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Third Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project

Videoconference, 7 June 2022

Agenda item 6: ML MED II Progress Report 2021

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2022

Marine Litter MED II Project

Annual Project Progress Report

Reporting period: 01/01/2021 - 31/12/2021

Prepared by

SIGNATURES ¹	
Name of Project Manager: Christos Ioakeimidis	Signature Date: 21 / 02 / 2022
Name of Supervisor: Mohamad Kayyal	Clearance Signature Date: 21 / 02 / 2022
Name of Head of Branch / Unit Managing Project: Tatjana Hema	Sign Off Signature Date: 21 / 02 / 2022

¹ The signatures of the annual project progress reports confirm that quality control was done in the concerned Division and MEA Secretariat.

ENRTP STRATEGIC COOPERATION AGREEMENTS / GPGC PROGRAMME COOPERATION AGREEMENT

ANNEX 4 – ANNUAL PROGRESS PROJECT REPORT

Reporting Period	01/01/2021 – 31/12/2021
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DESCRIPTION

ENRTP/GPGC Strategic Priority ²	GPGC Priority Area 1 – Component 4: International environment and Climate governance	EC Directorate General	DG ENV
Project Title	Marine Litter MED II		
UN Environment Division Director/MEA Executive Head managing project	UN Environment Programme /Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) Barcelona Convention Secretariat		
UN Environment /MEA Project Manager	Christos Ioakeimidis, Associate Programme Management Officer christos.ioakeimidis@un.org		
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UN Environment /MEA PoW	UNEP/MAP 2020-2021 Programme of Work (PoW)		
UN Environment /MEA Sub-programme	Ecosystem Management		
UN Environment /MEA PoW Expected Accomplishment(s)/Indicator(s)	<p>The project will strengthen and support the Contracting Parties to The Barcelona Convention to prevent and effectively manage marine litter through the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean.</p> <p><u>Theme 1 – Governance:</u> Indicator 3: Share of external financial resources mobilized by the entire MAP system to co-finance MTF for the implementation of the Mid-Term Strategy. Indicator 7. Number of MoUs/MoCs concluded or updated; 8. Number of joint activities with partners. Indicator 9 (a): Number of countries updating and implementing national IMAP-compatible monitoring and assessment programmes.</p> <p><u>Theme 2 – Land and Sea Based Pollution:</u> Indicator 1: Number of marine pollution prevention and control regulatory instruments and policies updated or developed. Indicator Indicator 3: Number of countries submitting reports on annual pollution loads and pollution monitoring data for agreed pollutants. Indicator 4(a): Number of projects identified and or prepared to eliminate pollution hot spots and respond to marine pollution. Indicator 4(b): Quantities of obsolete chemicals and marine litter disposed in environmentally sound manner/reduced in selected areas</p>		

² The ENRTP and GPGC priorities are indicated in the EC-approved project full-fledged documents.

	Indicator 5: Number of businesses, entrepreneurs, financial agents and civil society organizations capacitated to promote SCP solutions alternative to POPs and toxic chemicals, and marine litter reduction.		
UN Environment /MEA PoW Output(s)	UNEP/MAP Programme of Work (PoW) 2020-2021 Outputs: 1.1.2, 1.3.1, 1.4.3, 1.4.4, 1.5.1, 1.6.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.4.1, 2.4.3, 2.5.2, 2.6.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.1, 3.4.1, 3.5.1		
Link to relevant SDG target(s) and SDG indicator(s)	<p>12.4: "By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment";</p> <p>12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.</p> <p>14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.</p> <p>14.2: by 2020, sustainably manage, and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p>		
Name of Implementing Partners	Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (BSC) Mediterranean Countries Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention		
Type/Location	Regional: Mediterranean (focus on South-East Mediterranean) & Black Sea Regions		
Region (delete as appropriate)	Africa, West Asia		
Names of Countries	Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia		
Project Start Date ³	01/09/2020	Project End Date ⁴	31/08/2023
Date of EC Task Manager approval of project	20 August 2020		
Overall project duration	36 months		
Total EC Allocation incl. programme support costs (USD)	USD 1,140,000 (incl. 7% programme support costs)		

³ Start date should be the start date reflected in the EC-approved full-fledged proposal. If the EC approval came posterior to this date - the date of the email marking EC approval or the date indicated as the start date in the EC's email.

⁴ End date should be the end date reflected in the EC-approved full-fledged project document. The initial end date can be exceptionally modified upon written EC approval based on a request for no-cost extension of the project implementation period.

