



Marine Litter MED project

The Marine Litter MED project supported the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention from the southern Mediterranean region to implement the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management. It is funded by the European Union.

The Regional Plan is the first-ever legally binding instrument of its kind. It was adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2013. It provides for programmes of measures, implementation timetables, guidelines, assessment baseline values and environmental reduction targets. The requirements of the Regional Plan were reflected in the Contracting Parties' national policies through the 2015 National Action Plans.

QUICK FACTS:

Duration: 3.5 years (June 2016 – Dec. 2019).

Countries of implementation: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Executing Agency: UN Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP).

Funding: European Union.

MARINE LITTER MED PROJECT – THREE MAJOR OUTPUTS:

- ⇒ **Output A:** Assisting the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean at sub-regional levels. A particular focus is given to the five most common marine litter measures provided for in the updated National Action Plans.
- ⇒ **Output B:** Strengthening the implementation of harmonized approaches at regional and sub-regional levels, to reduce and prevent marine litter generation from land-based and sea-based sources, including pilot preventions. A series of regional guidelines were developed.
- ⇒ **Output C:** Assisting the establishment of regional and bilateral cooperation mechanisms with relevant regional actors as well as European Regional Sea Conventions, to enhance synergies for the implementation of the Marine Litter Action Plans. A particular focus is given to the collaboration with the Black Sea Commission and the establishment of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter.

The UN Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) is a cooperative effort to support the implementation of the Barcelona Convention. Adopted in 1976, the Barcelona Convention aims to protect and improve the marine and coastal environment in the Mediterranean, whilst promoting regional and national plans contributing to sustainable development.

Today, 21 countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the European Union, are Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

FOCUS ON OUTPUT A: SUPPORTING 5 MARINE LITTER PILOTS

Particular focus was given to support the following marine litter pilots comprising the key reduction and prevention measures as provided for in the updated National Action Plans:

1. "ADOPT A BEACH" MEASURES ●

"Adopt-a-beach" measures comprise of actions related to the beach cleaning and beach marine litter surveying programmes aiming to support and enhance the national marine litter monitoring programmes.

Pilots were successfully implemented at seasonal frequency in 12 sites in Israel, Lebanon, Libya, and Morocco. The AaB pilots were implemented in an integrated approach aiming to complement and support the finalization of the national monitoring programmes for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (beach marine litter). Based on the quantitative evaluation that UNEP/MAP and its MED POL programme undertook in November 2019 for the purpose of updating the 2016 Baseline Values for marine litter IMAP common indicators, during which the data acquired from the pilots were taken into consideration, the preliminary analysis indicates a reduction of 39% for beach marine litter (compared to the 2016 baseline values, COP19 Decision IG. 22/10).

2. "FISHING FOR LITTER" MEASURES ●

"Fishing-for-Litter" measures aim to reduce the amounts of marine litter at sea. It is a voluntary scheme that has demonstrated on a limited scale that it can gain the support of the fishing industry, harbour and local authorities.

3 Fishing-for-litter (FfL) pilots were successfully implemented in Morocco and Libya. Coupled with the FfL pilots, a methodological approach for the identification of marine litter hotspots was jointly prepared with support deriving from the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea Protection (IMELS), for the identification of areas where fisheries related items are accumulating on the seafloor.

3. BETTER MANAGEMENT OF SEA-BASED LITTER IN PORTS ●

For the purpose of determining the application of charges at reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable, application of the No-Special-Fee system in major ports as well as of improving the provision of reception facilities and the delivery of ship-generated wastes in marinas, a total of 8 pilots were successfully implemented in 4 major ports and 4 marinas in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia with the support of REMPEC. Libya benefited from a national meeting organised in Tunisia.

As part of the pilots, a targeted diagnosis, a field trip, a national meeting, expert advice, including recommendations, as well as an individual country report were delivered. A study based on literature review on existing best practices in the Mediterranean and other European regional seas, as well as a guidance document and operational guidelines, were prepared within the framework of the project. A field visit by Port Authority representatives in the Port of Antwerp was organised in collaboration with the Antwerp Port Authority in October 2018 during which representatives from Algeria, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia benefited from the sharing of information and expertise relating to the provision and operation of the port reception facilities.

4. PHASING-OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS AND ADVANCING ON EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY ▲

Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia received technical assistance with the support of SCP/RAC addressing land-based sources of pollution, focusing on enhancing public authorities' capacities on phasing out single-use plastic bags and promoting Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for beverage containers. The national waste agencies of Algeria and Tunisia have also benefitted from this work.

