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First Steering Committee and Kick Off Meeting of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project

Tunis, Tunisia, 10 March 2020

Agenda item 2: IMAP-MPA Project: Progress, Annual Work Plan and Budget

Progress Report

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UNEP/MAP
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Introduction

1. The Project “Towards achieving the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea and coast through an ecologically representative and efficiently managed and monitored network of Marine Protected Areas” (hereafter referred to as IMAP-MPA project), is funded by European Union (EU) – the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and the Green MED III: ENI South regional environment and water programme 2018-2022 financial instrument.
2. The project is coordinated and implemented by UNEP/MAP Secretariat and implemented through its Mediterranean Pollution Assessment and Control Programme (MED POL) and Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC). It covers a period of 42 months starting in August 2019, with an overall budget of EUR 3,999,660 (USD 4,459,309).
3. The beneficiary countries for the specific, national activities are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia; while Jordan and Palestine can also benefit from the regional/ capacity building activities of the project.

Project Summary and Objective

4. The overall objective of the IMAP-MPA Project is to contribute towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Mediterranean Sea and along its coast. In so doing, the project proposes to consolidate, integrate and strengthen the ecosystem approach (EcAp) for Marine Protected Area (MPA) management and their sustainable development. This will be achieved through the monitoring and assessment of environmental status in the Mediterranean Sea and its coast, including MPAs, in a comparative and integrated manner.
5. The project also proposes to enhance MPA management through coordinated implementation of the MAP Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed MPAs to Achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean, as well as enhance the integration of the Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) in this process. The IMAP-MPA Project will strengthen and further develop the Mediterranean network of ecologically representative, inter-connected, effectively managed and monitored MPAs. This will be achieved through improving national biodiversity-related governance and policies; preparing and implementing management plans for MPAs and improving MPA management with targeted actions.
6. Furthermore, the project will support the process for aligning the Mediterranean priorities with the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, as well as for other global and regional emerging issues.
7. The project will contribute to the assessment of MPA effectiveness through IMAP implementation of biodiversity and non-indigenous species, pollution and marine litter and hydrography clusters in an integrated manner. This will be showcased by presenting and highlighting environmental status differences between MPAs and areas which are under high-pressure because of human activity. In so doing, the project will also contribute to the overall status assessment of the Mediterranean Sea and coast and provide support to the beneficiary countries in enhancing their relevant capacities, e.g., through targeted trainings, exchange of specific best practices, and undertaking of pilots in new areas of monitoring of IMAP, in MPAs and outside with a focus on the sub-regional level.

Project Structure

8. The Project is structured is based on 3 major components, 5 outcomes and 9 outputs, which are hereunder described:

Component 1: Promotion and support of IMAP implementation at the regional, sub-regional and national scale

Outcome 1: Enhanced level of capacity in each country to implement IMAP and report reliable data for the IMAP common indicators

- Output 1.1: In depth identification at country level of the capacities required to enable IMAP implementation and facilitate the provision of reliable and quality assured data for the MED 2023 QSR.
- Output 1.2: Capacity building and exchange of best practices at the national, sub-regional and regional level through specific training sessions and meetings.

Outcome 2: Harmonized monitoring and assessment including at sub regional level, of IMAP common indicators for biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species (NIS); pollution and marine litter; and hydrography both within and surrounding MPAs

- Output 2.1: Integrated/joint monitoring in MPAs and high-pressure areas carried out in identified pilot sites for agreed common indicators.

Component 2: Improvement and support for the development of a comprehensive and coherent Mediterranean network of well-managed and monitored MPAs to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 in the Mediterranean

Outcome 3: Enhanced implementation of the governance and policies which relate to the Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Mediterranean countries

- Output 3.1: Support for the development of a National MPA Network Strategy for the Egyptian coast.
- Output 3.2: Organization of the 2020 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean to pave the way for the post 2020 MPA agenda process in the Mediterranean.
- Output 3.3: The development of a strategic document on MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean, in line with the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework through a participatory process.

Outcome 4: Improved on-site MPA management and identified mechanisms that ensure MPA sustainability

- Output 4.1: Elaboration of MPA management plans and provision of support for their effective implementation.
- Output 4.2: Improvement of MPA management through capacity building and initiation of management plan implementation.

Component 3: Effective project management ensured for guidance during the project as well as coordination for overall project implementation

Outcome 5: Effective and timely project coordination and implementation ensured:

- Output 5.1: Project management and coordination.

