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Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues

UNEP/MAP Strategic Response to the COVID-19 Crisis

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UNEP/MAP Strategic response to the COVID-19 crisis

June 2020

Purpose and context

In the context of the articulation of the UNEP COVID-19 strategic response, this document identifies the main issues and priorities of relevance to the mandate of UNEP/MAP. The UNEP/MAP action on COVID-19 will be part of the global response led by UNEP with a focus on the Mediterranean region and its specificities.

The document is articulated around the blocks set forth in the UNEP's COVID-19 Response paper "*Working With the Environment to Protect People*", namely: (1) The medical and humanitarian emergency phase; (2) A transformational change for nature and people; (3) Investing to build back better; and (4) Modernising global environmental governance, with a focus on elements related to the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system's legal and policy framework.

This document should also be read in the context of the United Nations Secretary General's report on the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and the UN Sustainable Development Group's framework for the immediate socio-economic response to the crisis and its impact.

The implementation of the priority actions identified in this document will be based on partnerships and coordination with regional and global actors, including *in primis* the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, as well as the BRS Conventions, CBD, FAO/GFCM, WHO, ACCOBAMS, OECD, the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development and UNEP/MAP non-governmental Partners.

At a later stage UNEP/MAP system will assess which of the priority response actions can be achieved through its approved Programme of Work and existing activities, possibly with minor adjustments and/or redirection, and which actions require new activities in the framework of the next Medium-Term Strategy and Programmes of Work.

Building blocks for responding to the COVID-19

BLOCK 1: THE MEDICAL AND HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY PHASE

A sound COVID-19 response requires an adequate waste management response addressing the increase in the quantity of discarded single-use plastic items and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The COVID-19 crisis is having increasingly visible implication for waste management. For instance, the widespread disposable face masks are mostly made of Polyethylene—a plastic that is nearly impossible for nature to completely break down.

The LBS Protocol provides the legal framework for the prevention, reduction, assessment and control of waste, including plastics in the Mediterranean. UNEP/MAP response will address the following priority issues:

- ensuring that contaminated municipal and medical waste is managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner, thus avoiding related pollution discharge into the Sea and the respective coastal zones, in particular disposable PPE (such as masks, gloves and gowns).
- with a view to reducing medical waste generation: promoting, to the extent possible, the use of reusable material and discouraging the excessive use of single-use items when it is not mandatory based on WHO recommendations and/or relevant national health authority directives.
- promoting preventive measures to minimize the wildlife trapping/entanglement hazards of such material.
- mitigating possible impacts on the national processes and rules applied in the recycling of plastic wastes, as some household items may be exempted from recycling due to contamination risks. A potential roll back of regulations and measures on single-use plastic bags (such as bans or taxes) as part of the COVID-19 prevention efforts is also possible and will require further attention. Robust systems for waste segregation, collection and management are to be taken into account in the implementation and planned revision of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management.
- ensuring interaction with and contribution to relevant global processes in the framework of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and WHO, especially those pertaining to the development of guidelines and best practices for the management of medical waste.
- assessing risks related to the possible contamination of the marine and coastal areas through wastewater outfalls. Specific analyses are required to identify potential traces of COVID-19 transferred to sea through treated wastewater and to assess any possibility of transmission through the trophic chain. In addition, the use of untreated wastewater for irrigation purposes in some Mediterranean countries should be assessed under the COVID-19 angle to address any potential risks.
- pursuing ongoing processes on development and/or updating of the UNEP/MAP legal and regulatory framework, including updating of the Annexes to the LBS Protocol and

the development of new/updated Regional Plans (on municipal waste, sludge management, marine litter, etc.). This endeavour will consider these elements with a view to including provisions for contaminated municipal and medical waste, as appropriate, and analysis of wastewater to address potential contamination issues.

- strengthening efforts aiming to close all existing illegal dump sites on land and preventing any emerging illegal dumping of medical waste on beaches, in the sea and in rivers in accordance with the provisions of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management.
- addressing the impact of increased demand for and production of cleaning products and disinfectants, including the swift introduction into the market of new disinfectants, in the context of the implementation of pollution-related Protocols of the Barcelona Convention. The aim is to ensure their proper use and assess as well as prevent any potential impacts on the marine and coastal environment.
- exploring links with the Hazardous Wastes Protocol, in cooperation with the BRS Convention, in view of promoting the ratification of the Protocol by more Contracting Parties and supporting them in building capacities for the development of national inventories of hazardous wastes and their environmentally sound disposal and management.

BLOCK 2: A TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE

2A. Better understanding and responding to zoonotic threats

COVID-19 is a reminder of the importance of better understanding potential risks of transmission of zoonotic diseases from marine species (including highly migratory ones, such as birds and marine mammals) to humans, including pathways, and of responding to zoonosis risks adequately.

The principal legal basis for this work in the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system is the SPA/Biodiversity Protocol. In this respect, due consideration will be given to the aforementioned considerations in the development of the Post-2020 SAP BIO, also taking into account the way that relevant issues are addressed at global level; from the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the CBD to UNEP response articulation, including the development of a zoonotic risk and response programme, national zoonotic risk reduction action plans and increased ambition and commitment to new global biodiversity targets.

UNEP/MAP response will address the following priority issues:

- examining the need to reassess Action Plans on key species (particularly marine mammals, sea birds, and marine turtles) and habitats under the SPA/BD Protocol and, if need be, revising them to address the aforementioned issues.
- given that illegal fishing and trade of marine species is still observed in the Mediterranean, improving the assessment and understanding of potential transmission of pathogens and diseases from marine species to humans, as well as strengthening the enforcement and control measures for illegal fishing, in close

cooperation with the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

- exploring and establishing links with the ICZM Protocol implementation, specifically regarding the management of anthropogenic activities that have an impact on the safety and security in pathways of wildlife and wildlife products, including habitat encroachment and destruction and landscape fragmentation. Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and human health concerns into marine and coastal activities and sectoral planning and development can be achieved through ICZM and ecosystem-based Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).
- Assessment of human activities' impacts on coastal artificialisation can be based on the Candidate Indicator 25 on Land Use Change under the UNEP/MAP Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP). While this is still a candidate indicator, thus monitored on a voluntary basis, the COVID-19 response calls for the strengthening of expert knowledge and scientific advancement in view of developing it into a Common Indicator, the monitoring of which is mandatory in the framework of IMAP.