I SUMMARY OF OVERALL PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Table 1: Achievement of results

Outcome 1	Indicator(s)	Target vs. Actual result	Description of the results achieved
Enhance national capacities on monitoring and assessing marine litter addressing pressures/sources and impacts to contribute to 2023 MED QSR with quality assured data addressing pressures and effectiveness of measures in line with COP 20 Decision on 2017 MED QSR:	National Monitoring Programmes and Strategies Prepared for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24	Target: 2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 2 (draft)	The component relevant to the IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 is progressing well with 2 draft National Monitoring Programmes and Strategies already in place in Lebanon and Tunisia and relevant progress ongoing at national level.
	Level of collection of monitoring data for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24	Target: 3 Baseline: 0 Actual: 1	
	Level of agreement on updated baselines values, threshold values for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24	Target: 2 BV – 1TV Baseline: 1 BV – 0TV Actual: 0 BV – 0TV	
	Number of Monitoring Protocols and methodologies prepared and implemented for riverine marine litter and microplastics coming from WWTP	Target: 2 Protocols – 2 Methodologies Baseline: 0 Protocols – 0 Methodologies Actual: 0 Protocols – 0 Methodologies	Preparatory work has been undertaken regarding the preparation of a protocol for monitoring riverine marine litter.
	Level of achievement of the approved marine litter environmental targets	Target: 1 Assessment Baseline: 0 Actual: 0 Assessment	Regarding the assessment of the marine litter environmental targets, as well as the identification of measures, yet there is no sufficient information to populate the indicators, however the ground is set to report progress during the next reporting period.
	Number of assessment reports delivered including measures identification	Target: 1 Report – 1 Shortlist Baseline: 0 Reports – 0 Shortlist Actual: 2 Report (draft versions) – 0 shortlist	2 assessment reports are under development (draft versions currently available) with a focus on sources and pathways, monitoring and control the discharges of macro- and micro-plastics in the Mediterranean.

Output 1-A	Level of preparation of national Monitoring programmes and strategies for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24	Target: 2 Monitoring Programmes – 2 Nat. Strategies Baseline: 0 Monitoring Programmes – 0 Nat. Strategies Actual: 2 Monitoring Programmes – 2 Nat. Strategies	2 (draft) national monitoring programmes and strategies for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 are prepared for Lebanon and Tunisia, national teams and institutions are in place, including capacity building and training activities.
	Number of national teams and Institutions involved in the process	Target: 2 Nat. Teams / country Baselines: 0 Nat. Teams Actual: 2 Nat. Teams	
	Number of national experts trained	Target: 2 experts / country Baseline: 0 Experts Trained Actual: 10 Experts Trained	
Output 1-B	Level of preparation of Data Standards and Data Dictionaries.	Target: 1 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	Preliminary work, coordinated by MED POL and SPA/RAC, is ongoing for the preparation of the Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.
	Level of preparation of quality assured reporting procedure of monitoring data sets	Target: 2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	
	Level of inclusion of DS and DD in the IMAP Infosystem and operability	Target: Operational for IMAP Cand. Ind. 24 Baseline: Not operational for IMAP Cand. Ind. 24 Actual: Not operational for IMAP Cand. Ind. 24	
Output 1-C	Level of further development and update of baseline values and environmental targets	Target: 2 reports (BV) Baseline: 1 report (BV) Actual: 0 reports (BV)	While project is expected to receive datasets when progress under Output 1-A (and partially Output 1-B) is mature enough, SPA/RAC and MED POL have undertaken preliminary work regarding the identification of additional sources of data to enable such an elaboration at regional level.
	Level of preparation of assessment threshold values	Target: 1 report (TV) Baseline: 0 report (TV) Actual: 0 report (TV)	