Country Support

9. The project aims in providing support to Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia; Jordan and Palestine through concrete national and regional activities aim to provide support to the countries with regards to integrated IMAP monitoring and effective MPA management. Table 1 presents in a summarized way the different types of support provided by the different outputs to the respective beneficiary countries.

Table 1: Different types of support provided to the respective beneficiary countries through the different outputs.

	ALG	EGY	ISR	LEB	LIB	MOR	TUN	JOR	PAL	Regional
Output 1.1										
Output 1.2										
Output 2.1										
Output 3.1										
Output 3.2										
Output 3.3										
Output 4.1										
Output 4.2										
Output 5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Reporting of Progress During the Inception Phase of the Project

10. The European Union Contribution Agreement was signed on 8 August 2019 and since then UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat has provided the enabling conditions for the effective implementation of the projects, namely:

- a. Communication with the beneficiary countries for the national activities (i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) established since December 2019, including for the nomination of the national focal points of the project;
- b. Hiring a full-time IMAP-MPA Project Manager since January 2020;
- c. Countersigning a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) for the implementation of a big set of activities in the framework of the project; and
- d. Communication with the beneficiary countries for the regional/capacity building activities (i.e. Jordan and Palestine) established since January 2020, including for the nomination of the national focal points of the project;
- e. Organization of the Coordination Meeting for the Preparation and Implementation of the EU-funded projects addressing Ecosystem Approach and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean (Athens, Greece, 12-13 February 2020), during which the Coordinating Unit, MED POL, SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC and Info/RAC:
 - i. Reviewed the national monitoring programmes for IMAP EO1, EO2, EO5, EO9 and EO10, and came up with proposals for the selection of the relevant MPA and high-pressure monitoring sites for the needs of the project, which are hereunder included to the present report; and
 - ii. Consulted and came up with proposal for the integrated monitoring of IMAP EO1, EO2, EO5, EO9 and EO10, which are hereunder included to the present report.
- f. Preparation of the kick-off and first steering committee of the project in Tunis, Tunisia, on 10 March 2020.

11. Moreover, detailed activities have been identified for the implementation of all project's outcomes and outputs. These activities described into details into the working document WG.478/3 "Annual Work Plan and Budget".

12. The first step for the effective implementation of the project's activities is to select the respective stations according to the project's requirements i.e. in MPAs and in high-pressure areas. MAP Secretariat together with its MAP Components, namely MED POL, SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC and Info/RAC, gathered in Athens, Greece, on 12-13 February 2020 and made an analysis of the sampling stations/sites provided for in the national monitoring programmes for IMAP EO1, EO2, EO5, EO9 and EO10. This analysis is provided under Table 2 to the present report.

13. Based on this analysis MAP Secretariat came up with concrete proposals with regards to the monitoring sites that could be selected in MPAs (Table 3) and in high-pressure (Table 4) areas, which are subject to the Steering Committee review and approval.

14. One additional element in which MAP Secretariat and its Components worked on is to provide an initial proposal for IMAP integrated monitoring, detailing the different IMAP EO's that could be selected for joint monitoring (Table 5) and in particular, which common indicators could be combined in an integrated and effective way. This analysis and proposal took into account the following minimum requirement; i.e. combining at least two common indicators from two different EO's.

Table 2: Compilation of candidate monitoring sites (i.e. MPAs and High Pressures Areas) for the needs of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA project, deriving from the National Monitoring Programmes Coordinated by MED POL and SPA/RAC.

	Morocco	Tunisia	Algeria	Libya	Lebanon	Egypt	Israel
MPAs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Al Hoceima^{***} 2. Jbel Moussa[*] 3. Cap des Trois Fourches[*] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zembretta Archipelagos^{***1} 2. Kerkennah Islands[*] 3. Kuriat islands[*] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rachgoun^{***} 2. Park el Kala^{**} 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ain Gazala^{***} 2. Farwa Lagoon^{***} 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Palm Islands^{***} 2. Tyre Coast^{***} 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lake Burullus^{**2} 2. Lake Bardawil^{**2} 3. Sallum Bay^{*3} 	[to be defined at a later stage]
High Pressure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oued Martil^{**} 2. Alboran[*] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gulf of Gabes^{*4} 2. Bahiret el Bibane^{**} 3. Gulf of Tunis^{***} 4. Sfax Sud^{**} 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bou Ismail[*] 2. Port de Ghazaouet^{**5} 3. Port de Peche de Oran (Zone)^{**} 4. Port D'Arzew^{**} 5. Mazafran^{**} 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bengazi Port^{**} 2. Gulf of Sirte^{*6} 3. Gulf of Tobruk[*] 4. Tripoli Coast^{***} 5. Brega Oil Port^{**} 6. Zwara Port^{**} 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Damour^{**} 2. Beirut Bay^{***} 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Port Said^{**} 2. Nile Delta[*] 3. El-Mex^{**7} 4. Abu Qir^{**8} 5. Rafah^{**} 	[to be defined at a later stage]