2B. Better understanding poverty, human and environment health linkages

The assessment of linkages between environment and human health is very relevant to UNEP/MAP work:

- ❖ The LBS Protocol provides the legal basis to support action in this respect, as its provisions explicitly stipulate the consideration of risks and potential impacts on human health from pollution (Article 7 par.1 and Annex I part A, and Annex II part E). A strong partnership was built on this basis between MED POL and WHO, and a WHO Unit was established within the Secretariat, focusing on assessment of and responses to human health risks from marine pollution from land-based sources. In the course of the past decade, this form of collaboration with WHO was terminated and work in this field suffered as a consequence. The response to the COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to rebuild this collaboration on the basis of the LBS Protocol.
- ❖ The SPA/BD Protocol will serve as an instrument to address links between human health and the status of marine and coastal biodiversity, including the assessment of possible pathways for human disease transmissions, potential risks for human health from the introduction of non-indigenous species and genetically modified species, and from wildlife trafficking.

UNEP/MAP response will address the following priority issues:

- under the implementation of the LBS Protocol and relevant Regional Plans: giving due consideration to the potential risks for human health from the increased use of single-use items and sterilisation chemicals, as well as cleaning products and disinfectants. This could entail the possible inclusion of new substances into the Mediterranean List of Priority Contaminants and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP).
- considering the potential of plastic litter to serve as a substrate for the transmission and spread of pathogens and viruses as part of a reinvigorated effort to prevent and

reduce plastic marine litter; and addressing knowledge gaps in this field in collaboration with scientific institutions.

- exploring the assessment of the potential impacts of the virus and of new/emerging chemicals used for its prevention on the quality of bathing waters and beaches in the Mediterranean.
- in addition to the implementation of the Med SO_x ECA roadmap—linking the Post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, under preparation in the 2020-2021 biennium, with the COVID-19 response. In this context, future measures to limit the emission of other harmful substances from ships, such as NO_x, should be also considered. Atmospheric pollution (linked to maritime transport) is to be further assessed as an aggravating factor for human health and respiratory diseases. COVID-19 has brought linkages between air pollution and human health to the fore, as individuals subject to greater levels of air pollution are potentially more vulnerable to airborne diseases and their physiological impacts such as respiratory denudation.

Background on SO_x ECA

At global level, through regulations established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the limit for sulphur in fuel oil used on board ships operating outside designated emission control areas has been reduced to 0.50% m/m (mass by mass) since 1 January 2020. The Mediterranean region is considering a step beyond by exploring the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as [an Emission Control Area for SO_x](#) (Med SO_x ECA), with special requirements to reduce ship emissions in line with a [road map](#) adopted by COP 21. According to a [Technical and Feasibility Study](#) carried out by REMPEC, the Med SO_x ECA would lower emissions by 78.7% for SO_x and 23.7% for PM_{2.5}, when comparing to the global sulphur limit (0.50% m/m), thus positively contributing to human health.

- assessing and reducing the impacts on key marine and coastal species of new/emerging chemicals present in cleaning and disinfectant products being used in the prevention of COVID-19, including by promoting good practices on their use and disposal.
- advocating the strengthening of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) networks based on the role they play in supporting environmental health, human well-being and socioeconomic stability.

These actions need to be based on strong scientific evidence and research. Taking into account the limited resources of UNEP/MAP system to conduct such specialised studies, it is important to identify new or strengthen existing partnerships and networks with scientific and research institutions and other specialised agencies, especially the WHO, including its Vulnerability and Risk Assessment and Management (VRAM) structures, as highlighted in the beginning of this chapter. In addition:

- The work of the UNEP/MAP Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre on the observation and foresight of environment and development will play a pivotal role in assessing links between environment and human health. These links were addressed in the State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED) and will be further analysed under the MED 2050 foresight study. UNEP/MAP participation in the implementation of the UN Decade on Ocean Science can also facilitate actions in this field.

- UNEP/MAP will explore and promote citizen science as an important source of information, including the reporting of unusual phenomena encountered in the marine and coastal environment. Efforts in this field will be pursued through the Information and Communication Regional Activity Centre (INFO/RAC).

2C. Making progress on the climate, biodiversity and chemical crises

Transformational change includes ensuring an ambitious approach to safeguarding environmental support systems in key areas, including climate, biodiversity and chemicals. All these areas are covered by the UNEP/MAP mandate and its key role in maintaining healthy and functioning ecosystems in the Mediterranean Sea and coasts.

The COVID-19 crisis may raise risks of weakened environmental regulation and enforcement in cases where emergency responses do not adequately integrate environmental protection as an important dimension. The UNEP/MAP response can address the multi-faceted nature of the challenge through the strategic and programmatic framework, legal and regulatory instruments, policy measures, monitoring and assessment activities as well as capacity building.

UNEP/MAP response will address the following priority issues:

- enhancing its efforts to ensure that Contracting Parties' commitments and action are maintained and reinforced through the Barcelona Convention governance structure and processes, and advocacy with the participation of MAP partners and civil society. The post COVID-19 period provides an opportunity for strengthening the environmental law and its implementation and enforcement, and thus it should be used by decision makers and civil society to push the environmental agenda with concrete proposals, backed by solid assessments including on links between environment and human health. Attention will be placed on promoting nature-based solutions and management of pressures, strengthening enforcement on illegal dumping prohibition, supporting environmentally sound management of municipal waste including medical waste, preventing illegal ecosystem degradation and highlighting the importance of restoration of degraded ecosystems (linked with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration).
- addressing key elements and emerging issues raised during the COVID-19 crisis in the development of the next Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, which will define the MAP vision and priorities.
- considering emerging pollution-related issues, including the increase in medical waste and the use of chemicals for COVID-19 prevention, in ongoing work on updating the Annexes to the Pollution related Protocols.
- redirecting the development or updating of several regulatory and policy instruments in the current biennium in order to fully take into account emerging issues and pressures that the pandemic has brought up. Relevant instruments include:
 - The Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean (Post-2020 SAP BIO);

