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Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

12-13 November 2020

**Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for April-September 2020**

**Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period April-September 2020**

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## I. Introduction

1. This report covers the activities and outputs carried out between April and September 2020. The Reports by the Secretariat on Specific Issues and on Financial and Administrative Issues are prepared as separate documents, namely UNEP/MED BUR.90/6 and UNEP/MED BUR.90/5 respectively. The complementing “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP 21 Decisions*”, is presented as document UNEP/MED BUR.90/4.

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

### II.1 Overarching Theme: GOVERNANCE

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

##### *Governance meetings*

2. Three meetings of the ECP took place in this period: ECP 41 (teleconference, 19-20 May 2020); ECP 42 (teleconference, 8-9 July 2020), and; ECP 43 (teleconference, 28-29 September 2020). All three ECP meetings had the preparation of the new MTS as a main agenda item, while the response of UNEP/MAP to the COVID-19 pandemic was also discussed. Detailed information is available in the reports of the 41st and 42nd Meetings of the ECP (document UNEP/MED BUR.90/Inf.4), while the Report of the 43rd meeting is currently under preparation.

3. The 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee was held online on 13-14 May 2020. The meeting reviewed the work of the MCSD and MSSD related activities for the period July 2019 – April 2020. It also addressed specific issues deriving from COP 21 decisions and the mandate of the MCSD, such as the MSSD and SCP Action Plan mid-term evaluations, MSSD Flagship Initiatives (incl. the Mediterranean Green Business Award and the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award), assessment studies (i.e. SoED, MED 2050, MedECC Report), the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and the integration of SCP indicators. It also included a discussion on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Sustainable Development of the Mediterranean Region and possible responses.

4. The 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Compliance Committee of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols was held on 16-18 June 2020, by teleconference. The meeting discussed the testing results of the criteria of submission, timelines, completeness and implementation against a set of 2016-2017 national implementation reports; the follow-up of the communication from Ecologistas en Acción de la Región Murciana, Spain (EARM) regarding SPA/BD Protocol implementation; as well as the effective functioning of the Compliance Committee. It was agreed to have a resumed session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Compliance Committee at the end of 2020. Further information is provided in the Report on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.90/6).

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

5. The Depositary has confirmed that no new deposit of instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols has taken place since April 2019.

##### *Resource mobilization, project proposals recently approved or submitted*

6. Following the conclusion of the submission process of the “Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security” for all seven Child Projects executed by UNEP/MAP, the kick-off meeting of the MedProgramme took place online, on 20 to 22 July 2020. This ambitious programme has mobilized approximately 37 million USD for the MAP-Barcelona Convention system, its partners and the GEF eligible countries in the Mediterranean (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey). The UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit is setting the legal framework for the use of the funds and their allocation to the activities.

7. 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 in the Project Steering Committee meetings although with some difficulties caused by COVID-19, pandemic making impossible to meet in person and organize samplings. The 3rd Project Steering Committee Meeting took place virtually on 7 July 2020. The meeting took stock of the progress made to date in the Project execution. Considering the COVID-19 impact on the project activities, the steering committee approved a Project extension proposal until 30 June 2021 and the revised Project workplan and budget.

8. The EC-funded IMA-PMPA (4 million Euros) project execution is progressing well. Communication with the respective beneficiary countries is ongoing for the establishment of the National IMA-PMPA Steering Committee and the organization of national meetings for the selection of the relevant monitoring stations and other specifications required to start monitoring activities on the ground. Other activities in progress include the organization of the 2020 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (postponed for 2021) and 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.

9. The implementation of the Project “Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices in the ENP South region - SEIS Support Mechanism” (2016-2019), was concluded successfully. A final Steering Committee Meeting for closure of the project was held on 21 September 2020. This event was accompanied by a corresponding communication/visibility

campaign and engagement with the eligible Project countries for continued cooperation in the future. The event also marked the launching of the joint EEA and UNEP/MAP Synthesis Report for policy makers (Towards a cleaner Mediterranean: a decade of progress).

10. Following the approval of the project proposals at the 8<sup>th</sup> Programme Steering Committee Meeting of the GPGC funding instrument under the EC-UNEP framework agreement, work was on-going to develop 2 fully-fledged project documents through a participatory process namely: “Efficient Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach-based Integrated Monitoring and Assessment of the Mediterranean Sea and Coasts in synergy with the EU MSFD” (EcAp-MED III) and Marine Litter MED II, and were approved by the European Commission in August 2020. The process for their operationalization has been initiated. The EcAp-MED III project aims to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the results of the EcAp MED II project and expected to boost further implementation of Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP)-compatible monitoring, assessment and reporting in line with the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR) Roadmap milestones at national, sub-regional and regional level with a particular focus on southern Mediterranean countries (namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia). It will also strengthen IMAP data management through the expansion of the IMAP Info-System to all IMAP Common Indicators and support harmonized assessment and the delivery of a data-based 2023 MED QSR. The Marine Litter MED II project will focus on the expansion in terms of geographical scope and impact the previous Marine Litter MED project outcomes, and on the implementation of successfully conducted pilots addressing key reduction and prevention measures addressing beach litter, fishing for litter, non-single use of plastics and better management of waste at ports, to further develop the IMAP candidate indicator 24. It also aims to enhance collaboration and cooperation with the Black Sea Commission and FAO/GFCM on issues pertinent to marine litter management. Both projects aim at further strengthening the regional experience gathered during the implementation in previous years for maximizing synergies with relevant work undertaken in the framework of other initiatives and relevant projects.

11. The final meeting of the Steering Committee for the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea Protection (IMELS) was held in May 2020, highlighting the successful implementation of the Agreement and the importance of the outputs delivered in its framework. Both Parties reaffirmed their willingness to follow discussions for a potential future Cooperation Agreement. A limited number of activities was agreed to be continued through reactivation of non-utilized funds under the Agreement, including start of implementation of the transboundary CAMP in Otranto strait, communication/dissemination activities, support for the organization of the CORMON on Marine Litter and the preparation of the marine litter hotspot identification report.

12. Proposals for the following projects have been prepared by Plan Bleu/RAC, considering the PoW for 2020-2021:

13. A project proposal on “Scénarios d’avenir et transitions concrètes pour une Méditerranée durable à 2050” (Future scenarios and concrete transitions for a sustainable Mediterranean by 2050) was submitted to the Foundation Prince Albert II of Monaco to support funding of MED 2050 roadmap Phase 2, as approved at COP 21, with a particular focus on the module on sustainability transitions: i.e. identifying priority investments, measures and practices in the short, medium and long terms, to foster a transition towards a more sustainable and inclusive Mediterranean at 2050. The total budget requested from the Foundation Prince Albert II of Monaco is 225,000 Euros.

14. Plan Bleu/RAC submitted to the Région Sud – Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (French local government) a project proposal on “Prospective méditerranéenne MED 2050 en Région SUD et participation au nouvel exercice de prospective du Plan Bleu à l’échelle du bassin méditerranéen” to support funding of MED 2050 roadmap Phase 2, as approved by COP 21, with particular focus on the module on trends: i.e. identifying structural long-term trends and possible disruptions that will be determining factors for the future of the Mediterranean basin. The total budget requested from the Région Sud – Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur is 80,000 Euros. The proposal has been accepted and official notification should be received in autumn 2020.

15. SPA/RAC collaborated, as a project co-leader and partner, with the European Topic Centre, University of Malaga (ETC-UMA: project leader), the Mediterranean Cities Network (MedCities), the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve, Lebanon, the Municipality of Sfax, Tunisia, and the Mediterranean Coast and Sea Foundation (MEDSEA Foundation) in developing and submitting a project proposal entitled “ENhancing Socio-Ecological RESilience in Mediterranean coastal area” (ENSERES) to the EC ENI CBC MED Programme. ENSERES seeks transformative changes by bending the environmental degradation curve with an integrated solution approach at transboundary level, both in and outside areas under legal protection, and involving public authorities, socio-economic actors and civil society organizations. It focuses on transferring and mainstreaming ecosystem-based management basics to implement ICZM processes in multi-level conservation and territorial practices leading to better prepared communities and natural goods. This project would allow SPA/RAC to enhance MPA management by establishing new SPAMI Twinning Programmes and in contributing to the efforts of fundraising for the Post-2020 SAP BIO, through a donor conference and event. The total budget requested from EC is 1,027,929 Euros, from which 200,000 Euros are for SPA/RAC.

16. Proposals for the second phase of the following projects have been prepared by SPA/RAC and communicated for approval by the MAVA Foundation, taking into account the PoW for 2020-2022:

17. “Understanding Mediterranean multi-taxa” (or ‘Bycatch’) of vulnerable species and testing mitigation-a collaborative

approach: the proposed activities will support data collection related to the incidental catch (bycatch) of the vulnerable species with the aim of developing and testing bycatch mitigation measures in the beneficiary countries (Croatia, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey) that can be replicated at regional level. The project will provide additional support to elaborate the Post-2020 SAP /BIO with regard to marine living resources and the new GFCM strategy on the sustainable management of natural resources. Project partners: SPA/RAC, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia (coordinator of the project), IUCN-Med, MEDASSET and WWF MedPo). The total budget provided by MAVA is 3,976,087.29 Euros from which 415,013 Euros for SPA/RAC. The project started in July 2020 and will end in October 2022.