Output 1-D	Level of progress achieved in reaching the environmental targets approved by COP 19 in 2016.	Target: 1 assessment Baseline: 0 assessment Actual: 0 assessment	Progress has been achieved regarding IMAP Common Indicator 22 (BV-TV approved by COP22), whereas work is ongoing for IMAP Common Indicator 23 expected to be finalized within 2022. A similar approach applies for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.
	Proposal on environmental targets or their update for IMAP Common and Candidate Indicators for Marine Litter	Target: 1 assessment Baseline: 0 assessment Actual: 0 assessment	
	Number of indicators proposed to assess the reduction of plastic leakage in the Mediterranean towards the commitments in the Naples Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 with a particular on the result of the pilot projects under outcome 2 of this project	Target: 2 indicators Baseline: 0 indicators Actual: 0 indicators	
Output 1-E	Level of preparation of Methodologies developed for monitoring and assessing riverine inputs.	Target: 1 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	Preliminary desk/literature work has been initiated during the reporting focusing on the collection of all available information, existing protocols and methodologies for monitoring riverine inputs of marine litter. The ground has been set in 2 countries (Israel and Morocco) for the collection of datasets within 2022.
	Level of Data collected to feed 2023 MED QSR preparations with regards to marine litter riverine inputs	Target: 2 data sets Baseline: 0 data sets Actual: 0 data sets ⁵	
	Number of national experts trained	Target: 2 experts/ country Baseline: 0 experts/ country Actual: 0 experts/ country	
Output 1-F	Number of Regional/sub-regional reports on the sources, uses and leakages of microplastics in the Mediterranean	Target: 1 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	1 draft report “Sources for plastic pollution and measures to prevent and reduce generation of plastic waste management in the Mediterranean” is already available, and a more elaborated version is expected during Q1-Q2 2022. Information is not yet sufficient to enable a concrete proposal of specific measures, which is expected to significantly progress within 2022.
	Number of key management and prevention measures proposed	Target: 3 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	
	Number of Protocols developed to monitor microplastics	Target: 1 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	

⁵ Preliminary collection of data is ongoing in Israel.

Output 1-G	Number of national experts trained	Target: 10 experts/ country Baseline: 0 experts/ country Actual: 0 experts/ country	This activity is solely linked with the signature of the SSFAs and the commencement of the on the ground activities for FfL and thus the commencement of this activities has not been successful within 2021. Progress is expected during Q2-Q3 2022.
	Number of teams involved in the pilot projects at country level	Target: 2 teams/ country Baseline: 0 teams/ country Actual: 4 teams in 2 Countries ⁶	

⁶ Israel and Morocco.

Outcome 2	Indicator(s)	Target vs. Actual result	Description of the results achieved
Scale up and expand the implementation of pilot implementation of selected marine litter reduction and prevention measures at national and local level:	Number of national reports submitted showcasing and presenting results from the implementation of Adopt-a-beach pilots	Target: 9 National Report Baseline: 4 National Report Actual: 0 National Report	The scale up and expansion of the AaB and FfL pilots progress is reported in Morocco, whereas intensive efforts are ongoing towards finalizing the legal agreements with the remaining countries (i.e. Egypt, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia). SSFAs are expected to be concluded during Q1-Q2 2022. Work has been commenced in Tunisia regarding the reduction of single-use plastic bags, whereas relevant work is expected to commence also in Egypt and Lebanon during Q1 2022. Morocco has received support on EPR and preparatory work is ongoing, whereas relevant work is expected to commence also in Algeria and Lebanon during Q2 2022. Preliminary work has been initiated in Morocco regarding the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas. The work focused on establishing national teams and setting the ground for the commencement of the on the ground activities within 2022. Algeria and Tunisia are expected to come on board during Q1 2022.
	Number of national reports submitted showcasing and presenting results from the implementation of Fishing-for-Litter pilots	Target: 5 National Report Baseline: 2 National Report Actual: 0 National Report	
	Number of national reports submitted showcasing and presenting results from the implementation of measures related to the reduction of single-use plastic bags, and promote alternatives to SUPB, including preparation of adaptation programmes for concerned national industry	Target: 4-5 CPs Baseline: 3 CPs (ML MED) Actual: 0 CPs	
	Number of EPR schemes prepared and developed with a particular focus on plastic packaging and beverage containers	Target: 4-5 CPs Baseline: 2 CPs (ML MED) Actual: 0 CPs	
	Number of pilots related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas	Target: 14 pilots Baseline: 8 pilots Actual: 0 pilots	

Output 2-A	Number of countries implementing Adopt-a-beach pilots	Target: 5 Baseline: 4 Actual: 0	Work has been initiated in Morocco since Nov. 2021, and a workplan and national teams are in place. Morocco is working to prepare a baseline report for the AaB pilots, including the selection of pilot sites which will be concluded by Q1 2022. The discussion with Egypt, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia has been inconclusive till the time of drafting of the present report and the Secretariat is closely following up with the countries aiming to have this matter closed by Q1 2022.
	Number of sites selected per country to implement adopt of beach measures.	Target: 2 additional sites per country Baseline: sites per country as selected in ML MED Actual: 2 additional sites in Morocco	
	Number of data collected in line with IMAP guidance factsheets and Adopt a Beach Guidelines	Target: 5 additional datasets Baseline: datasets collected under ML MED Actual: 0 additional datasets	
	Number of local actors involved in the process	Target: 2 additional actors per country Baseline: actors involved in ML MED Actual: 0 additional actors per country	
	Level of marine litter reduction in pilot areas	Target: 2 assessment reports Baseline: 0 assessment reports Actual: 0 assessment reports	