- The new/updated Regional Plans under the LBS Protocol (Regional Plan on Municipal Wastewater Treatment; Regional Plan on Sewage Sludge Management; Regional Plan on Marine Litter) and relevant Guidelines;
 - The Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships;
 - The Mid-Term Evaluation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and of the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Regional Action Plan;
 - New/Updated Species and Habitats Action Plans;
 - Set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses in the Mediterranean.
- reviewing and updating (where applicable) the monitoring programmes under the ambitious UNEP/MAP Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) in order to adequately cover new/emerging pollutants generated by the response to COVID-19, affecting both marine environment and human health, including the identification of pathways. In this respect, the UNEP/MAP List of Priority Contaminants may need to be updated in view of integrating these elements.
 - considering the impacts of COVID-19 in the next UNEP/MAP assessment products on the marine and coastal environment as well as socioeconomic aspects. The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 Med QSR) will address elements highlighted above related to municipal and medical wastes, hazardous wastes, illegal and uncontrolled dumping, occurrence of new/emerging chemicals, impacts on the status of key marine and coastal species and habitats, and links between human and environment health. Focus will be also placed on drivers of pressures, including an assessment of whether and to what extent reduction of human activities during the first months of the outbreak affected the status of marine and coastal environment. COVID-19-related issues will also be addressed by the forthcoming MED 2050 Foresight Study under a perspective and scenario analysis.
 - assessing socioeconomic impacts from the COVID-19 crisis focusing on economic sectors with a particular importance for the Mediterranean region, including tourism, maritime transport, fishing and aquaculture, as well as socioeconomic impacts on MPAs. In this respect, the work undertaken by the UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre Plan Bleu will be instrumental in acquiring valuable insights. UNEP/MAP will also support Contracting Parties in undertaking national socioeconomic assessments focused on the COVID-19 impacts, to the extent possible.
 - given the need for additional efforts at national level: exploring the possibility of providing further support and capacity building to the Contracting Parties in the implementation and enforcement of the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention system’s legal and regulatory framework, in particular regarding the management and disposal of medical waste and illegal dumping. In this respect, partnerships with key actors in the region and engagement in the H2020 Initiative will be strengthened.

BLOCK 3: INVESTING TO BUILD BACK BETTER

As highlighted in the UNEP’s COVID-19 Response, fiscal stimulus packages provide an opportunity for initiating a transformational and green recovery with the creation of green jobs and build back better, specifically by accelerating integrated, life-cycle approaches.

UNEP/MAP will catalyse actions towards this direction in the Mediterranean region, in the framework of its legal and policy framework including the promotion of sustainable consumption and production and circular economy, green jobs, marine renewable energy, sustainable tourism, nature-based solutions and transition to sustainable blue economy.

The Naples Declaration adopted by the Contracting Parties in their 21st Meeting (COP21, Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019) put forward a regional consensus on the importance of *triggering economic prosperity and contributing to the stability of the region with green jobs and innovation opportunities in full respect of the environmental protection, in a circular approach and good governance pattern*. UNEP/MAP intends to build on this consensus in order to ensure that post COVID-19 recovery is fully based on principles of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Building back better will also entail the effective use of existing instruments promoted by the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols by Contracting Parties, including the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment for investments. Green fiscal policy options¹ can be a powerful lever to orient actions towards nature-based and climate-neutral strategies.

In view of building back better, SCP should be placed at the core of the post-COVID recovery. Measures taken to face the pandemic resulted in people abstaining from previous negative practices, or switching and substituting them, especially in areas such as hygiene, food provision, mobility, shopping, leisure, household work.

Virtuous behaviour that we have seen during the pandemic may lay the groundwork for scaling up the adoption and uptake of SCP as part of a new, green normality. The extraordinary situation provided evidence that this is possible provided the right incentives and conditions are present. The implementation of the Regional Action Plan on SCP in the Mediterranean will lead to a green recovery by putting in place the conditions for practices deemed as sustainable to become the “new normal”.

UNEP/MAP response will address the following priority issues:

- considering the implications of COVID-19 in the mid-term evaluation process for the Regional Action Plan on SCP and the MSSD, as well as in the development of the next MTS 2022-2027. Global developments on a more deliberate and harmonised use of “SCP terminology” will be also followed closely, as this can support bringing together currently fragmented communities working on circular and green economy, green growth, an inclusive transition to SCP.
- considering potential links between recovery efforts and the Paris Agreement. The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) may also be considered in the new MTS under the framework of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas. Opportunities for nature-based solutions, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity safeguards and green infrastructure offered by the COVID-19 recovery plans need to be supported in that respect.
- COVID-19 is expected to put additional pressures on the water sector in the Mediterranean, which already faces significant challenges, including an increased demand for water supply in order to apply the hygiene measures recommended by

¹ For example, making accession to recovery subsidies/ funding conditional to the implementation of defined sustainability criteria and environmental safeguards.

the health authorities combined with possible reduction of capital investments and utility revenues. In this context, and taking into account the impacts of climate change on water resources in the region, the post COVID-19 period calls for more effective water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems, streamlined into climate change adaptation plans. These elements are to be addressed by the MTS 2022-2027, in the framework of the ICZM Protocol, which can offer a legal basis for the integration of water management and climate change adaptation through the national ICZM strategies and coastal implementation plans and programmes. Opportunities for financial support, including through the Green Climate Fund, need to be explored to this aim.

- assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on tourism, one of the major economic sectors in the Mediterranean, including through due consideration of different criteria for assessing carrying capacity, in view of ensuring safety distance and behaviour, and promoting more sustainable forms of tourism.
- developing new schemes on physical planning and urban development to ensure more open and green spaces and promotion of nature-based solutions, green and blue infrastructure, etc. The coastal plans and programmes, as stipulated by Art.18 of the ICZM Protocol, constitute adequate instruments that can be used in this field.
- promoting SPAMIs/MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures as part of plans to build back better, as they not only support ecosystem conservation but can also sustain income-generating activities benefiting local communities and create additional sustainable jobs.
- ensuring that efforts to build back better are backed by solid socioeconomic analyses. The forthcoming State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED) can serve as the basis to build UNEP/MAP actions in that respect, as it provides the most recent and comprehensive knowledge base on environment and development in the Mediterranean region. Further integration of socioeconomic assessment in UNEP/MAP activities will be also considered, for example through a cross-cutting component on socioeconomic assessment of all major activities in the next Medium-Term Strategy.
- bolstering partnerships with civil society: consultations should be held to discuss common issues and responses. UNEP/MAP web-based platforms may be used as a tool to disseminate up-to-date information and promote best practices from across the region.
- fostering inclusive partnerships and cooperation with relevant regional and global actors as a prerequisite for an effective region-wide response. The participation of the private sector in view of promoting sustainable practices and life-cycle approaches, increasing the offer of sustainable products and services, and supporting green business and entrepreneurship will be crucial. By embracing sustainable and circular models, businesses can decouple economic activity from the consumption of raw materials vulnerable to climate risks and other crises and shocks, and build supply chains that are more diverse, distributed, flexible, and resilient. The efforts of SCP/RAC in developing national partnerships led by Business Support Organisations in southern Mediterranean countries to support the development of green and circular businesses (SwitchMed initiative) will contribute to this necessary effort. The recent COP 21 Decision on the “Development of a Set of

Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products”, will be used as a basis in this respect and its implementation will take into consideration the COVID-19 crisis implications.

- considering as a matter of priority the improvement and use of economic instruments for sustainable use and management of marine and coastal resources in collaboration with relevant actors.