18. “Rebuilding Mediterranean fish biomass and recovering key habitats to benefit fisheries and local communities: a Mediterranean Partnership Empowering the legacy of Mediterranean Partners: Scaling up co-managed and financially sustainable No-Take Zones/Marine Protected Areas” (NTZ-MPA project): the aim of phase 2 of this project developed as follow up of MedKeyHabitats II project is to support the concerned national authorities in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Turkey to: (i) update, develop or implement management plans for pilot MPAs to reduce the impact of fishing activities on marine key habitats; (ii) exchange experience through SPAMI Twinning Programme, national and international event participation; (iii) build national capacities in line with the Barcelona Convention’s IMAP; (iv) elaborate National Action Plans (NAPs) for the conservation of marine vegetation and coralligenous habitats; (v) Run a solid bottom-up process to identify priorities and actions for a stronger “Post-2020 SAP BIO”. The total budget requested from MAVA is 4,607,692 Euros from which 1,006,400 Euros for SPA/RAC.

19. “Conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean countries (Marine turtles) project: the second phase is aiming to: (i) ensure sustainability of the project through partnerships; (ii) increase knowledge to create a baseline for effective conservation strategies according to the EcAp- IMAP protocol and principle; (iii) secure long term buy-in for sea turtles’ conservation through the preparation and adoption of NAPs for the conservation of marine turtles in the concerned countries; (iv) scale-up site protection. SPA/RAC will continue strengthening good practices in Kuriat Islands (Tunisia) and scale up in new priority areas such as the Tyre Nature reserve (Lebanon) and Sirte -Farwa (Libya) through promotion of awareness and ecotourism actions. The requested budget is around 300,000 Euros.

20. Together with the City of Split and the University of Split, PAP/RAC has joined a consortium of the European cities in the COASTPATH project proposal submitted to H2020. The project proposal focuses on building the resilience of European cities to the effects of climate change. Having successfully passed the first elimination round (concept phase of the call) with the highest number of points, the consortium developed and submitted the full project proposal in early September 2020. Furthermore, as a follow-up to the MAVA-funded project on Mediterranean coastal wetlands, in which PAP/RAC is a partner in charge of the governance aspects, the same partnership is finalizing, at the invitation of the donor, a small-scale project to capitalize on the results of the existing project.

21. External funding from IMO’s Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) amounting to 112,710 Euros were secured and transferred to REMPEC for a number of meetings and events. Furthermore, IMO ITCP financed the Webinar on the implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean region (23 September 2020).

22. REMPEC continued implementing the two-year 2019-2020 EU-funded Project Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil and HNS Pollution Cooperation (West MOPoCo). The secondment to REMPEC of a Junior Programme Officer (VIS) by the French Oil Company, Total, through the French Government International volunteer programs, was secured for 18 months from 1st August 2020. Furthermore, in consultation with IMO and the Secretariat, REMPEC continued liaising with IOGP - the global oil and gas industry trade association for the drafting of the required agreement related to a part-time secondment to REMPEC from the oil and gas industry to support the implementation of 2020-2021 activities related to offshore. Unfortunately, due to the fall of the price of the oil barrel following the COVID-19 pandemic, the members of IOGP confirmed that they could not second a staff.

23. At the beginning of 2020, SwitchMed partners (UNIDO, UNEP/ Economy Division and SCP/RAC) were invited by DG NEAR to submit a project proposal in order to add a specific component on Blue Economy to the current SwitchMed II project. An additional €3M were allocated to complement the SwitchMed II activities with new Blue Economy-related outputs: €2.5M were provided by the European Commission (DG NEAR and DG MARE) and €0.5M by the Catalan Waste Agency. In this regard, SCP/RAC prepared its proposal after consultation with the MAP CU, MED POL, Plan Bleu/RAC and SPA/RAC, and initial feedback from the EC. A new amendment of the SwitchMed II Agreement is being finalized for this purpose, with activities expected to start by the end of the current year.

24. In April 2020, 2020 ENI-CBC MED approved the project STAND Up! “Sustainable Textile Action for Networking and Development of circular economy business ventures in the Mediterranean”, led by SCP/RAC. The grant contract has been signed on 30 June 2020 and the action officially started on 1 July. The project, with a total budget of 3.6M€, is being implemented in five Mediterranean countries (Spain, Italy, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon) by a consortium of six Med-based organizations.

25. In May, the project proposal “JUST2CE - A Just Transition to the Circular Economy”, led by the Autonomous University of Barcelona and supported by SCP/RAC has been selected for the second evaluation step. A full proposal has been submitted by the project consortium on 3 September. The Research & Innovation Action focuses on providing evidence-based decision support to policymakers, private stakeholders and civil society to promote transitional development and circular economy. Results are expected to be announced in January 2021.

26. In June 2020, SCP/RAC applied as Leader for an EU/EDF Funded Service Contract (EuropeAid/140756/DH/SER/LY) to support the Mousanada programme for Libya. Results of the first step of the evaluation process have not been published yet (presentation of a consortium). No detailed project proposal was prepared at this stage. In June, SCP/RAC also submitted a project proposal to the BeMed call targeting the implementation of solutions in Mediterranean islands specially affected by Plastic Pollution. The project was prepared together with SMILO (Small Islands Organization) and aims at Capitalizing BeMed initiative to reduce plastic pollution in Mediterranean Islands (CapiMed-Islands).

27. In July 2020, SCP/RAC submitted the project proposal RESET “RESults Enabling Transitions. Mapping, documenting and mainstreaming green and circular economy achievements in the MED region, for replication and policy-making”. The proposal has been developed within the framework of the ENI-CBC MED Capitalization Call for Proposals to promote capitalization, dissemination and policy uptake of relevant green and circular economy results in the Mediterranean. The consortium is led by SCP/RAC and composed by BEYOND Group (Lebanon); the University of Florence (Italy); LEADERS (Palestine) and INJAZ (Tunisia).

#### *Other activities under Strategic Outcome 1.1*

28. REMPEC submitted the First Draft Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) and its Action Plan for comments to the established Brainstorming Group, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and Partners. The Meeting of National Experts on the Post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships has been postponed to 10 March 2021, to allow for a further round of consultations by correspondence and will be held online. The review of the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management, is ongoing, including its Action Plan and Timetable, the outline of which was introduced during the Webinar on the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments in the Mediterranean region (23 September 2020). Furthermore, the inclusion of a specific agenda item, in the agenda of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, related to a joint proposal on the ban on paraffin and others substances under MARPOL Annex II in Mediterranean, has been discussed with a group of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

29. Plan Bleu/RAC continues work on regional tools, including possible guidelines on sustainable tourism with a particular focus on nautical activities, pleasure boating including cruises. Terms of Reference (ToRs) are under preparation and a workshop is being planned for November 2020. The guidelines will be finalized in the framework of an Interreg project, with a capitalization workshop scheduled for June 2021.

30. As mandated by Decision IG.24/3 and in synergy with the preparation of the MTS 2022-2027, the Secretariat launched the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD and of the SCP Action Plan under the guidance of the MCSD Steering Committee. The mid-term evaluations represent a good opportunity to further align those policy frameworks with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. The following deliverables have been prepared and shared with the MCSD Steering Committee: “MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation: Workplan and Timeline, Methodology, Sources of Information and List of Stakeholders to be consulted”, and “MSSD Mid-Term Evaluation – State of Play and Gap Analysis”. More information is provided in the “Report on Specific Issues” (document UNEP/MED BUR.90/6).

31. Regarding the preparation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO a Concept Note and a guidance document for the Post-2020 SAP BIO elaboration have been produced in consultation with the SPA/BD Focal Points; recruitment of additional experts have been concluded to support SPA/RAC; the reactivation of the SAP BIO Advisory Committee, including a consultation with SPA/BD Focal Points on its updated composition, took place and a first online meeting was held on 2 April 2020. The process considers a strong national consultation and national experts to assist Parties on their national contribution and national consultation processes, in support of the SAP BIO National Correspondents, were engaged and already working on those tasks. More information is provided in the “Report on Specific Issues” (document UNEP/MED BUR.90/6).

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

32. Follow-up action were undertaken by the Secretariat with the aim to increase the reporting rate of national implementation reports under Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention, which included (a) a letter dated 29 May 2020, from the Coordinator to MAP Focal Points on the timely and quality reporting, providing general guidance to support the reporting process and introducing the steps taken to streamline the online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) to further simplify report completion, (b) follow-up with Contracting Parties on an individual basis to boost reporting, and (c) continued support from the Secretariat and INFO/RAC to Contracting Parties on the use of the on-line BCRS. More information is provided in the “Report on Specific Issues” (document UNEP/MED BUR.90/6).

#### **Strategic Outcome 1.3: Strengthening participation, engagement, synergies and complementarities among global and regional institutions**

33. Plan Bleu/RAC is preparing, with partners, four events in the context of the IUCN World Conservation Congress (on climate change/MedECC report, nature-based solutions, SoED 2019, and tools to protect biodiversity in touristic areas), including three

events on a Mediterranean Stand in coordination with SPA/RAC, to highlight the Mediterranean specificity. The Congress has been first postponed to January 2021 and is now further postponed with no new dates indicated.