Output 2-B	Number of countries implementing FfL pilots	Target: 3 countries Baseline: 2 countries Actual: 0 countries	Work has been initiated in Morocco since Nov. 2021, and a workplan and national teams are in place. The selection of the ports together with a baseline report will be concluded by Q1 2022. The discussion with Algeria and Tunisia have been inconclusive till the time of drafting of the present report and the Secretariat is following up with the countries towards having all legal agreements in place.
	Number of sites selected per country to implement FfL measures	Target: 1 additional site per country Baseline: sites under ML MED Actual: 1 additional site for Morocco	
	Number of data collected in line with IMAP guidance factsheets and FfL Guidelines.	Target: 3 datasets Baseline: 2 datasets Actual: 0 datasets	
	Number of local actors involved in the process.	Target: 2 additional actors per country Baseline: ML MED 1 Actors Actual: 0 actors	
	Level of marine litter item reduction in pilot areas.	Target: 1 assessment report Baseline: 0 assessment report Actual: 0 assessment report	
Output 2-C	Number of fishermen engaged in the implementation of the pilots.	Target: at least 10 fishermen per country Baseline: N/A Actual: 0	Relevant progress is not reported during the current reporting period. Project will progress in this regard within 2022. This activity is solely linked with the signature of the SSFAs and the commencement of the on the ground activities for FfL and thus the commencement of this activities has not been successful within 2021. Progress is expected during Q2-Q3 2022.
	Number of national workshops.	Target: 1 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	

Output 2-D	Number of countries to review and draft up to date regulations and law on reduction of single use plastics	Target: 2-3 Baseline: 1 Actual: 0	Progress can be reported in Tunisia pertinent to the development of a national campaign to support the decree banning single-use plastic bags. Preparatory work has been also initiated in Egypt to set the ground for the subsequent steps of the envisaged work. In Morocco, an agreement is in place with the Ministry of Environment regarding the scope of work that will be supported in the framework of the Marine Litter MED II project.
	Number of laws/regulations developed on reduction of single use plastics.	Target: 1-2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	
	Number of counties and sectors implementing EPR schemes for plastic packaging and beverage containers	Target: 4-5 Baseline: 2 Actual: 0	
Output 2-E	Number of pilots related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas implemented	Target: at least 1 additional pilot per country Baseline: 8 pilots Actual: 0 pilots	Preliminary work has been initiated in Morocco since Nov. 2021. The discussions with Algeria and Tunisia have been inconclusive till the time of drafting of the present report, however the Secretariat has finalized the preparation of the SSFA with Algeria which is expected to be concluded during Q1 of 2022.
	Number of targeted diagnosis prepared for the selected ports and marinas	Target: 6 targeted diagnosis reports Baseline: 3 targeted diagnosis reports Actual: 0 targeted diagnosis reports	
	Number of Waste Reception and Handling Plans (WRHP) prepared or revised	Target: 6 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	

Outcome 3	Indicator(s)	Target vs. Actual result	Description of the results achieved
Maximize synergies on marine litter actions in the Region with a focus on the collaboration with the Black Sea Commission and GFCM, and other regional partners:	Level of marine litter reduction observed in pilot areas in two eligible BS countries addressing beach marine litter (Adopt-a-beach) and prevention measures (phasing out single-use plastic bags)	Target: 1 assessment Baseline: 0 assessment Actual: 0 assessment	An SSFA is in place with the BSC since Nov. 2021 and the first installment was released in Dec. 2021. Official exchange between UNEP/MAP and GFCM was initiated in late 2021, and an updated MoU between UNEP/MAP and GFCM has been endorsed by COP22. The 4 th meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter was held online in Nov. 2021, and additional memberships have been received.
	Number of national marine litter monitoring programmes prepared	Target: 2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	
	Number of marine litter assessment reports for the Black Sea region updated/prepared	Target: 2 Baseline: 1 Actual: 0	
	Number of joint workplans prepared and established with GFCM and BSC on marine litter issues and cooperation with regional partners enhanced, including with G7 and G20 as appropriate	Target: 3 Baseline: 1 Actual: 0	
	Number of additional memberships from organizations/institutions from the project eligible countries join the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine litter in the Mediterranean.	Target: 27 Baseline: 22 Actual: 31	
	Number of project reports prepared and submitted, and steering committee meetings successfully organized.	Target: 6 Baseline: 0 Actual: 3 (2 annual reports ⁷ and 1 SC meeting organized)	
Output 3-A	Number of national monitoring programmes	Target: 2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	The countersignature of the SSFA took place only in Nov. 2021 which did not allow for any tangible progress to be reported within 2021. Project will progress in this regard within 2022.
	Number of regional assessment reports	Target: 2 Baseline: 1 Actual: 0	
	Number of baseline values formulated	Target: 2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	