BLOCK 4: MODERNISING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to re-assess our traditional ways of work and the future of environmental governance. Areas to be addressed under this assessment include every-day office operations, activities implementation, budget implications and resource mobilisation, partnerships, and communication.

The pandemic has shown that technology and modern tools can help us shift our traditional ways of work while maintaining the same level of efficiency and reducing the environmental footprint of our operations. These methods, including mainly telecommuting, zero-printing, and holding meetings through virtual means should be further promoted and maintained to the extent possible even after the end of the crisis, in line with UNEP-led process of modernizing global environmental governance towards a unified and collective response to international crises, including pandemics, while supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we respond to the COVID-19 emergency, UNEP/MAP will stay the course on priorities and key processes. We will continue pursuing MAP objectives, which all remain valid and up to date. Modifications in means of implementation or activities may need to be introduced but the general framework is to be maintained.

The implementation of activities in the field, including environmental monitoring, pilot implementation, trainings and national capacity building activities, is expected to be impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, due to limitations imposed in travel, and movement restrictions in most Mediterranean countries. It is therefore crucial to identify alternative ways of working with the countries in order to ensure that PoW activities as adopted by the COP will continue and expected outputs will be delivered, including the possibility of boosting capacity development in the Contracting Parties' national institutions.

The current situation can be an opportunity to promote the use of the UNEP/MAP e-learning platform through an integrated and collaborative approach among the different MAP Components in order to deliver high-level quality learning and training thematic material to ensure appropriate support to the Contracting Parties.

The role of the Barcelona Convention Compliance Committee is even more important in the post COVID-19 governance period, in view of ensuring that the legal and policy framework of MAP Barcelona Convention continues to be effectively implemented and enforced by the Contracting Parties.

The COVID-19 crisis may also have budgetary implications, especially in the medium term, which should be further evaluated. Budget savings from limited operations and virtually held meetings during the crisis may be redirected to support activities for the implementation of

the UNEP/MAP strategic response to COVID-19 in particular at country level. At the same time, it is important to continue working closely with the Contracting Parties in view of maintaining high level of ambition and national commitment in the implementation of the UNEP/MAP programmatic framework. The COVID-19 crisis highlights the importance of MEAs in timely tackling threatening degradations which can give place to health crisis, generated by ecosystems impoverishment and the associated risks of pathogenic diseases spread; the important contribution of well-functioning MEAs to the One Health approach should be promoted. In addition, UNEP/MAP efficiency in mobilising external resource through Programmes and Projects should be maintained, while the redirection of some activities, as indicated above, including work on medical waste, new/emerging contaminants and hazardous waste, policy responses for green recovery, assessment of pathways of diseases and pathogens, quality of bathing waters etc. may provide new opportunities for resource mobilisation.

UNEP/MAP will step up communication and advocacy for building back better in the region. A UNEP/MAP narrative paper will be developed for dissemination addressing the priorities identified in the present document and taking into account the need to raise awareness on the linkages between environmental issues and public health with a specific focus on Mediterranean context. Some elements brought up by the pandemic illustrate the relevance of the UNEP/MAP mandate and can therefore provide opportunities for institutional visibility. One important objective of outreach campaigns to be developed jointly with INFO/RAC would be to mobilize the attention of and engage stakeholders in seizing the historic opportunity for a green renaissance in the Mediterranean.

Part II: Addressing COVID-19 response needs through UNEP/MAP activities

1. Integration of COVID-19 response elements into the UNEP/MAP activities

Some activities of the UNEP/MAP PoW 2020-2021 have experienced a delay due to the COVID-19 situation, attributed mainly to reduced possibilities to recruit new human resources, and the impossibility to organize physical meetings intended to produce substantive content through collective work. Notwithstanding the above, the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system is committed to adapt its planned activities to the situation and ensure that its Programme of Work for 2020-2021 is implemented. While activities may be adjusted to fit the new context, there is limited anticipated change in their overall timeline and budget requirements.

In addition, and taking into consideration the expected emerging or exacerbated pressures on the marine and coastal environment, and the response needs identified in the Blueprint, a number of existing activities of the UNEP/MAP PoW 2020-2021 may need to be slightly redirected in order to address these elements.

The following PoW activities will be adjusted to address the following aspects:

- **Preparation of MTS 2022-2027 (PoW 1.1.2.6):** The Blueprint on UNEP/MAP strategic response will be shared with the experts working on the preparation of the MTS 2022-2027. All elements identified in the Blueprint will be taken into consideration in the development of the next MTS priorities and objectives. Links between environment and human health will be included in the next MTS and should be further promoted and this may be used as an opportunity to re-establish the previous cooperation between MED POL and WHO. Financial opportunities related to responses to emerging issues, i.e. contaminated municipal and medical wastes, potential new contaminants, integration of water and sanitation management into climate change adaptation etc., should be explored in support of relevant activities in the framework of the next MTS.
- **Preparation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO (PoW 1.1.2.7):** The Post-2020 SAP BIO should take into consideration the need to identify and assess potential risks from transmission of zoonotic diseases from marine and coastal species and their pathways; potential impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity from increased use of chemicals, disinfectants and cleaning products as well as single use plastic items and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); and the increased importance of MPA/SPAMI and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) networks and ecosystems restoration in supporting resilience of marine and coastal areas and socioeconomic stability including sustainable fisheries. In this respect, it will be useful to look also at the integration of human induced global impacts considerations, such as zoonoses like the COVID-19, into the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- **Preparation of Regional Strategy addressing pollution from ships (PoW 1.1.2.8):** The post 2021 Regional Strategy should further integrate links between environment and human health, with a particular focus on impacts of atmospheric pollution to human health and respiratory diseases, in support of objectives and actions aiming at reducing air emissions from ships, including SO_x, NO_x and other harmful substances. The new Strategy should address other priorities including climate change, marine

litter, marine biosafety, pollution incidents, and emerging issues, integrating regional and national areas of influence, in particular people, institutions, infrastructures, and information.