34. The cooperation arrangement between REMPEC and FEDERCHIMICA in the context of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) was renewed in August 2020. Furthermore, IPIECA's participation in the Brainstorming Group for the preparation of the post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships was secured.
35. REMPEC explored synergy between the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships by establishing a dialogue between UNEP/MAP and IMO to ensure synergies between the (EU-funded) "Marine Litter-Med II" Project and the IMO-FAO-Norway GloLitter Partnerships Project. A progress report on REMPEC activities was published for MEPC 75 (teleconference, 16-20 November 2020).
36. The European Environment Agency (EEA) and UNEP/MAP concluded the final draft of the EEA-UNEP/MAP 2<sup>nd</sup> Horizon 2020 indicator-based assessment report and its Executive Summary "Horizon 2020 Synthesis." This process is carried out in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring Group and the support mechanism of the ENI SEIS II South EU funded Project. A bilateral meeting between the EEA Executive Director and UNEP/MAP Coordinator was held on 18 September 2020, reaffirming the important results from the Joint Work Plan implementation. Key messages were transmitted by both the EEA Executive Director and UNEP/MAP Coordinator in the concluding event for the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism, held through videoconference on 21 September 2020.
37. UNEP/MAP is actively involved in the Plastic Waste Partnership (PWP) established under the Basel Convention to mobilize business, government, academic and civil society resources to improve and promote the environmentally sound management of plastic waste and to prevent and minimize its generation. In coordination with the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, UNEP/MAP and the Mediterranean Marine Litter Node hosted on 9 September 2020 a webinar on "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Increase of Plastic Waste in the Mediterranean". UNEP/MAP (MED POL) has also been elected to represent the Marine Litter Regional Nodes in the meetings of the Steering Committee for the Global Partnership on Marine Litter. The Regional Nodes regional network of public and private bodies that promote development and implementation of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) on a regional basis. MED POL will assume this role for the next 12 months. The first meeting attended by UNEP/MAP representing other nodes was on 17 September 2020. Furthermore, UNEP/MAP through SPA/RAC is regularly participating to the CBD process on the elaboration of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, including key topics such as Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, Post 2020 SBSTTA 24 documentation, monitoring, indicators and targets, target and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity. On 22 September 2020, the Coordinating Unit and Plan Bleu/RAC co-organized with the UfM and MedECC Secretariats the Plenary consultation on the draft Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) elaborated by the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC).
38. More information on partnerships is provided in the Report on Specific Issues (document UNEP/MED BUR.90/6).

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

39. The first draft study on trends and outlook of marine pollution from ships and activities and of maritime traffic and offshore activities in the Mediterranean, prepared by REMPEC in collaboration with MED POL, SPA/RAC, the ECAP Project Team, and CU, was reviewed by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. A second draft was prepared integrating comments from the Contracting Parties and elements from the complementary study related to ship movement forecast for the next 5, 10, 20 and 30 years. The Study will contribute to the preparation of QSR 2023 and the Med 2050 Roadmap.
40. REMPEC exchanged best practices on IMA Common Indicator (CI) 19 with the Bonn Agreement, HELCOM as well as other regional seas programme and the EU with a view to better defining "acute pollutions" and related level to trigger monitoring of the impact to the environment. This was followed up in the context of the revision of the Guidance Fact Sheets CI19 and CI6 to be submitted to the next CORMON Meeting. In consultation with the Secretariat, REMPEC invited HELCOM, the ODYSSEA Project and SPA/RAC to share information on data and projects related to the granting of exemptions under the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), targeting species in the Mediterranean Sea. The Regional Workshop on the BWM Convention that REMPEC had planned to organize in Valletta, Malta, from 2 to 4 June 2020, was replaced by a webinar organized on 23 September 2020 with interventions from IMO, HELCOM, the ODYSSEA Project and SPA/RAC.
41. Plan Bleu/RAC is preparing thematic products for outreach, building on the findings of the 2019 SoED Report. Six potential themes have been preselected (maritime transport, emerging pollutions, demographic trends, inequalities, SDGs implementation status and trends, offshore activities). The report on demographic trends was published in September 2020 and the one on maritime transport will be published in collaboration with REMPEC before mid-November 2020. The thematic brief on emerging pollution is under finalization, in consultation with MED POL. Work is ongoing for the brief on offshore activities, also in collaboration with REMPEC.
42. Plan Bleu/RAC has started implementing the second set of activities included in the Med 2050 Roadmap. The first foresight group meeting took place in May 2020 and the second on 13 – 14 October 2020. The first "comité d'orientation" meeting is

tentatively planned for December 2020. A consultation on trends and gaps is under preparation. Three publications on long term trends are under finalization: (i) publication on demographic trends (published in September 2020); (ii) a publication comparing projected trends in the 2005 report and actual trends is under review for publication in October 2020; (iii) a dashboard of long-term trends is under review and finalization for publication in November 2020. The first edition of the MED 2050 newsletter is prepared for dissemination through the MED 2050 network in September 2020.

43. Plan Bleu/RAC has initiated preparations to produce in 2021 an updated populated version of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard for monitoring the implementation of the MSSD. SCP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC are working to include the SCP Action Plan's Indicators into the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard (in conserving the 2 lists). SCP Action Plan's Indicators will be presented through MSSD indicators' factsheets. Regarding the Exchange of best practices on data and indicators among National Observatories and observation networks (in synergy with the MSSD dashboard, IMAP indicators, and Shared Environmental Information System - SEIS) and the update of the Regional Observatory, Plan Bleu/RAC is in preparation of a concept note for a workshop on monitoring SDG 14, to be held in early 2021.

44. To promote educational programmes in cooperation with academic institutions focusing on marine and coastal issues, with the aim to promote education on sustainable development, Plan Bleu/RAC, submitted together with a policy science research institution a joint PhD thesis project proposal for funding (the thesis is focusing on the MED 2050 foresight study). This proposal was accepted. An additional part-time partnership with PhD students has been put in place dealing with Blue Economy/aquaculture, with direct contribution to the 2020-2021 PoW.

45. Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Task Force are held on a monthly basis including the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit, MED POL, SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC, INFO/RAC, REMPEC and Plan Bleu/RAC to discuss key issues of implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap, including in particular the organization of the Integrated CORMON meeting and the implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap, through ongoing and planned projects, and through activities planned as part of the Programme of Work for 2020-2021. More information on IMAP implementation is provided in the "Report on Specific Issues" (document UNEP/MED BUR.90/6).

46. Preparatory activities for the organization of an Integrated CORMON Meeting, to be held virtually on 1-3 December 2020, are ongoing. The meeting is expected to take stock of the status of implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and review key elements for the report's development and structure, inform the participants on the implementation of three relevant EU funded Project activities (i.e. IMAP MPA, ECAP MED III, ML MED II), review a number of IMAP related documents in cluster specific break-out sessions, review best practices on integrated monitoring and assessment, and provide guidance on strengthening SPI in support of IMAP implementation.

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

47. Several activities have been initiated by SPA/RAC during this period: a concept note on the governance and updating of the Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species Database (MAMIAS) is prepared; the a new version of MAMIAS web application will be launched officially by the end of October 2020 during a special event to be organized online; the SPAMI platform web application has been developed and published online; a call for tenders to develop new web applications for the Standard Data-entry Form and Specially Protected Areas directory has been prepared and disseminated; a contract for the improvement of the Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform is signed; a call for tenders for the development of an online Evaluation System for the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance has been prepared and launched, and its evaluation and consultant selection processes are underway. Furthermore, INFO/RAC has started the process for the development of Data Standards and Data Dictionaries on Biodiversity cluster.

48. SCP/RAC has contributed to the Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on Green Entrepreneurship launched by UNDP. The course draws on the training methodology for green entrepreneurs developed by SCP/RAC, namely the Handbook for Green Entrepreneurs "Create your Green Business". The course counts on the support from SCP/RAC, EcoEnterprises Fund, FaithInvest, Fordham University's Gabelli School of Business, Lehigh University, SEED, and The GEF Small Grants Programme.

#### **Strategic Outcome 1.6: Raised awareness and outreach**

49. In line with Decision IG.24/4, after approval by the UNEP Publishing Board and Publishing Secretariat, the 2019 SoED, its Summary for Decision-Makers (SDM) and Key Messages have been published, in English and French, as UNEP publications. The Secretariat supported by Plan Bleu continued to implement the MAP system-wide communication plan on the SoED, with communication items adapted to a wide audience and targeted groups. The communication plan identifies the main audience groups and optimal ways of engaging them, either through the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system's own communication channels or by harnessing the dissemination capabilities of the media and other multipliers.

50. The UNEP/MAP revamped website, including a new layout, a revised structure and new content, is online since June 2020. A letter was sent in October 2020 to inform the Contracting Parties and Partners that the full version of the new website is accessible at [www.unepmap.org](http://www.unepmap.org) and [www.unep.org/unepmap](http://www.unep.org/unepmap) and to ask them for their reactions and feedback as primary users of the website. Launched in October 2019 with the hashtag #BarcelonaConvention, the UNEP/MAP twitter account is boosting the visibility of the



MAP-Barcelona Convention system on an important social media platform on which most institutional actors of environmental governance in the Mediterranean region are present.