National Reports have been prepared/developed for Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, reflecting the outcomes, gained experience and lessons learnt from the provided Technical Assistance (TA) aiming to enhance public authorities' capacities on phasing out single-use plastic bags and promoting Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for food and beverage packaging:

The governmental decree has been approved in Tunisia and was published at the Official Journal of the Republic of Tunisia (JORC) (No 32, 16 January 2020) can be gladly reported as one of the important achievements of the Marine Litter MED project.

5. REDUCING IMPACTS OF MARINE LITTER IN BIOTA ■

The reduction of the impact of marine litter on biota was addressed in the framework of the project through significant developments and progress achieved pertinent to IMAP Candidate Indicator (CI) 24, mainly focusing on improving knowledge and establishing methodologies for assessing the amounts of marine litter ingested by or entangling on marine turtles, including: (i) a report on the "Most representative species to be used for the assessment of the amount of marine litter ingested by or entangling the marine species/biota in order to improve knowledge on IMAP CI 24"; (ii) specific protocols for monitoring interactions between marine litter and marine turtles (ingestion and entangling) with a view to harmonizing methods of data collection for monitoring and assessment (jointly with EU-funded INDICT-I project); (iii) a report providing assessment of available data to propose GES Targets with regard to the amounts of marine litter ingested by or entangling marine turtles; (iv) a regional operational strategy for monitoring IMAP CI 24; and (v) guidelines for the improvement of existing networks and development of a Mediterranean network for monitoring and assessment of IMAP CI 24.

Other Important Milestones:

- ◇ 4 regional marine litter guidelines were adopted by the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Naples, 2-5 December 2019 – Decision IG.24/11): (i) Adopt-a-Beach; (ii) Phase-out of Single Use Plastic Bags; (iii) Provision of Reception Facilities in Ports and the Delivery of Ship-Generated Wastes; (iv) Application of Charges at Reasonable Costs for the Use of Port Reception Facilities.
- ◇ The development of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean since 2016.
- ◇ The adoption of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter for the Black Sea Region during the 34th Ordinary Meeting of the Black Sea Commission in October 2018.

Marine Litter MED: COUNTRIES OF IMPLEMENTATION



- IMPLEMENTING "ADOPT A BEACH" MEASURES
- IMPLEMENTING "FISHING FOR LITTER" MEASURES
- BETTER MANAGEMENT OF SEA-BASED LITTER IN PORTS

- ▲ PHASING-OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS AND ADVANCING ON EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY
- REDUCING IMPACTS OF MARINE LITTER IN BIOTA

Assisting the Permanent Secretariat of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (BSC) in Enhancing Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea Region.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in 2016 between UNEP/MAP and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution during the 19th CoP of Barcelona Convention (Athens, Greece). The aim of the MoU is to increase interaction and exchange of information, expert knowledge, sharing best practices between the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions on the topics of common concern.

The cooperation between UNEP/MAP and BSC and the relevant mechanism of regular bilateral cooperation that was established, is now showcased as an example of successful inter-regional collaboration, and also at Regional Seas Convention level.

In the framework of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED project important achievements can be reported pertinent to strengthening of the bilateral collaboration and enhancing marine litter management in the Black Sea region.

- ⇒ The Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the Black Sea was adopted by the Black Sea countries during the 34th BSC Regular Meeting (25-26 October, 2018)
- ⇒ The Black Sea countries requested from the BSC and its Advisory Groups to consider the Regional Marine Litter Monitoring Guidelines developed in line with the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program (BS-IMAP 2017-2022), which are pending official approval from the Black Sea Countries.
- ⇒ A joint implementation workplan has been drafted and agreed between UNEP/MAP and BSC since 2017 and it is implemented. Its progress is reviewed on a yearly basis.

Four bilateral coordination meetings were organized in the framework of the project during the period 2016-2019:

- Athens, Greece, 24 July 2017;
- Istanbul, Turkey, 6 December 2018;
- Istanbul, Turkey, 29 May 2019
- Istanbul, Turkey, 13 December 2019

BSC PS attended and contributed to 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 21) held in Napoli in December, 2019;

A Regional Verification workshop to support the establishment of the Black Sea Marine Litter Monitoring Programme and streamline the implementation of Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea was organized in Istanbul, Turkey, 12-13 December 2019. UNEP/MAP participated to the meeting in which the:

- i) The draft guidelines on monitoring of marine litter in the Black Sea environment were further reviewed by the Black Sea countries aiming to their adoption within 2020;
- ii) Implementation of the Regional Action Plan was discussed based on the Mediterranean experience and marine litter management best practices were specified.