- **Preparation of the Post-2020 Strategy on MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean (PoW 3.2.1.1):** The Post-2020 Strategy on MPAs and other effective area based conservation measures (OECMs) should emphasise the increased importance of MPA/SPAMI and OECM networks and ecosystems protection, management and restoration in supporting resilience of marine and coastal areas and socioeconomic stability, including sustainable fisheries. The Post-2020 Mediterranean Strategy on MPAs and OECMs will be prepared in line with the CBD orientations.
- **Mid-Term Evaluations of the MSSD and the SCP Action Plan (PoW 1.1.1.5):** The mid-term evaluation of these two strategic frameworks take into consideration elements outlined in the “Investing to Build Back Better” section, including the use of fiscal stimulus packages for initiating a transformational change for a new economy, based on the principle of building back better, with the creation of green jobs and business opportunities, especially by accelerating integrated and life-cycle approaches promoting circular economy and sustainable consumption and production, sustainable tourism, nature-based solutions and transition towards a sustainable blue economy. Following a forward-looking approach and links with the MED 2050 Foresight Study, and considering the need to reorient actions in the future for the best implementation of the MSSD and SCP Action Plan, the mid-term evaluations will make an effort to consider the COVID-19 crisis’ impacts and possible responses in terms of risks and opportunities for the circular economy and sustainable blue economy.
- **Preparation of new/updated LBS Regional Plans (PoW 2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2, 2.2.2.3):** The preparation of the new/updated Regional Plans will take into consideration the new or increased pressures, related to wastes and chemicals, including the extended use of single-use plastics and PPE, the issue of contaminated municipal or medical wastes, the increased use of chemicals, disinfectants and cleaning products and the introduction of new products in response to COVID-19, the potential contamination of wastewater, the issue of illegal/uncontrolled dumping and the linkages between environment and human health.
- **Development of a Set of Regional Measures to Support the Development of Green and Circular Businesses and to Strengthen the Demand for more Sustainable Products (PoW 6.1.1.3):** The regional measures will take into consideration the need to increase participation of the private sector in promoting sustainable practices and circular economy, increasing the offer of sustainable products and services, and supporting green business and entrepreneurship as a means to support green recovery and build back better. The process for the preparation of this set of measures offers the opportunity to work with the countries to prepare responses to the green recovery by strengthening support to green and circular businesses.
- **Implementation and update of key species/habitats action plans (PoW 3.2.1.2):** The importance of better understanding potential risks of transmission of zoonotic diseases from marine and coastal species (including highly migratory ones, such as seabirds, marine turtles and marine mammals) to humans, including pathways, and of responding to zoonosis risks is to be considered, by assessing the need to reassess Action Plans on key species (particularly marine mammals, sea birds, and marine

turtles) and habitats under the SPA/BD Protocol and, if need be, revising them to address these issues.

- **Country based NAP assessment factsheets update (Support streamlining NAP measures in the national regulatory systems and their implementation - PoW 2.3.1.1):** The assessment and evaluation of the NAP implementation process, to be undertaken by updating NAP/H2020 indicator based NAP Assessment Factsheets with available reported and scientific information, as well as by additional data gathered via participatory mid-term NAP evaluation processes, will be extended to include the impacts of emerging issues such as COVID-19 on implementation of the NAPs; mitigation of the risks on national implementation; as well as future areas of capacity building and financial support.
- **Development of regional guidelines to address Single-Use Plastics (PoW 2.2.1.2):** The COVID-19 crisis entailed a significant increase of production and consumption of single-use plastics (masks and gloves but also other items used for food and beverage service packaging). The guidelines being elaborated by SCP/RAC will consider the post COVID-19 situation while preparing the background study and selecting the prevention measures to be implemented in order to reduce and prevent the use of single-use plastics. The list of SUP items selected for the background study are drink bottles, food containers, straws and cigarette filters. The associated regional training on single-use plastics (PoW 2.2.1.2), initially planned in June 2020 and to be finally delivered online by the end of the year, will also consider the impact of COVID-19 pandemic (not much on masks and gloves but rather on food and beverage packaging).
- **IMAP and 2023 MED QSR Roadmap implementation (multiple PoW activities):** During the implementation of IMAP and the 2023 QSR Roadmap, evidence will be collected and compiled in order to assess as appropriate the Good Environmental Status and potential impacts from COVID-19.
- **Implementation of MED2050 Roadmap (PoW 1.4.1.4):** COVID-19 issues, relating to environmental and socioeconomic impacts and the assessment of links between environment and human health are planned to be further addressed by the forthcoming MED 2050 Foresight exercise, under a prospective and scenario analysis. The strong involvement of Plan Bleu in researching and drafting the "health and environment" chapter of the SoED will be an advantage to further address this issue. The introductory meeting of MED2050 Foresight group was organized virtually in May 2020, rather than face to face. The first face-to-face working meeting, scheduled for October 2020, will be organized as a virtual meeting given the current situation especially in Marseille. The recruitment of an additional senior person to work on the Med2050 exercise was delayed by the COVID-19 situation and is effective on 1st October 2020.
- **Training and support programme for green entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs (PoW 6.3.1.1):** There is an increased need to support the creation of new sustainable businesses that will provide solutions to the green recovery from the COVID-19 and build back better. Online trainings are being delivered in the framework of SwitchMed and GIMED projects.
- **Facilitating market access to sustainable tourism businesses (Scale up SCP solutions in the Mediterranean - PoW 6.4.1.2):** this activity was targeting sustainable

businesses of Tunisia and Lebanon. The sanitary crisis due to COVID-19 in combination with other challenges led SCP/RAC to cancel the activity in Lebanon, and new options will be explored when the situation in the country allows it. In Tunisia, activities were delayed but are still planned. The tourism sector was highly affected by the COVID-19 crisis and sustainable businesses need to be supported to continue offering sustainable solutions, increase their share on the market and thus contribute to the green recovery.

- **Implementation of MAP Operational Communication Strategy (PoW 1.6.1.1.):** UNEP/MAP position on strategic response to COVID-19 will be communicated in a coherent manner from all MAP Components under the leadership of the CU, including a broader communication campaign targeted to a wider public.

The Coordinating Unit has already initiated a series of advocacy activities focusing on “building back greener” in the context of the recovery from COVID-19.

The term “green renaissance” was coined as part of this effort and appeared prominently in advocacy products, including two op-eds signed by the UNEP/MAP Coordinator in *El Pais* (in the context of marking the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process) and *Euractiv*, which presented the proposed roadmap for the possible establishment of an Emission Control Area for SO_x in the Mediterranean as a concrete step through which the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention can confirm their commitment to a greener future.

The same message has consistently been conveyed in the Ocean Day and Coast Day messages by the UNEP/MAP Coordinator.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/news/opinion/beacon-hope>
<https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/news/opinion/breeze-may-herald-green-renaissance-mediterranean>

This effort was accompanied by communication on social media, including video clips with captions:

<https://twitter.com/UNEPMAPNews/status/1272803386077872128>

A web feature titled “six ways in which the UNEP/MAP system can support a green renaissance in the Mediterranean” reaffirmed the system’s relevance and ability to support Contracting Parties in building back greener, in addition to other stands linked to the strategic response to COVID-19:

<https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/news/news/six-ways-which-unepmap-can-support-green-renaissance-mediterranean>

All the above-mentioned articles (some of which are available in French) are available in the news section of the revamped UNEP/MAP website.