51. The MED Newsletter 02/20 was produced and disseminated, and webpages and campaigns dedicated to UN international days (International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies and Mediterranean Coast Day) have been developed and launched. The Coordinating Unit is working with INFO/RAC on the implementation of the Operational Communication Strategy. Regular meetings of the MAP Communication taskforce are held with the participation of communication specialists in the RACs. An action plan assorted with a timetable is being devised and followed with inputs from MAP components and in line with the operational priorities set forth in the PoW.

52. The Secretariat prepared jointly with the European Environment Agency (EEA) a press release on the joint report entitled “Towards a cleaner Mediterranean Sea: a decade of progress”. The press release was issued on 21 September 2020 and coordinated dissemination on social media ensued, including a tweet by EEA (followers: 83,000) mentioning the @UNEPMAPNews twitter account.

53. The Plan Bleu/RAC’s Blue Economy report on perspectives and lessons learned based on 40 case studies was published in January 2020 and presented at a number of events on Blue Economy. Two notes on the COVID-19 impacts in the Mediterranean region were released in May 2020. The SIMPEER report was made available online in June 2020. A report and its synthesis on demographic trends were published in September 2020. Notwithstanding publications related to the SoED launch, 15 additional publications are expected to be published and disseminated in 2020. Plan Bleu/RAC also prepares, with partners, four events in the context of the IUCN Congress (on climate change/MedECC report, nature-based solutions, SoED 2019, and tools to protect biodiversity in touristic areas), including three events on a Mediterranean Stand in coordination with SPA/RAC, to highlight Mediterranean specificity.

54. The Identification Guide on vulnerable species accidentally caught in the Mediterranean Sea was translated into Arabic by SPA/RAC; ID Guide and simplified ID Guide (for Morocco/Tunisia/Turkey) were printed and disseminated within the Med-Bycatch project; a quiz on marine species was prepared at the occasion of the IBD 2020 to further promote these products. SPA/RAC published the following documents on its website: Assessment of the Ecological Status and MSP preliminary initial assessment in Vlora Marine Area (Albania) in the framework of the MSP Pilot Project; Conservation of the Marine Turtles in Lebanon; Updated Action Plan on cartilaginous fishes.

55. A partnership with Tunisia Cinema Foundation was established to organize EnviroFest (Environmental film festival in Tunisia) in order to raise awareness on marine habitats and species conservation in particular in 4 coastal cities (La Marsa on 26-27 June, Monastir on 14-15 August, Sfax and Tunis in October/November 2020); SPA/RAC organized a webinar on 18 June and produced three videos to raise awareness on Kuriat Islands and the conservation of marine turtles, and promote co-management of MPAs in Tunisia; posters are being prepared with APAL and NGB association on Kuriat Islands and their biological features; SPA/RAC contributed to the first global online seminar on Marine Spatial Planning and Sustainable Blue Economy (in Arabic) organized by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in the 27 May 2020, to a webinar entitled « L’environnement à l’heure de l’après COVID19 » organized by the Tunisian association for United Nations (9 June), and to the Forum « Quelle gouvernance pour la mer : préservation de la biodiversité et exploitation durable de la Méditerranée ».

56. SCP/RAC disseminated two new publications: (a) Guidelines to address single-use plastics through public procurement in the Mediterranean (developed in the framework of the cooperation agreement with IMELS) <http://www.cprac.org/es/archivo-de-noticias/genericas/addressing-plastic-pollution-through-public-procurement-new-guidelines>, and (b) Guidelines to phase out single-use plastic bags in the Mediterranean (adopted at COP 21) <http://www.cprac.org/es/archivo-de-noticias/genericas/guidelines-to-phase-out-single-use-plastic-bags-in-the-mediterranean-a>.

57. SCP/RAC worked on the preparation of a publication with IPEN (International Pollutants Elimination Network) on “Plastic’s Toxic Additives and the Circular Economy”, based on a document prepared by SCP/RAC (BRS COP Information Document). The Publication is available in four languages (EN, FR, ESP and AR) and includes a joint foreword by Rolph Payet, BRS Secretariat Executive Secretary and the UNEP/MAP Coordinator. The Launch of the publication is planned for 30 September.

58. The virtual regional celebration of the Mediterranean Coast Day was accompanied by several local events organized by partners and supported by PAP/RAC, namely: in the framework of the GEF Adriatic project, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the National Agency for Protected Areas of Albania a technical workshop and awareness raising campaign on the theme “Marine resources, the energy of Blue Tourism”; in Croatia a series of activities related to the protection of Pina nobilis intended for children; in Cyprus the action #potavristou (reach out) organized by the last year Honorary Ambassador for the Coast in collaboration with the Department of Environment; several events for children on the theme of the protection of red coral in Montenegro; in Sardinia, Italy, a press conference for the presentation of the Maristanis Coastal Contract in the presence of the Regional Councilor for the Environment and a virtual meeting on coastal beauties an threats together with MEDSEA Foundation; the Coast Week organized by the EUSAIR Managing Authority in Izola (Slovenia) and online in the frame of the Slovenian EU Presidency; and focus on the Coast Day within the EU4Ocean Coalition online workshop on 25 September.

59. Since May 2020, the Secretariat participated in the monthly meetings of the UNEP Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) Coordination Group, established by the Marine and Fresh Water Branch, Ecosystems Division. Working with Regional Seas and

other partners, the SBE Coordination Group supports the development of UNEP's SBE work, coordination, integration and synthesis of work streams, consolidation and communication of results across UNEP. The SBE Coordination Group supports the UNEP's Sustainable Blue Economy Initiative, which aims to facilitate sustainable ocean-based economic, social and environmental benefits. An important focus of the initiative is to support UNEP's COVID-19 strategic response, creating a holistic, forward-looking green-blue economic narrative to replace the current mainly growth-focused ocean economic narrative, unlocking investments and building a recovery that uses oceans within safe operating space of planet for humanity and helps deliver the Paris Agreement on climate change.

60. In September 2020, the Secretariat contributed with substantial inputs, based on commitments of the Naples Ministerial Declaration and other relevant UNEP/MAP strategic documents, to the UfM consultation on common post-2020 priority thematic areas for the UfM Environment and Climate Action Agenda towards the preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> UfM Ministerial Meeting on Blue Economy.

61. In August 2020, the Secretariat joined, as a founding member, the "The European Ocean Coalition (EU4Ocean) platform", launched on 8 June 2020 on the occasion of the World Oceans Day. Supported by the European Commission, the initiative connects organizations, projects and people that contribute to ocean literacy and to the sustainable management of the ocean, boosting public awareness and advocacy for a healthy ocean across the European Union.

62. The Secretariat, including MAP Components, contributed to the preparation of the SDG14 Regional Seas Report in view of the next UN Ocean Conference. Cases studies related to the Marine Litter Regional Plan and the Roadmap towards an ecologically representative and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas will be included in that report and detailed in its supplementary annex.

63. More information on outreach and communication is provided in the Report on Specific Issues (document UNEP/MED BUR.90/6).

## **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**

64. Further to the preparation of the "Evaluation report on the implementation of the Regional Plans for reduction of BOD5 from Urban Wastewater and in the Food Sector; Reduction of Inputs of Mercury; Elimination of POPs; and Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean", reflecting the status of implementation of legally binding measures in the aforementioned Regional Plans for the biennium 2018-2019, a final evaluation of the implementation of targeted measures by the Contracting Parties (by 2021) is currently underway. This work will complement the current ongoing NAP midterm evaluation targeting to assess the implementation of the NAPs which were updated nationally based on the requirements of the legally binding measures of the Regional Plans.

65. REMPEC organized the Sub-Regional Meeting on the Better Management of Marine Litter from Sea-based Sources in Ports and Marinas in the Adriatic in Sliema, Malta, from 29 to 30 January 2020, which was part of the 2018-2019 activities funded by the Cooperation Agreement with IMELS. REMPEC contributed to the preparation of the (EU-funded) "Marine Litter-MED II" Project, ensuring continuity and building on the outcome of the first phase of the project, during which the organization of the National Pilots related to the Better Management of Marine Litter from Sea-based Sources in Ports and Marinas for Lebanon had been originally planned.

66. Following the signature of CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina, REMPEC relaunched the activity for the development of the National Contingency Plan, notably by reviewing the budget to allocate funds to this activity from savings resulting from the organization of remote events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing work process for the finalization of the Annexes to the Sub-regional Oil Marine Pollution Contingency Plan between Cyprus, Egypt and Greece was suspended following the withdrawal of Egypt, due to unsuccessful internal procedures.

67. Within the framework of the West MOPoCo Project, REMPEC contributed to the preparation of a first draft study, led by France, aimed at identifying and establishing operational and administrative synergies between existing sub-regional agreements in place in the Western Mediterranean region. REMPEC also contributed to the development of the template for the Manuals on National Mechanisms for the mobilization of response equipment and experts in case of emergency, supervised the completion by Spain, Tunisia, and Malta, assisted the completion by France and Italy, and supported the start of the process by Algeria and Morocco.

68. REMPEC carried out preparatory work with a view to following up on the Conclusions and Recommendations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> MENELAS meeting pertaining to the work of the MENELAS Working Group and launched Phase 1 of the work of the said group in September 2020. The 4<sup>th</sup> MENELAS meeting originally planned for September 2020 will be organized remotely by REMPEC on 2 December 2020. REMPEC invited the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to share information on any coordinated aerial surveillance operations for illicit ship pollution discharges.