* Monitoring sites contained in the national monitoring programmes for EO1, and EO2.

** Monitoring sites contained in the national monitoring programmes for EO5, EO9 and EO10.

*** Monitoring sites contained in the national monitoring programmes for EO1, EO2, EO5, EO9 and EO10.

¹ Not recommended for monitoring IMAP Indicators due to difficult weather and oceanographical conditions.

² Ramsar site.

³ Upon confirmation with the Country.

⁴ It includes Kerkennah islands as a future/potential MPA area (process is ongoing).

⁵ In vicinity to Bou Ismail monitoring site.

⁶ Potential new MPA site; Management Plan Elaboration is planned, for a specific area of the Gulf of Sirte, under the IMAP-MPA project.

⁷ Hotspot Type-B

⁸ Hotspot Type-A

Table 3: Proposal for Selection of MPA Monitoring sites for the needs of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA project.

	Morocco	Tunisia	Algeria	Libya	Lebanon	Egypt	Israel
MPAs	1. Al Hoceima 2. Jbel Moussa	1. Kerkennah Islands	1. Rachgoun	1. Ain Ghazala 2. Farwa Lagoon	1. Palm Islands 2. Tyre Coast	1. Sallum Bay	[to be defined at a later stage]
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data availability: Pilot monitoring programme on habitats implemented within the MAVA-funded project (MedKey Habitats II) and the MTF SPA/RAC budget (biennium 2016-2017). • Al Hoceima is included as a monitoring station for both IMAP Biodiversity and Pollution Cluster. • Contribution to the development of the observatory within the Odyssey project and the MAVA-funded project. • Trained personnel and capacities reinforced (EU- and MAVA-funded projects). • Access to site: easy. • Management plan developed within the EU-funded Med MPA Network project for Jbel Moussa. • Management to be updated for El Hoceima National Park within the MAVA-funded project (starting from July 2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data availability: Pilot monitoring programme on habitats and sea birds implemented within the MTF SPA/RAC budget (biennium 2016-2017) • Personnel well trained and capacities reinforced within the EU-funded EcAp-MED II project • Access to site: easy. • Management plan developed within the EU-funded Med MPA Network project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data availability on habitats within the MAVA-funded project (Med Key Habitats II) • Rachgoun is included as a monitoring station for both IMAP Biodiversity and Pollution Cluster. • Personnel trained on monitoring sea birds and mapping benthic habitats (EU- and MAVA-funded projects) • Access to site: prior authorization is needed • Management plan to be developed for the site within the IMAP-MPA project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data availability that should be updated • Management plan to be developed within the IMAP-MPA project for Gulf of Sirte area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data availability for Tyre (marine turtles, sea birds, habitats). • Palm Islands and Tyre Coast are included as a monitoring station for both IMAP Biodiversity and Pollution Cluster. • SPAMI status • Access to site: easy • Management plan to be elaborated within the IMAP-MPA project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only MPA along the Mediterranean coast of Egypt • Data availability • Access to site: prior authorization needed • Management plan developed within the previous EU funded Med MPA Network project 	[to be defined at a later stage]

Table 4: Proposal for Selection of High-Pressure Monitoring sites for the needs of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA project.