Furthermore, ten new activities are proposed for the current biennium, that can be funded either through non-utilized funds from existing activities, mainly from reduced meeting costs replaced by virtual meetings, or through additional external resources to be mobilised:

1. **Support for socioeconomic analyses of COVID-19 impacts (tbc).**

2. **Overall assessment of disposal/dumping of PPE at sea and coastal zone and identification of best practices on management and disposal reducing marine litter (regional level).**
3. **Monitoring campaign at country level focusing on quality of beaches and bathing water.**
4. **Activities to streamline potential measures against COVID-19 in MedProgramme.**
5. **Activities to streamline potential measures against COVID-19 in Marine Litter MED II and ECAP MED III.**
6. **Analysis of Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard Indicators, to assess their sufficiency to also monitor potential impacts of COVID-19 and information on measures, including proposal for new indicators.**
7. **Priority list of contaminants to consider emerging pathogens.**
8. **Design and implementation of campaign for monitoring of wastewater and sludges, after treatment, for potential source of contamination.**
9. **Organisation of a “Webinar on Adaptation Strategies during COVID-19”, featuring how selected sustainable businesses (from the Switchers Community) reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
10. **Support to the launch and implementation of MSSD Flagship Initiatives, related to Objective 6 Governance.**

In addition, two work adaptation solutions to respond to the COVID-19 risks should be further explored to ensure a smooth and safe continuation of activities:

1. Adoption at MAP system level of best interoperable solutions and infrastructure available for remote working and video conferencing (including simultaneous interpretation, breakout groups and other advanced options), and provision of the needed training to the staff.
2. Establishment of a MAP system employee and third-party (participant to a meeting, partner, supplier, etc.) common COVID-19 Response Protocol.

The amount of savings generated due to COVID-19 impacts on the means of implementation of MAP Components, especially from meetings that were held virtually and inability of consultants to travel, and the capacity of the system to mobilize additional external resources, will define the scope and scale of implementation of these new activities.

The table below presents the main elements of the adjusted activities of the current PoW and the proposed new activities:

	Activity and Expected Outcome	Adjusted to reflect COVID-19 impacts (A) or New (N)	Collaborating Partner(s)	Funding and source	Deliverables and Timeline
A.1	Preparation of MTS 2022-2027 (PoW 1.1.2.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive issues identified in the Blueprint • Links between environment and human health (One health approach) 	MAP partners	No change from PoW	No change from PoW and deliverables and timeline, richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New financial opportunities (i.e. Green Climate Fund) 			
A.2	Preparation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO (PoW 1.1.2.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible risks and pathways of zoonotic diseases transmission • Impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems from envisageable response measures such as the current COVID-19 ones • Role of MPA and OECM for green recovery (See also A.4) 	SAP BIO Advisory Committee, ACCOBAMS, CBD, FAO GFCM, IUCN, MedPAN, MedWet, WWF	No change from PoW	<p>No change from PoW deliverables only enriched in terms of substance to include COVID-19 considerations.</p> <p>The initially Post-2020 SAP BIO planned timeline is extended due to inability to organize physical meetings and national consultancies to travel, as well as parallel delays in Post 2020 global CBD Biodiversity process influencing its flow.</p>
A.3	Preparation of Regional Strategy addressing pollution from ships (PoW 1.1.2.8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between environment and human health • Focus on impacts of atmospheric pollution • SOx, NOx and other harmful substances 	IMO, IPIECA, EMSA	No change from PoW	<p>No change from PoW deliverables only enriched in terms of substance to include COVID-19 considerations.</p> <p>The initially planned timeline for the preparation and review of different versions may be slightly postponed, due to COVID-19 and possible delays in autumn 2020.</p>
A.4	Preparation of the Post-2020 Strategy on MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean (PoW 3.2.1.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of MPAs and OECMs in marine and coastal ecosystems resilience and conservation 	ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IUCN, MedPAN, WWF and other relevant partners	No change from PoW	<p>No change from PoW deliverables, only enriched in terms of substance to include COVID-19 considerations.</p> <p>Some delays could be encountered due to the delays in the CBD post-2020</p>

					global process (initially expected to be completed by end-2020, now by mid-2021).
A.5	Mid-term evaluation of MSSD and SCP AP (PoW 1.1.1.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements outlined in the “Investing to Build Back Better” section (i.e. transformational change, green jobs and business opportunities, integrated and life-cycle approaches, sustainable tourism, nature-based solutions sustainable blue economy etc. 	MCSD and its Steering Committee, MAP Partners, SwitchMed community	No change from PoW	No change from PoW deliverables and timeline, richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects.
A.6	Preparation of new/updated LBS Regional Plans (PoW 2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2, 2.2.2.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-use plastics as PPE - contaminated municipal/medical waste • Increased use of chemicals/cleaning products and new ones introduced • Possible contamination of wastewater • Illegal/uncontrolled dumping • Linkages between environment and human health 	MAP Partners, H2020, UfM	No change from PoW	<p>No change from PoW deliverables only enriched in terms of substance to include COVID-19 considerations.</p> <p>For the time being, the meetings are scheduled as initially planned.</p>
A.7	Development of a set of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses and to strengthen the demand for more sustainable products (PoW 6.1.1.3)	Need to identify effective policy measures to increase participation of the private sector in promoting sustainable practices and innovative solutions, as a means to support green recovery and build back better	SwitchMed Focal Points, National experts nominated by the countries, SwitchMed Community, UNIDO, UNEP Economy Division, EC	No change from PoW	<p>No change from PoW deliverables and timeline, richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects.</p> <p>Consultation event with experts nominated by the countries to be organized either online by the end of this year or to be postponed to the beginning of next</p>

					year. Situation is being assessed.
A.8	Implementation and update of key species/habitats action plans (PoW 3.2.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible risks and pathways of zoonotic diseases transmission (particularly for marine mammals, sea birds, and marine turtles) 	ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IUCN, WWF, MAVA Projects Partners, RAMOGE, NGOs	No change from PoW	Not major change from PoW deliverables and timeline, richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects.
A.9	Country-based NAP assessment factsheets update (PoW 2.3.1.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts of emerging issues such as COVID-19 on implementation of the NAPs; mitigation of the risks on national implementation; as well as future areas of capacity building and financial support 	MAP Partners	No change from PoW	No change from PoW deliverables and timeline, richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects.
A.10	Development of regional guidelines to address Single-Use Plastics (PoW 2.2.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant increase of production and consumption of Single-Use Plastics due to COVID-19 	WES experts, SCP/RAC FP	No change from PoW	No change from PoW deliverables, richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects.
A.11	IMAP and 2023 MED QSR Roadmap implementation (multiple PoW activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection and compilation of evidence for GES assessment and potential COVID-19 impacts 	IMAP TF, MAP Partners	No change from PoW	No major change expected from PoW deliverables, richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects. Some impacts on the timeline, in particular delays in monitoring due to movement restrictions may occur, although it is still early to assess with certainty.
A.12	Implementation of MED2050 Roadmap (PoW 1.4.1.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospective and scenario analysis, including analysis of environmental and socioeconomic impacts from COVID-19 	IPEMED, CIHEAM, IUCN, OME, CMI. World Bank, civil society, private sector	No change from PoW	Introductory meeting of the Foresight Group organized virtually rather than face to face. Delay in the recruitment of a senior expert, leading to some potential