69. In July, as part of the WES Project regional activity on phasing out single use plastic items in the Mediterranean, SCP/RAC, started developing the "Peer to Peer Component". This action, addressed to the southern Mediterranean countries, aims primarily at providing technical assistance and strengthening the capacities of at least 15 peers nominated during September 2020. During the

months of November and December, SCP/RAC will deliver a regional online training inviting a wider range of participants including representatives of the Balkans and Turkey and other stakeholders along the value chain (plastics system). On a final stage, SCP/RAC will facilitate peers' inputs into the process of preparation of Policy Guidelines to phase-out Single Use Plastic (SUP) items in the Mediterranean. It is expected that through this activity WES Partner Countries, Balkans and Turkey, will contribute to elaborate and implement effective measures to reduce consumption and leakage of SUP into the environment, in line with the provisions of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management.

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

70. Further to the adoption of Decision IG.24/10 by COP 21 on the updating of the annexes of the LBS and Dumping Protocols, MED POL is in the process of reviewing and amending the identified aspects requiring updates as proposed in Document UNEP/MED WG.473/5/Rev.1. The First Meeting of the Countries' designated Working Group of experts for updating the annexes of the LBS Protocol will convene virtually on 11 December 2020. The First Meeting of the Working Group of experts to review updates of the annex of the Dumping Protocol will take place in February 2021. Both meetings will discuss proposed updates and provide feedback for further elaboration.

71. MED POL initiated work to support the Contracting Parties in implementing the Dumping Protocol along with the activities stipulated under the bilateral cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) - London Convention/ London Protocol (LC/LP) signed on 9 October 2019. This work will focus on development of an assessment procedure for permitting dumping activities of dredged material. Work will also provide guidance to the Contracting Parties on compliance monitoring programmes under the Dumping Protocol and will identify best practices with regards to national implementation of the London Protocol mainstreaming regional and global good practices under LC/LP, HELCOM and OSPAR.

72. MED POL initiated work on updating the National Baseline Budget (NBB) of Pollutants Guidelines, based on lessons learnt from the 4<sup>th</sup> NBB Cycle. Updates will incorporate structural changes and address gaps identified between NBB and PRTR systems (including E-PRTR) aiming to streamline data management, eventually improving the quality of data submitted by the Contracting Parties, while identifying best practices where the data can be used in complementary ways on reporting. The work is focusing on development of monitoring standards and determination techniques for releases from point sources regarding principal sectors identified by the "Technical assessment of progress towards a cleaner Mediterranean" (EEA Report No 8/2020). Principal sectors include food packaging, energy production, manufacturing of refined petroleum products, manufacturing of textile, manufacturing of metals and pollution releases from offshore activities.

73. In conjunction with the above-mentioned update of NBB Methodology, a complementary study has been initiated for establishing the determination techniques for releases from non-point sources including agriculture, aquaculture as well as catchment water runoff. The diffuse sources and aquaculture will complement the monitoring activities of the new Regional Plans under development for Agriculture and Aquaculture.

74. MED POL initiated work for upgrading the Regional Plan on Municipal Wastewater Treatment and for developing a new Regional Plan on Sewage Sludge Management. The First Meeting of the Countries' designated Working Group experts for review of the two new draft regional plans will convene virtually on 9 and 10 December 2020 to discuss proposed measures and provide feedback for further elaboration.

75. REMPEC initiated the review of MIDSIS-TROCS 3.0 (<http://midsis.rempec.org>), launched a consultation process, through the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG), for the establishment of a Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean within the framework of the West MOPoCo Project ([www.westmopoco.rempec.org](http://www.westmopoco.rempec.org)). REMPEC Country Profiles were reviewed and updated by partners of the West MOPoCo Project (i.e. Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia as well as Monaco) together with their respective list of response equipment and experts on MEDGIS-MAR.

76. The process of developing Policy Guidelines to phase-out single use plastic items is ongoing through the preparation of the baseline report on SUP in the Mediterranean. Data and information (production, consumption, end-of-life treatment, etc.) has been gathered in four pilot countries (Egypt, Greece, Morocco and Montenegro) regarding four selected SUP items: bottles, straws, food containers and cigarette filters. This data will serve to model the effect on different policy options on those items. In addition, worldwide case studies have been prepared illustrating the implementation of different policy options. The report is expected to be concluded by October 2020.

**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**

77. A methodology for the midterm evaluation of the NAPs was developed in 2019, with the work starting at the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020. MED POL initiated the preparation process for the midterm evaluation report on the status of implementation of the updated NAPs for the period 2015-2020. The Midterm Evaluation Methodology consists of assessments of NAPs operational targets vis a vis technical, investment, institutional and policy measures implemented at national level. The midterm evaluation will be complemented by updates of NAPs Assessment Factsheets for the period under evaluation.

78. SCP/RAC provided initial support to Tunisia for shaping a communication strategy following the publication of the decree to

ban single use plastic bags in the countries. The support was requested by Tunisia. SCP/RAC initiated exchange with Lebanon to define technical assistance activities regarding Single-Use Plastic Items and Single-Use Plastic Bags (following activities developed under Marine Litter Med I). The current situation and political instability in Lebanon might slow down the process. SCP/RAC prepared a detailed work plan of activities regarding new POPs and Mercury for Child Project 1.1 of the MedProgramme (including legal support to Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia). Furthermore, SCP/RAC prepared an initial concept note for the development of an initiative for the local management of organic waste to move towards circular economy in that sector in Morocco. Initial discussion took place with the SCP/RAC Focal Point and the expertise of the Catalan Waste Agency has been mobilised.

79. Further to the expression of interest by Algeria and Egypt at the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, two national consultants have been recruited to elaborate the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021). Consultation is still on-going with other Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, namely Algeria and Malta. To facilitate the ratification and implementation of relevant international maritime conventions related to the protection of the marine environment, REMPEC participated to an ad-hoc inter-ministerial meeting attended by Tunisian competent authorities, the Secretariat and REMPEC (Tunis, Tunisia, 11 March 2020) to address Decision IG.24/8. Considering the uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Workshops to be organized in Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon on the Ratification and Effective Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, were postponed to the end of 2020. They will be organized remotely subject to the confirmation of dates and of the participation of relevant stakeholders by the relevant competent authorities.

#### **Strategic Outcome 2.4: Marine Pollution Monitoring and Assessment**

80. Work is in progress for operationalization of the means aimed at supporting implementation of the national IMAPs, preparation of the data dictionaries related to Common Indicators 18 and 20, as well as application of the QA/QC schemes into the IMAP Info System, in line with the Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2020-2021 and the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap. MED POL has been working on establishing the means for implementation of several activities related to IMAP Pollution Cluster, respectively to: i) harmonization and standardization of the monitoring and assessment methods in line with IMAP; ii) preparation of the proposal for integration and aggregation rules for monitoring, assessment and reporting of data on state of marine environment toward integrated assessment of GES; iii) preparation of the proposal of the scales of assessment for the Ecological Objectives 5, 9 and 10, considering also the Ecological Objectives 1, 7 and 8.

81. Further to the finalization and signing of the Agreement of UNEP/MAP with the Marine Environment Studies Laboratory (MESL) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the biennium 2020-2021, activities were initiated in order to continue supporting harmonized and coordinated quality assurance programmes at national level, as well as preparing the protocols for applying good laboratory practices related to eutrophication and contaminants.

82. The Monitoring Guidelines related to IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17 and 20 are prepared for consideration of the forthcoming integrated CORMONs (teleconference, 1-3 December 2020), whilst the Monitoring Guidelines for IMAP Common Indicator 18, along with the Monitoring Guidelines related to data quality assurance and reporting are under finalization for consideration of the Meetings of the CORMON on Pollution Monitoring that will be held in 2021. Regarding marine litter IMAP Common Indicators, methodological elements for monitoring floating microplastics as well as updated baseline values and proposal for threshold values for IMAP Common Indicator 22 are prepared for review by the Integrated COMON Meeting (1-3 December 2020).

83. To support strengthening of national capacities, questionnaires were prepared and submitted to respective MED POL Focal Points for their feedback, with the aim of assessing the capacities of IMAP competent laboratories related to i) equipment availability; ii) experience in sample collection and sample processing; iii) analytical procedures; iv) application of good laboratory practices, respectively proposing relevant recommendations for consideration of the Meetings of the CORMON on Pollution Monitoring. The ongoing MED POL activities are also focused on upgrading the assessment criteria related to IMAP Common Indicators 17 and 18, along with preparation of the assessment criteria related to IMAP Common Indicator 14, in order to complement preparation of the integrated GES thematic assessment methodologies for IMAP Ecological Objective 5, 9 and 10 for consideration of the Meetings of the CORMON on Pollution Monitoring.

84. In line with COP Decisions IG.22/7 and IG.23/6 providing for “the Contracting Parties to regularly report quality-assured data deriving from the implementation of the updated integrated national monitoring and assessment programmes”, the call has been opened in June 2020 for the Contracting Parties to start uploading and sharing their monitoring data which conform with the approved Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for 11 selected IMAP Common Indicators, respectively CI 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 23. The Contracting Parties were invited to upload all available and compatible data, by September 2020 at the latest. New 2020 monitoring data are to be uploaded no later than 31 January 2021.

