018 and 2019: EUR 5,706,788 annually*
- *Total collections for 2018 as at 01/07/2019: EUR 5,558,395 (97.40%)*
- *Total collections for 2019 as at 01/07/2019: EUR 4,692,570 (82.23%)*
- *Total arrears as at 01/07/2019: EUR 918,291*

206. The invoice raised for the year 2019 for the EC Discretionary Contribution, amounting to EUR 596,484 annually, was received on 1 July 2019.

207. During COP 20, Italy pledged to contribute EUR 2,015,000 in the biennium 2018-2019 for the implementation of key activities of the PoW and EUR 300,000 for the financing of the Information and Communications Officer post, in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP and IMELS. Instalments of EUR 1,306,000 and EUR 45,000 were received in 2018 and instalments of EUR 709,000 and EUR 83,565 were received in 2019, with respect to the COP 20 pledges.

208. With regards to consultancy, efforts were continued to minimize hiring of consultants through MTF and EC Discretionary Contribution resources. From January to December 2018, only 29% of the consultancy costs were financed by the MTF and the EC Discretionary Contribution.

2. Personnel Matters

209. The information regarding the new recruitments is as follows:

P4 Programme Management Officer (MED POL) (Position No: 30600866): the selected candidate, Mr. Mohamad Kayyal, reported for duty on 1 September 2018.

P4 Administrative/Fund Management Officer (Position No: 30601050): the selected candidate, Ms. Lydia Eibl-Kamolleh, reported for duty on 11 August 2018.

P3 Programme Management Officer (MED POL Monitoring) (Position No: 31002533): the selected candidate, Ms. Jelena Knezevic, reported for duty on 1 May 2018.

P3 Public Information Officer (Position No: 30600867): the selected candidate, Mr. Jihed Ghannem, took up the position effective 12 May 2019.

P3 Programme Management Officer (Quality Status Report) (Position No: 31025245): the recruitment process is complete, and it is expected that the selected candidate, Ms. Daria Mokhnacheva, reports for duty as at 21 August 2019.

P3 Programme Management Officer (Shared Environmental Information System II South Project) (Temporary Position No: 31025623): the selected candidate, Ms. Christina Bodouroglou, has been on board since 14 February 2019.

P3 Programme Management Officer (EcApMEDII Project): Ms. Gyorgyi Gurban resigned and left the position on 30 November 2018.

G6 Finance and Budget Assistant (Position No: 30606488): the selected candidate, Ms. Georgia Stavarakis, reported for duty on 27 March 2018.

Annex I

Status of Contributions as at 1 July 2019

Status of Contributions as at 1 July 2019											
Ordinary Contributions to MTF											
Country	Unpaid Pledges for 2016 and prior years	Unpaid Pledges for 2017	Unpaid Pledges for 2018	Unpaid Pledges as at 31/12/2018	Pledges for 2018	Collections for 2018	Pledges for 2019	Collections for 2019	Unpaid Pledges for 2019	Deferred Income	
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
Albania	-	-	-	-	3,217	3,217	3,217	3,217	-		
Algeria	19,337	64,746	64,746	148,829	64,746	-	64,746	-	64,746		****
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	5,228	5,228	5,228	-	5,228	-	5,228		
Croatia	-	-	-	-	39,813	39,813	39,813	39,813	-		
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	17,292	17,292	17,292	17,292	-		
Egypt	-	-	-	-	61,126	61,126	61,126	-	61,126		****
European Union	-	-	-	-	142,670	142,670	142,670	142,670	-		
France	-	-	-	-	1,954,037	1,954,037	1,954,037	1,954,037	-		
Greece	-	-	-	-	189,412	189,412	189,412	-	189,412		
Israel	-	-	-	-	172,924	172,924	172,924	-	172,924		
Italy	-	-	-	-	1,507,250	1,507,250	1,507,250	1,507,250	-		
Lebanon	8,646	18,499	18,499	45,644	18,499	-	18,499	-	18,499		
Libya (State of Libya)	513,930	50,268	50,268	614,466	50,268	-	50,268	-	50,268		
Malta	-	-	-	-	6,434	6,434	6,434	6,434	-		
Monaco	-	-	-	-	4,021	4,021	4,021	4,021	-		
Montenegro	-	-	-	-	1,609	1,609	1,609	1,609	-	(48)	**
Morocco	-	-	-	-	21,716	21,716	21,716	-	21,716		*
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	33,780	33,780	33,780	33,780	-		
Spain	-	-	-	-	982,447	982,447	982,447	982,447	-		
Syrian Arab Republic	84,820	9,652	9,652	104,124	9,652	-	9,652	-	9,652		
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	11,260	11,260	11,260	-	11,260		
Turkey	-	-	-	-	409,387	409,387	409,387	-	409,387		
TOTAL	626,733	143,165	148,393	918,291	5,706,788	5,558,395	5,706,788	4,692,570	1,014,218	(48)	
<i>Collection Rate</i>						<i>97.40%</i>		<i>82.23%</i>			

EC Discretionary Contribution											
						Expected contribution for 2018	Received contribution for 2018	Expected contribution for 2019	Received contribution for 2019		
						EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR		
European Commission						596,484	596,484	596,484	-		

Host Country Contribution											
						Expected contribution for 2018	Received contribution for 2018	Expected contribution for 2019	Received contribution for 2019		
						EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR		
Greece						367,200	322,035	367,200	-		***

*The Contribution of Morocco for 2018 was received in January 2019.

**The Contribution of Montenegro was received in 2017.

***Difference between expected and received contribution due to exchange rates fluctuations.

****Unpaid pledges for 2016 and prior years have been reduced by EUR 42, as the respective receipt was confirmed by UNEP HQ.

*****Arrears of Egypt for 2016-2018 were received on 01 July 2019.

Note: Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations: Regulation 3.5. Contributions and advances shall be considered as due and payable in full within 30 days of the receipt of the communication of the Secretary-General referred to in regulation 3.4 or on the first day of the calendar year to which they relate, whichever is later. As of 1 January of the following calendar year, the unpaid balance of such contributions and advances shall be considered to be one year in arrears.