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of links between environment and human health 			<p>limited delays in publications. 1st working meeting of the Foresight Group postponed to October 2020. There is a risk of further delay of this activity, depending on the evolution of sanitary conditions, because much of the activity's substance is conceived to emerge from collective intelligence during face-to-face workshops. The situation will be re-assessed by end 2020 to potentially reframe this activity. It is expected that the results of this activity will be richer in terms of substance to include COVID- 19 aspects.</p>
A.13	<p>Training and support programme for green entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs (PoW 6.3.1.1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the creation of new sustainable businesses that will provide solutions to the green recovery/ build back better 	<p>SwitchMed national partnerships (BSOs), SwitchMed partners</p>	<p>No change from PoW</p>	<p>Training of trainers programme for green and circular business development targeting Business Support Organizations in the MENA region had to be adapted in order to be delivered online.</p>
A.14	<p>Facilitating market access to sustainable tourism businesses (Scale up SCP solutions in the Mediterranean - PoW 6.4.1.2):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support sustainable businesses to identify new market and thus survive to the economic crisis due to COVID-19 and provide solutions to build back better 	<p>SwitchMed partners, Switchers community</p>	<p>No change from PoW</p>	<p>Delay in the activities implemented in Tunisia, cancellation of activities in Lebanon. New options to be considered.</p>

A.15	Implementation of MAP Operational Communication Strategy (PoW 1.6.1.1.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAP system coherent communication of UNEP/MAP position on strategic response to COVID-19, including to wider public 	MAP Comm Task Force	<p>No change from PoW</p> <p>However existing budget for communication activities and in-house expertise will be used for translation and communication of the Blueprint and targeted comms material on COVID-19</p>	<p>There are some changes and delays expected in the PoW deliverables and timeline:</p> <p>Med Coast Day: It is decided to postpone the Med Coast Day celebration of 2020 for the next year, in consultation with the Maltese authorities being the host country. Communication and promotional material produced in September 2020.</p> <p>SOED release: There are significant delays in communication events planned for the release of SoED (e.g. UICN 2020, UN Ocean, etc.). Further development of virtual communication in addition, but not planned to replace actual events (at this stage). Plan Bleu was asked to participate in a number of additional virtual meetings, thus developing this form of communication on the MAP system.</p> <p>COVID-19 communication actions will be integrated into the existing PoW activities)</p>
N.1	Support for socioeconomic analyses of	New	OECD, World Bank, ILO, FAO/GFCM, FEMISE	10,000 € (funding source to be identified), for	Compilation of available information on socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19

	<p>COVID-19 impacts. (TBC)</p> <p>SDG 14, SDG 8</p>			<p>a consultant to produce report from Nov 2020 – Jan 2021. No country missions planned.</p> <p>If resources become available national analyses could be also undertaken</p>	<p>in Mediterranean countries: By February 2021</p>
N.2	<p>Overall assessment of disposal/dumping of PPE at sea and coastal zone and identification of best practices on management and disposal reducing marine litter (regional level)</p> <p>SDG 14, SDG 6</p>	New	<p>BRSC Bratislava Regional Center, H2020, MAP Partners,</p>	<p>12,000 USD SSFA or SSA</p>	<p>By April 2021</p>
N.3	<p>Monitoring campaign at country level focusing on quality of beaches and bathing water.</p> <p>SDG 14</p>	<p>New – Preparation of the scientific study on the impacts of the virus responsible for COVID-19 on the quality of bathing water.</p> <p>In line with findings of the study, complement national IMAP field surveys to address impacts of COVID-19 on the quality of bathing water.</p>	<p>IMAP TF, WHO, IAEA, national MEDPOL laboratories, scientific institutions, INDICIT, EMODNET, EEA</p>	<p>500,000 EUR</p> <p>It cannot be funded under ECAP MED III, as in present proposal there is no budget to support CI 21. A possibility of launching a new project to be considered.</p>	<p>This is mid-term activity.</p>
N.4	<p>Activities to streamline potential measures in relation to COVID-19 in MedProgramme (TBC)</p>	New	<p>GEF, UNEP</p>	<p>TBD by February 2021</p>	<p>TBD</p>

	SDG 14				
N.5	<p>Activities to streamline potential measures against COVID-19 in ML MED II and ECAP MED III</p> <p>SDG 14</p>	<p>New.</p> <p>Possible political and economic risks related to Covid-19 impacts integrated in the projects' risk assessment and risk management plan.</p>	EU	TBD by December 2020	<p>Possible delays in the projects implementation timeline if movement restrictions are maintained/ reinforced, affecting in particular consultants' travel, in-situ monitoring activities, and governance and expert meetings. Risks related to meetings are lower, since physical meetings can be replaced with online ones. The situation and timeline will need to be reassessed in late 2020 based on the evolution of the Covid-19 related measures, and activities adjusted accordingly as necessary.</p>
N.6	<p>Analysis of existing MSSD Indicators, to assess sufficiency to also address potential impacts of COVID-19 and information on measures/ proposal for new indicators</p> <p>SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</p>	New	MCS D and its Steering Committee, Plan Bleu Focal Points	<p>Plan Bleu, CU</p> <p>Potential need for additional funds depends on the ambition of the activity.</p>	<p>September – December 2020</p> <p>Analysis to be included in the proposal for potential revisions of the Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard and related products by October 2020. Proposal to be discussed with the MCS D Steering Committee, in particular during its 22nd Meeting (December 2020).</p>
N.7	Priority List of contaminants to consider	New	IMAP TF	40,000 EUR ECAP MED III could be	Preparation of the Scientific study to propose new