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

85. Work is in progress in coordination with the LC/LP and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for further reinforcing and developing techniques for the monitoring of dumping activities, and for the compliance monitoring of permitting conditions, as well as for the identification of capacity building and technical assistance to the Contracting Parties. The collaboration

will include joint meeting with LC/LP on best practices regarding permitting condition of disposal of dredged material under the Dumping Protocol.

86. The Regional Workshop to enhance Marine Oil and HNS regional cooperation in the Mediterranean (MEDEXPOL 2020) originally to be held in Monaco, from 27 to 29 October 2020, will be held as a remote meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to present and discussed deliverables of the project for further integration at Mediterranean level. The Sub-regional Workshop on the assessment of the level of oil spill response planning and readiness management – Tirana, Albania is postponed to February 2021.

87. SCP/RAC finalized the #BagToTheFuture business challenge organized in Egypt that supported two business initiatives. Videos of the two winners of the challenge were prepared and disseminated. SCP/RAC drafted ToRs for the development of a training activity to support the green entrepreneurship ecosystem in Algeria; discussion are on-going with the relevant counterparts to further develop the activity based on the local needs and current situation. SCP/RAC started to coordinate with the Circular Economy hotspot – Catalonia event organizers in order to facilitate the participation of representatives from Mediterranean countries in the event, which due to COVID-19 was postponed to November 2021. The event will be an opportunity to learn concrete case of implementation of Circular Economy.

88. SCP/RAC prepared ToRs for a innovative demonstrative action for the selective collection of packaging waste in a target locality in Morocco, in coordination with ACR+. The ToRs were shared with the relevant Focal Points in Morocco and are under discussion to adapt to the current situation regarding COVID-19.

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

89. Based on a brainstorming session, SCP/RAC developed a concept note to define the main characteristics of the Green Business Award for the Mediterranean. The concept note was presented to the MCSD Steering Committee and was welcomed by its members. SCP/RAC started the legal process for its creation and selected external experts to develop the visual identity of the award and prepare a dissemination campaign for its launch by the end of the year.

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

90. REMPEC, through IMO, launched, in June 2020, a Request for Proposals on the provision of consultancy services related to the implementation of the roadmap for the possible designation of the Med SOx ECA, which covered LOT 1 (updating of the initial draft submission to the IMO), LOT 2 (land-based emissions control measures of SOx and PM in the Mediterranean coastal States) and LOT 3 (analysis of fuel supply and alternative compliance methods). The respective work was initiated, and the first deliverables were provided as scheduled in September 2020, for further consultation through the SOx ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts. REMPEC also contributed to the preparations by Plan Bleu/RAC of a Call for Proposals for the “Additional economic impact evaluation for the possible designation of the Mediterranean as a SOx Emission Control Area”, which covered LOT 4. During the period under review, the MAP-Barcelona Convention System raised awareness on the matter through various publications and a story map.

91. SCP/RAC reviewed the draft option paper on enabling a circular economy for plastic and lowering impact on environment and health (with UNEP Chemicals and Health Unit). The preparation of the final version is pending on the development of a new agreement with UNEP. SCP/RAC finalized the report on “Inspiring business practices and collaborative initiatives to prevent plastic packaging waste in the food and beverage industry and ultimately combat marine plastic pollution”. A dissemination strategy is under preparation. It also includes the organization of a Webinar to present the report.

### **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**

92. A consultation is conducted with the SPA/BD Focal Points on the approach chosen for the establishment and functioning of the Ad hoc Group of Experts on Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) for the next period. They have been requested to propose potential independent experts (and their CVs) to become members of AGEM. A list of qualified experts in each AGEM area of expertise is compiled and an online poll was organized among the SPA/BD Focal Points. The 16 independent experts were eventually selected. Their composition shows a full gender equality (8 female and 8 male members) and a good geographic representation of all the Mediterranean ecological sub-regions. Furthermore, partner organizations members of AGEM were requested to appoint their scientific body representative. The proposed programme of work for the period 2020-2021 is being defined by SPA/RAC, in view of an inception of the AGEM works and discussions online by October 2020.

93. The 2020 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean is co-organized by SPA/RAC, MedPAN, WWF Mediterranean and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, and was expected to take place on 30 November - 2 December 2020 in Monaco. However due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forum event is postponed to the end of 2021 or early 2022 (decision taken by the Forum steering committee in July 2020) and Virtual Forum Sessions will be organized from 30 November to 4 December 2020. A post-2020 roadmap for Mediterranean MPAs, part of the MPA forum collaborative process, is being prepared jointly by MedPAN, SPA/RAC and WWF, in consultation with the other partner organizations member of the forum steering

committee.

94. The Database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MAPAMED) is a joint property and is jointly administered by SPA/RAC and MedPAN. A dedicated User Manual has been drafted by SPA/RAC and MedPAN, to ease the understanding of various users of data collection methodology and contents of the database. A specific MoU defining the obligations and responsibilities of SPA/RAC and MedPAN for the development, maintenance, operation, analysis and dissemination of the MAPAMED database has been drafted and is being consulted with the SPA/BD Focal Points, in view of its signature.

95. REMPEC liaised with SPA/RAC with a view to submitting the draft Guidance Document with regard to identifying and designating Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) in relation to Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for comments prior to its submission to the Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC.

### **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**

96. A concept note on the elaboration of a post-2020 Regional Strategy on marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean has been elaborated in consultation with the Secretariat. Furthermore, draft ToRs for the hiring of a consultant to support SPA/RAC in the preparation of the post-2020 regional strategy document are being prepared and will be shared with the SPA/BD Focal Points. Based on their feedback, an open call for consultancy services will be launched in October 2020.

97. The Updated Classification of Benthic Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean Region was transmitted by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to EEA to be included in the European Nature Information System (EUNIS). Furthermore, the SDF document has been updated with the newly updated Reference List of Marine Habitat Types for the Selection of Sites to be Included in the National Inventories of Natural Sites of Conservation Interest in the Mediterranean and was sent to the SPA/BD Focal Points.

98. The assessment and the updating of the Regional Action Plan concerning dark habitats and cetaceans are underway. Related prefilled questionnaire for each country has been completed and sent to the Contracting Parties for approval and complement. ToRs for the identification of the first elements for the elaboration of the list of Reference of Pelagic Habitat Types in the Mediterranean Sea, are under preparation and should be disseminated among SPA/BD Focal Points by end of September 2020. A consultant is already hired for the elaboration of the “Interpretation Manual” of the new reference list of marine benthic habitats types in the Mediterranean; the first draft of the manual will be ready by January 2021 for national consultation.

99. Within the MedBycatch Project, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey started the elaboration of a national bycatch data analysis report based on the bycatch data collected through the bycatch observation programme from March 2019 to March 2020. SPA/RAC set up a team of national experts to elaborate the Tunisian report. The “Manual on standardized monitoring data collection on incidental catch of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” is published by GFCM. The document was elaborated with contributions from SPA/RAC, ACCOBAMS, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, IUCN Med and MEDASSET. The preparation of the French version is ongoing. Within the MedBycatch Project, SPA/RAC also made a contract with the INSTM (National Institute of Marine Science and Technology, Tunisia) to elaborate and test a modified fishing gear which mitigates the incidental catch of vulnerable species. SPA/RAC provided several inputs to the proposed bycatch database data policy document elaborated by GFCM and participated in the meetings organized in July and September 2020 dedicated to the data policy.

100. Within the framework of the MAVA Species Project, three reports of project regions, namely the Alboran Sea, Sicily Strait/Tunisian Plateau and Central Aegean/Cyprus Basin, have been prepared and combined on a single report as “MAVA Vulnerable Species Knowledge, Mediterranean Gap Analysis”. After it had been examined by the Project Steering committee, SPA/RAC has planned to edit and share this report given the relevance of its findings and recommendations. A document about the Role and contribution of the Barcelona Convention and its components in the processes related to underwater noise monitoring and assessment in the Mediterranean Sea, has been elaborated within the Quiet MED II SPA/RAC project component.

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

101. The SPA/BD Focal Point of Israel has been contacted in order to start the preparation of the elaboration of NAP on Non-Indigenous Species (NIS), with SPA/RAC assistance. The NAP for the conservation of the coralligenous species in Lebanon is under preparation with the SPA/RAC assistance.

102. NAPs for the conservation of marine turtles have been elaborated for Libya, Lebanon and Spain and are under discussing and approval at national level. Within the framework of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative, SPA/RAC supported the analysis of the field data collected in the territorial waters of Tunisia about the marine megafauna distribution, established through a student internship at La Rochelle University (France). SPA/RAC is supporting the implementation of monitoring programme of monk seal and dolphins’ population in the Inner Ionian Archipelagos and the Gulf of Ambracia in Greece. Sea turtles nesting monitoring programmes have been implemented in Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon during summer 2020, with support of the MAVA marine turtles project, coordinated by SPA/RAC.

103. SPA/RAC is supporting the elaboration of the management and business plans of (i) Tyre Coast Nature Reserve in Lebanon, (ii) Gulf of Sirte in Libya, and (iii) Rachgoun area in Algeria. These activities are being implemented through the IMAP-MPA EU-funded project. Since the signature of the PCA between SPA/RAC and UNEP on 27 January 2020, SPA/RAC started preparing the detailed national activities and workplan which have been discussed at the Project Coordination Meeting, held in Athens, Greece, on 12-13 February 2020 and agreed during the kick-off and first Steering Committee meeting of the project (Tunis, Tunisia, 10 March 2020). Currently, complementary ecological and socio-economic studies are under execution.