	Morocco	Tunisia	Algeria	Libya	Lebanon	Egypt	Israel
High -Pressure	1. Alboran	1. Gulf of Gabes 2. Bahiret el Bibane 3. Gulf of Tunis 4. Sfax Sud	1. Bou Ismail 2. Port de Ghazaouet	1. Gulf of Sirte 2. Tripoli Coast	1. Beirut Bay	1. Port Said 2. Nile Delta	[to be defined at a later stage]
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing activities. • Maritime traffic. • Urban development. • Extension of a commercial port. • Alboran is included as monitoring station of the IMAP Biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing activities. • Loss of biodiversity due to pollution. • Urban development. • Maritime traffic. • Gulf of Tunis is included as a monitoring station for both IMAP Biodiversity and Pollution Cluster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing activities. • Urban development. • Maritime traffic. • Bou Ismail is included as monitoring station of the IMAP Biodiversity. • Port de Ghazaouet is included as monitoring station of the IMAP Pollution Cluster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing activities. • Oil exploitation. • Maritime traffic. • Gulf of Sirte is included as monitoring station of the IMAP Biodiversity, and modelling studies provide predictions for being an accumulation zone for marine litter. • Tripoli Coast is included as a monitoring station for both IMAP Biodiversity and Pollution Cluster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing activities • Urban development • Waste-water discharge. • Maritime traffic. • Beirut Bay is included as a monitoring station for both IMAP Biodiversity and Pollution Cluster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban development • Fishing activities • Maritime traffic. • Port Said is included as a monitoring station for IMAP Pollution Cluster. • Nile Delta is included as a monitoring station for IMAP Biodiversity. 	[to be defined at a later stage]

Table 5: Proposals for Integrated monitoring approaches for IMAP Ecological Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 10.

	EO1	EO2	EO3	EO5	EO7	EO9	EO10
ROV Scuba Box Corer	CI1 CI2			CI13 CI14		CI17 CI18 CI19	CI23
Nesting Sites	CI3 CI4 CI5						CI24
Ports	CI1 CI2	CI16			CI15		
Trawlers (GFCM) ⁹			CI7 CI11				CI23
Satellite images	CI1			CI14		CI19 CI21(?)	CI23(?)
Modelling ¹⁰							

Issues, Challenges and Questions to be Addressed by the Steering Committee

15. MAP Secretariat has identified several issues and open questions which should be addressed by the Steering Committee aiming to provide with support and further guidance:

- a) Cost consideration of the integrated monitoring: an assessment needs to be undertaken in cooperation and consultation with the countries with regards to cost implications that the integrated monitoring may have, after considering and providing a clear idea about the existing national capacities that are available.
- b) Country ownership of joint monitoring: the Steering Committee should explore all possible ways for the countries to be actively involved in this complex but still effective approach of monitoring for the marine and coastal environment.
- c) Information standards: for those common indicators for which Data Standards and Data Dictionaries are not available, Info/RAC should be mandated by the Steering Committee to prepare them.

⁹ Coordination and support with GFCM are required.

¹⁰ Modelling could be used across the board for all IMAP indicators aiming to verify the modelling results with raw data coming from the national monitoring programmes, identify potential monitoring areas of high interest (e.g. accumulation areas, hot spot areas), as well as to contribute to the assessments deriving from the national monitoring programmes.

- d) Monitoring protocols: for those common indicators for which monitoring protocols are not in place, or approved, in the framework of UNEP/MAP, the project and MAP Secretariat we will follow the best practices approach, by proposing for use internationally or regionally wide accepted monitoring protocols
- e) Planning of monitoring surveys: basic data sets (e.g. bathymetry; hydrographic conditions, etc.) are needed and participating countries should provide these data sets to MAP Secretariat.
- f) The proposed, selected stations are defined through the national IMAPs but are mostly new stations, which means that no historical data exist for those stations.
- g) Frequency of sampling: since most of the monitoring stations are new and the generation of data for all of them is extremely important, it is proposed that the frequency of sampling undertaken in the framework of the project could be more frequent than the frequency proposed in the national IMAP's.
- h) Participation of National institutions: one institution should have the leadership for IMAP monitoring for each country. These institutions need to be defined by the participating countries to the Steering Committee. Moreover, MAP Secretariat is proposing to create an inventory or network of national institutions per country which should be working in a coordinated manner. The establishment of national roundtables discussions, to look on how activities can be implemented in a coordinated manner, are proposed by MAP Secretariat. These roundtable discussions should be organized within 2020.
- i) The applied modalities and possible cost implications deriving from the renting of ships/boats for the needs of the relevant monitoring activities at national, sub-regional and regional levels will be another challenging issue that the project may face. In particular, relevant procurement processes as well as the presence and operation of ships in international waters needs to be discussed in depth by the Steering Committee.