	<p>emerging pathogens</p> <p>SDG 14, SDG 3</p>			<p>considered as a potential source of funding</p>	<p>mandatory priority contaminants for inclusion into IMAP:</p> <p>The amendment of the List of Priority Contaminants under MAP/Barcelona Convention within the IMAP Pollution Cluster should be considered taking into account the analysis/information of the potential threats posed in the marine environment by i) increased use of medical waste/ single-use plastic items in use to increase self-protection of population (the widespread use of disposable face masks, gloves and other protective equipment); ii) chemicals used for sterilisation campaigns in the Mediterranean;</p> <p>It should be considered as short-term/ medium-term action.</p>
N.8	<p>Design and implementation of campaign for monitoring of WW and sludges, after treatment, for potential source of contamination. This can include sharing/ recapitalisation of existing national campaigns and</p>	New	WHO, H2020, national laboratories	<p>Consideration regarding potential coverage of these new activities by Med Programme</p>	<p>Development of a standard for monitoring COVID 19 in Wastewater. Timeline: By 2021</p> <p>Implementation of monitoring programme Timeline: 2022-2023</p> <p>Training in a research centre to illustrate to</p>

	actions if already implemented SDG 14, SDG 6				lab operators methodology for testing for COVID virus. Cost for about 21 participants from all CPs, and for a course of two days, plus cost to lab for training purposes, can be around USD 50,000; course can be organized in cooperation with WHO.
N.9	Organisation of a "Webinar on Adaptation Strategies during COVID-19", featuring how selected sustainable businesses (from the Switchers Community) reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic.	New	Switchers Community	No change from PoW	Delivered
N.10	Support to the launch and implementation of MSSD Flagship Initiatives, related to Objective 6 Governance	New	MCSO Members	Specific relevant PoW activities budget and/or savings	Draft policy paper/ report on environmental governance by May 2021 for discussion at the 19 th MCSO Meeting (June 2021) and possible side event at COP 22 (December 2021)

2. Partnerships for the implementation of UNEP/MAP response to COVID-19

UNEP/MAP has built long-standing cooperation and partnerships with key regional and global actors in the Mediterranean, which are crucial for the implementation of MAP response to COVID-19, including with the BRS Conventions, FAO-GFCM, IMO, ACCOBAMS, EEA, UfM etc. These partnerships should be maintained and further strengthened. Some may be also reviewed to cover more explicitly COVID-19 related issues.

- Partnership with the **BRS Conventions** should support interaction with and contribution to relevant global processes relating the development of guidelines and best practices for the management of medical waste;
- Partnership with **FAO-GFCM** should be used for the identification of risk and pathways of transmission of zoonotic diseases from marine species interacting with fisheries and aquaculture, i.e. marine turtles, marine mammals and sea birds;
- Partnership with **ACCOBAMS** should be used for the identification of risk and pathways of potential transmission of zoonotic diseases from marine mammals (interacting with fisheries, aquaculture, stranded, therapy, delphinium, etc.);
- Strong partnership with the relevant global and regional partner organizations through the SAP BIO Advisory Committee will continue to benefit the elaboration of the Post-2020 SAP BIO;
- Cooperation with **IMO** should support the identification of links between atmospheric pollution from ships and human health, and efforts for emissions reduction (SO_x, NO_x and other harmful substances);
- Partnership with **IAEA** should be used to support new/emerging needs in terms of monitoring, including trophic chains' issues aiding to trace possible zoonosis flow;
- Cooperation with the **CBD Secretariat** should be also strengthened to ensure streamlining between the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Post-2020 SAP BIO and the Post-2020 Strategy on MPAs and OECMs, on issues related to COVID-19 response;
- Partnership with **UfM and WGP-Med** should support actions related to water management and streamlining into climate change adaptation through implementation of the ICZM Protocol.

As highlighted in the COVID-19 UNEP/MAP Blueprint, new partnerships may be considered to address specific issues arisen from the COVID-19 crisis, including:

- Re-establishment of cooperation with **WHO** on links between pollution and human health, as well as vulnerability and risks assessment and management. This should include dissemination of best practices provided in the WHO guideline on safe management of waste from healthcare activities published in 2014;
- Extension of the collaboration with **OECD, and FEMISE as appropriate**, to cover socioeconomic impacts and risks linked to COVID-19;
- Possible cooperation with the World Tourism Organization and One Planet Network to support recovery measures for the tourism sector.

3. Risks and Contingency Planning

There are no expected risks on the implementation of most activities of the UNEP/MAP PoW 2020-2021. The redirection proposed will not have impacts on budget requirements and timeline. Their implementation will continue as per the original plan, with potential reframing of the timeline and modalities of some activities, while additional elements will be taken into

consideration, in line with the UNEP/MAP Blueprint. Although some delays have already occurred and additional can be foreseen for some PoW activities mainly due to the inability to hold physical meetings and organise consultants' travel, no major risks are expected on the implementation of PoW activities and their deliverables; this however needs to be reassessed if the pandemic situation is not improved in the last quarter of 2020.

Some changes in activities' timeline and/or deliverables have occurred or are expected, as outlined in the table above, including:

- Postponement of the 2020 regional Coast Day celebration to the next year and celebration of this year's edition through various online means;
- Extension of the Post-2020 SAP BIO original timeline due to inability to organize physical meetings and national consultancies to travel, and parallel delays in Post 2020 global CBD Biodiversity process influencing its flow;
- Possible minor delays in the initially planned timeline for the preparation of the Regional Strategy addressing pollution from ships in autumn 2020;
- Possible minor delays in the preparation of the Post-2020 Strategy on MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean, mainly due to delays in the CBD post-2020 global process;
- Consultation event with experts nominated by the countries for the development of regional measures to support the development of green and circular businesses to be organized either online by the end of 2020 or to be postponed to the beginning of 2021 (situation is being assessed);
- Possible impacts on the timeline of IMAP and MED 2023 QSR activities, in particular delays in monitoring due to movement restrictions, although it is still early to assess with certainty;
- Some changes in the implementation of the MED 2050 Roadmap, including delay in the recruitment of a senior expert, leading to some potential limited delays in publications; first working meeting of the Foresight Group postponed to October 2020; risk of further delays, depending on the evolution of sanitary conditions to be re-assessed by end 2020;
- Training of trainers programme for green and circular business development targeting Business Support Organizations in the MENA region adapted in order to be delivered online;
- Activities on facilitating market access to sustainable tourism businesses facing delays in Tunisia and being cancelled in Lebanon; new options are being considered.
- Significant delays in communication events planned for the release of SoED (e.g. UICN 2020, UN Ocean, etc.); there is further development of virtual communication, but not planned to replace actual events (at this stage);
- For biodiversity related field activities, such as marine habitat mapping, marine component surveying and monitoring, field training etc., no major delay risk is to be expected so far, although this will depend on restrictive measure's duration and evolution of the situation.