104. Within the MedBycatch Project (phase 1), SPA/RAC made a contract with the INSTM (National Institute of Marine Science and Technology, Tunisia) to elaborate and test a modified fishing gear which mitigates the incidental catch of vulnerable species. Successful bycatch mitigation trials started in March 2020 but due to the COVID-19 situation the field work was temporarily stopped. Mitigation trials are planned to restart in phase 2 of the project. Within the MedBycatch Project (phase 1), SPA/RAC also participates in the online meetings dedicated to the bycatch mitigation in Morocco (28 April 2020), Turkey (9 June 2020) and organized an online meeting for Tunisia (30 April 2020). Within the MedBycatch Project, SPA/RAC also organized, in coordination with the project partners, an online meeting on 23 September 2020 to present the phase 1 project results and the phase 2 planned activities for Tunisia.

105. SPA/RAC is coordinating the implementation of the MAVA funded project “Mitigating dolphin depredation in Mediterranean fisheries – Joining efforts for strengthening cetacean conservation and sustainable fisheries” in Tunisia.

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

106. The collection of NIS data from the southern Mediterranean countries is ongoing and the roadmap for the elaboration of NIS baseline condition and status will be prepared once data collection is completed and reviewed by the experts of the integrated CORMON Meeting. Progress in the implementation of the second phase of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) is ongoing within the EU funded IMAP-MPA project. Cross cutting issues, integration modalities between the IMAP clusters and assessment criteria are ongoing and will be reviewed and discussed during the 2021 CORMON meeting.

107. Within the implementation of the Egyptian NAP for the conservation of the marine vegetation, monitoring will start with the assistance of SPA/RAC.

108. In the framework of the GEF Adriatic Project, an IMAP study related to Patok-Rodoni Bay (Albania) has started in late 2019. Phase 1 of the study (inception report) was done but the field survey (phase 2) planned to start in March 2020 was temporarily suspended due to COVID-19. A continuous monitoring of the situation was ensured by SPA/RAC in close coordination with the Albanian representatives. The field survey is planned to start in October 2020. Furthermore, in the same framework, the elaboration of a report “toward GES for Albania and Montenegro” started in May 2020 by SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC, in coordination with the Coordinating Unit.

109. A correspondence related to the SPAMI periodic review (including follow-up of previous and forthcoming reviews) was circulated to the SPA/BD Focal Points of concerned Contracting Parties during the second half of March. Cyprus, France, Italy, Morocco and Spain SPA/BD Focal Points will be contacted in October 2020, in order to set up the technical advisory commissions and to discuss the best modalities for an optimal running of the 2020 and 2021 ordinary reviews of SPAMIs, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions.

110. Field surveys to determine the distribution of the main marine habitats, including the most sensitive ones, is ongoing in Tunisia within the MAVA funded MedKey/Habitats II project. Distribution and sensitivity maps of the main marine habitats in Malta, Morocco, Algeria and Turkey are available at the Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform.

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

111. A regional training session on the identification of marine key habitats (Common Indicators CI-1, EO1 and CI-2, EO1 of IMAP) and the use of Standard-Data entry Form (SDF) web application and Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform (MBP) is planned by SPA/RAC during the first half of 2021 in synergy with the IMAP/MPA project.

112. SPA/RAC took part to the online QUIETMED 2 Workshop – Training session (II) for Competent Authorities from EU Member States to support the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework-New regionally coordinated measures (10-11 September 2020).

113. In the framework of the EU-funded project “ODYSSEA”, after two Summer Schools held in 2018 (on “Operational Oceanography for Science, Business and Society”) and 2019 (on “Oceanography and Fisheries in the Mediterranean”), SPA/RAC is leading the preparation of a 3<sup>rd</sup> school on the topic of “Spatial Oceanography”. Initially planned to be held in Tunisia in September 2020, with 25-30 participants from Mediterranean countries, it has been postponed due to COVID-19 and will take place as a webinar managed by SPA/RAC during Autumn 2020, addressed to young scientists and observatory managers. During the first three months of 2020, SPA/RAC has exchanged and achieved the confirmation of the following key institutions to support the training with their expertise: COSPAR (Committee on Space Research), LEGOS (Laboratoire d’études en géophysique et

océanographie spatiales), ESA (European Space Agency) and EUMETSAT (European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites).

114. SCP/RAC selected three pilot projects for the implementation of SCP solutions to prevent Marine Litter in MPAs. The three pilot projects will be implemented in Cabo de Gata (Spain), Delta del Ebre (Spain), Miramare (Italy). The focus will be on the implementation of systems for reusable glasses, collection of beverage packaging and mussels' nets. Pilot actions planned to take place this summer, were postponed until next summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

115. The final version of the joint programme of work SPA/RAC-ACCOBAMS, presented and discussed during the 13th ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee meeting (Cap d'Ail, France, 26-28 February 2020), has been annexed to the new MoU, reviewed by the Coordination Unit and under signature by SPA/RAC and ACCOBAMS.

116. The main joint activities will focus on the implementation of the national cetacean monitoring programmes in Southern Mediterranean countries through the IMAP/EcAp process and the Quiet MED II project; the evaluation and the update of the action plan for the conservation of cetacean in the Mediterranean; and, a capacity building programme. SPA/RAC prepared two draft memoranda to be concluded with the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN): (a) A Framework Memorandum of Collaboration between SPA/RAC and MedPAN; and (b) A Memorandum of Understanding between SPA/RAC and MedPAN concerning the Database on Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MAPAMED). These draft memoranda were cleared by the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit and circulated to the SPA/BD Focal Points, in view of their timely signature by both organizations.

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

#### **Strategic Outcome 4.1: 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**

117. To support the socio-economic evaluation of measures in Regional Strategies and Action Plans, Plan Bleu/RAC continued its participation to the MEDREGION project.

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

118. Consultants to support PAP/RAC in preparing a toolbox for the analytical phase of the MSP process have been recruited and the work has started. The initial concept of the toolbox is expected in October 2020, when it will be submitted to Contracting Parties for consultation.

119. At the invitation by PAP/RAC and the MAP Focal Point for Slovenia, PAP/RAC representatives participated in a coordination meeting at the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia. The main agenda item was related to two strategic documents prepared by the Ministry, namely the Spatial Development Strategy and the MSP for Slovenia. Both documents are closely related to the implementation of the ICZM Protocol and its Common Regional Framework. Prior to the meeting, PAP/RAC reviewed both drafts in order to assess how these correlate with the Protocol, and prepared written comments and suggestions for amendments. The conclusion is that both documents have clear reference to those requirements of the Protocol that can be applied through spatial planning instruments, such as the provision of the coastal setback, use the IMAP indicators and adaptation to climate change.

#### **Strategic Outcome 4.3: Strengthening national implementation**

120. Agreement for the CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina was signed on 29 June 2020 and the National Project Coordinator has been contracted as of 1 September. In early September he already visited relevant national and local authorities and institutions and sent invitations for the membership in the CAMP Steering Committee in which PAP/RAC will be representing UNEP/MAP. Together with PAP/RAC's officer in charge of this CAMP, the National Project Coordinator has been developing tenders for the implementation of the project activities; the first to start will be the one on sustainable tourism. As a part of this CAMP, REMPEC has initiated the work on the National Contingency Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

121. Based on the Feasibility Studies prepared in 2019 for the CAMP between Cyprus and Israel, PAP/RAC drafted the CAMP Agreement, which was discussed with the two countries in two Webex meetings organized on 15 June and 8 September. The draft was deemed acceptable for both countries with some minor changes suggested. Once the two countries provide information about their financial contribution to the project, PAP/RAC will share the draft Agreement with the other MAP Components to see if there is interest and possibility for their involvement.

122. A proposal on how to use IMELS contribution left from the past biennium was prepared by PAP/RAC and submitted to the Secretariat for further negotiations with IMELS. Two options were proposed regarding possible activities and outputs: until 2020 and until June 2021. Both countries have re-confirmed their interest in this project.



#### **Strategic Outcome 4.4: Monitoring and assessment**

123. Following a series of consultations with relevant authorities and institutions it was agreed that the Land-Sea Interactions (LSI) methodology developed within the SUPREME and SIMWESTMED projects would be tested in Malta. All preparatory activities were accomplished (agreement and ToRs prepared, and working team formed) and the activity has started in July when the first meeting of the technical committee was held online.

124. PAP/RAC contributed to the preparatory activities regarding the “coast and hydrology» cluster for the next CORMON meeting; communicated with the countries to speed-up the nomination of responsible officers to upload monitoring data to IMAP info system; provided assistance to countries (ex. Malta) on technical aspects of monitoring of the CI 16; helped the CU to develop ToRs and technical specifications for the hydrography component of the IMAP MPA project; and, contributed to the preparation of the EcAp MED III project.

125. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee meeting of the GEF-Adriatic project took place on 7 July, when it was agreed to extend the project until end June 2021. The integrated monitoring programme for Montenegro was finalized and submitted for official national consultations, while the integrated monitoring programme for Albania is in final editing stages. GES assessment for both countries has progressed; assessments for EO1 and 2 as well as EO9 have been drafted; and additional components are under development (EO5,7,8,10). Within the same project, a series of online meetings and consultations on MSP with national experts and institutions of Montenegro were organized and a number of input documents (in Montenegrin) prepared. Contract with a company to prepare the IMAP-based data base in Montenegro was signed in July and an initial back-office version was prepared.

126. Cooperation with the Albanian Academy of Science was established, and a contract signed to support the organization of the 1st International Conference on Water, Environment Protection and Sustainable Development in Albania. It was due for October 2020 but due to COVID-19 it was agreed by the Scientific Committee to postpone it for March 2021. A series of awareness events and training workshops were organized in Albania during summer. A contract was signed to support the activities implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the National Agency for Protected Areas.

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

127. In the frame of the PORTODIMARE project (Interreg ADRION) PAP/RAC is the partner that coordinates testing and training activities. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Training Workshop took place on 19-20 May 2020 by using the on-line EUSAIR Stakeholder Platform. Some 45 participants followed the training with the main objective to learn from the partners that are testing the Geoportal (GAIR) on tools and modules related to MSP and ICZM. Partners demonstrated the planning issues related to their pilot sites, presented data collected, how they used the GAIR, and what were the results achieved so far. The second day was dedicated to technical aspects and the Steering Committee meeting. Ideas and concepts on the maintenance of the Geoportal and its transferability within the Adriatic-Ionian region and wider were exchanged.

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

#### **Strategic Outcome 5.3: Strengthening national implementation.**

128. PAP/RAC is working with Lebanon and Egypt on the preparation of the National ICZM Strategies in these two Contracting Parties, which will be supported by the GEF MedProgramme. PAP/RAC was also approached by its Focal Point for Algeria to support the process of updating the Algerian National ICZM Strategy prepared within the GEF MedPartnership. PAP/RAC has provided comments and suggestions on the first document submitted by the Algerian team – the Diagnostic Analysis.

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

129. All preparatory activities for this year’s run of PAP/RAC’s virtual training course on ICZM – MedOpen - were finalized (updating of the training material and of the learning platform to make it more user-friendly). The 4-month course was launched on 21 September for more than 50 Master’s degree students of two universities: Bizerte in Tunisia and Al Hoceima in Morocco.

### **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**

130. In collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation and in partnership with the Regional Environment Centre Turkey, based on two workshops organized in 2019 (first one mainly public sector, second one private sector, and third-sector oriented) and the online stakeholder survey, SCP/RAC finalized the background study and submitted it for the final approval of the Ministry. Four flagship and six pilot projects were developed for sustainable consumption and production within the Electrical and Electronic Equipment value chains that was selected as the focus of the background study. Discussions are on-going to define the support to the implementation of the Action Plan.

131. SCP/RAC published and selected the consultant for the mid-term evaluation of the SCP Action Plan, in coordination with the

secretariat. A methodology for the evaluation was prepared, structured around three main blocks: analysis of SCP indicators, analysis of official reporting under the LBS protocol, and analysis of relevant initiatives (regional, sub-regional and trans-national). The evaluation is under preparation and regular calls are organized to ensure that the mid-term evaluation processes of the SCP Action Plan and the MSSD are well aligned.

132. SCP/RAC published ToRs for the preparation of a baseline study for the development of regional measures for green and circular businesses (situation in the region and international experience). A methodology for the preparation of the study was prepared and agreed. Factsheets regarding the situation in each country were prepared and reviewed by SwitchMed Focal Points. Factsheets are being shared with SCP/RAC Focal Points. A summary of the findings is being prepared together with the concept note for the consultation process and the initial list of measures.

#### **Strategic Outcome 6.2: Monitoring and assessment**

133. SCP/RAC published ToRs for the selection of an external consultant that will provide support to SCP/RAC for the update and population of the SCP indicators list. Factsheets for each indicator will be prepared following Plan Bleu/RAC's template for the MSSD indicators, in view of their integration within the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard.

134. SCP/RAC developed a comprehensive set of Indicators for the most representative sustainable entrepreneurship sectors: Circular Economy / Sustainable Waste Management; Organic Farming; Renewable Energies; Eco-tourism; Eco-building. For each sector, a full set of Indicators has been developed including a characterization and methodological guidance for all the Indicators. Indicators will be added to the Online Platform as a tool allowing sustainable entrepreneurs to assess their environmental, social and economic results.

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

135. SCP/RAC is about to launch an interactive Sustainable Business Development Online Platform. The Platform will offer a unique entry point to: The Sustainable Business Development Toolbox; The Switchers Fund; The Switchers Community; and The Policy Watch. The Toolbox will offer free access to entrepreneurs, trainers/mentors, Business Support Organizations (BSOs) and Financial Actors to a full set of online tools and methodologies to support the creation of circular enterprises (Green Business Model Development Toolkit; Green Business Plan Development Toolkit; Products and Services Eco-design Tool; Access to Finance Toolkit; Access to Market Toolkit; and Impact Monitoring Tool). SCP/RAC has stated to support the creation of Switchers National Partnerships of BSOs for sustainable business development. Thus, a large number of BSOs are already involved in the launching of the national networks in several countries: Lebanon (13 BSOs), Morocco (22 BSOs), Palestine (9 BSOs) and Jordan (19 BSOs). Training of Trainers process targeting experts from the BSOs members of the National Partnerships has started with transferring the sustainable business development methodologies and tools available on the Online Platform. So far, 48 local experts have been trained on Sustainable Business Model Development in Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt and Italy and 19 local experts have been trained on Sustainable Business Plan Development in Lebanon.

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

136. To overcome barriers posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, digital tools have been further explored, leading to the development of: (a) An investment opportunity tracking system, to scout and disseminate potential opportunities to green entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean; (b) The development of an Access-to-Finance Toolkit, hosted on the Sustainable Business Development Online Platform, targeting green entrepreneurs at different stages of their business life cycle; (c) The development of a dedicated dashboard for Financial Institutions (FIs) on the Sustainable Business Development Online Platform, including the creation of a digital training, supporting FIs to better identify and analyze financial green opportunities; (d) A virtual match-making mechanism, allowing FIs to interact with the wide Switchers (Green Entrepreneur) community via the Sustainable Business Development Online Platform.

137. A first draft of the "Responsible Tourism Service - An Export Facility Study" has been implemented in Tunisia, analyzing the export potential of sustainable tourism products and services and its value chain and mapping stakeholders and capacity gaps. The study lays the basis to identify further areas of works. In partnership with the Turkish Business Council for Sustainable Development, SCP/RAC completed a publication on environmental challenges and Circular Economy (CE) business opportunities within the clothing and textiles value chains. The publication will be officially released in October and an ad-hoc dissemination plan will be implemented. The publication includes a framework on CE business strategy categories and business models specific to fashion industry and 25 detailed case studies.

138. The Access-to-Market Toolkit has been developed, with the support of NOMIA (content and strategy), REKALL (development and graphic design) and PROMETO SL (programming) and hosted on the Sustainable Business Development Online Platform. The Toolkit, which is now in its beta version, will be finally released in October and will be coupled by a tailored training module which will be implemented (on-line) in nine different Mediterranean countries and delivered to approximately 80 BSOs. The Access-to-Market Toolkit development has been funded by the ENI-CBC MED funded project "Green Impact MED"

and SwitchMed II.

139. The Switchers Community has been given a new and more functional platform which will be eventually connected to the Sustainable Business Development Online Platform. This way, Green Entrepreneurs, BSOs, experts and FIs will have access to relevant services, interacting digitally and exchanging information and data. To better envisage peer-to-peer exchanges, a specific community mechanism has been designed and launched to match green entrepreneurs at different stages of their business life-cycle. The Sustainable Business Development Online Platform will be coupled with a web-application (The Switchers Product) showcasing products and services of the Switchers Community. Initial design and wireframes have been defined and a market research is conducted to contract an external developer.

## **II.7 Cross-cutting Theme III: CLIMATE CHANGE**

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

140. To promote the integration of Nature Based Solutions in Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, Plan Bleu/RAC is preparing a Multipartner workshop during the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

141. Guidelines for enhancing coastal resilience are being finalized by PAP/RAC in the framework of the EU-funded ADRIADAPT project.

### **Strategic Outcome 7.3: Strengthen national implementation**

142. The catalogue of adaptation options under the EU-funded ADRIADAPT Project is under development by PAP/RAC. The template for presenting the adaptation options was agreed among the partners; a group of experts continued working on the development or updating of approximately 50 adaptation options and their testing within the project case studies. By September 2020, 20 adaptation options were completed, and 10 more drafted. Five case studies were completed and two more drafted. Collaboration with project partners continued on the development of a dedicated website and adaptation process tool, and on the production of videos. The project was presented at the WATER CARE conference held in Split in June 2020, and several online meetings were organized to discuss project activities.

### **Strategic Outcome 7.4: Monitoring and assessment**

143. The report on socio-economic indicators associated with climate change vulnerabilities in MPAs, prepared by Plan Bleu/RAC in collaboration with SPA/RAC, is under finalization for publication in October 2020.

### **Strategic Outcome 7.5: Enhanced capacity at regional, sub- regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building.**

144. A large science-policy event is in preparation and will take place online on 16-18 November 2020. The event is organized by Plan Bleu/RAC in partnership with the MISTRALS research programme and the MedECC network. It will give the opportunity to highlight the MedECC MAR1 report and the 2019 SoED report.