⁷ Including the one for 2022 and the current report for 2021

Output 3-B	Adopt-a-beach pilots are implemented in at least, two Black Sea countries	Target: 2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	The countersignature of the SSFA took place only in Nov. 2021 which did not allow for any tangible progress to be reported within 2021. Project will progress in this regard within 2022.
	National regulatory framework for phasing out single-use plastic bags is reviewed, and technical assistance is provided in two countries	Target: 2 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	
Output 3-C	Joint workplan between UNEP/MAP and GFCM is prepared and agreed.	Target: 1 Baseline: 0 Actual: 0	A letter from UNEP/MAP Coordinator has been addressed to GFCM Executive Secretary in Dec. 2021 informing GFCM about the project activity towards supporting and aiming to further streamline marine litter issues into the fisheries agenda as well as to support the development of the GFCM Adaptation Strategy on Marine Litter. A joint work plan will be drafted and prepared within 2022. The 4 th meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter was held online in Nov. 2021. The 2018 joint workplan was reviewed and a new one was agreed for the 2022-2023 biennium.
Output 3-D	Participation and membership of key Mediterranean actors and stakeholders into the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean expanded; synergies maximized	Target: 3 Baseline: 2 Actual: 4 new members	
	Additional memberships from organizations/institutions from the project eligible countries join the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine litter in the Mediterranean	Target: 27 Baseline: 22 Actual: 31	

II OUTPUT PERFORMANCE

Outcome 1: Enhance national capacities on monitoring and assessing marine litter addressing pressures/sources and impacts to contribute to 2023 MED QSR with quality assured data addressing pressures and effectiveness of measures in line with COP 20 Decision on 2017 MED QSR:

Output 1.1: Support countries to further advance and operationalize monitoring of IMAP Candidate Indicator 24, with a focus on the ground implementation of the operation strategy as developed during the previous ML MED Project.

The draft National Operational Strategies for monitoring of IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 in Lebanon and Tunisia have been prepared and shared for review and comments with the main actors to be involved in their implementation in the said countries.

The National Monitoring Strategy/Programme for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 in Lebanon has been launched on 1st September 2021 and a first progress report was made available on 30th December 2021 presenting the main results and outcomes deriving from its implementation. The data collection will be continued within 2022 in line with the project's workplan and the National Operational Strategy.

The National Monitoring Strategy/Programme for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 in Tunisia was prepared in 2021. Its operationalisation has faced delays and challenges due to the fact that the main appropriate institutions to implement it, i.e. the National Institute for Marine Sciences & Technologies (INSTM), the Faculty of Sciences of Sfax managing the sea turtles rescue centre of Monastir and the first aid centre of Sfax,) involved in the respective activities (i.e. analysis of stomach contents from stranded sea turtles) were already occupied and committed in executing activities in the framework of other EU funded projects (i.e. INDICIT II, COMMON and LIFE MED TURTLE), having comparative objectives with those of the Marine Litter MED II project, the national activities of which are implemented in a different geographical context. SPA/RAC came in agreement with INSTM to supervise the implementation of the monitoring programme for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 in Tunisia starting as of January 2022 while ensuring synergies between projects and avoiding overlap in data collection.

Output 1.2: Develop reporting templates, data standards and data dictionaries based on the agreed standardized monitoring protocols, including data quality assurance and quality control tools, to enable the reporting to the Secretariat of national data with regards to IMAP Candidate Indicator 24, through the IMAP (Pilots) Info System.

Preparatory work, coordinated by MED POL, SPA/RAC and to some extent InfoRAC, is in progress in order to prepare the ground for the development of the reporting templates and the corresponding Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24. The work is solely based on the agreed region-wide standardized monitoring protocols developed during the first phase of the project and the goal is to present a first draft for review during the upcoming CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (May 2022, tbc).

Output 1.3: Update Baseline Values and establish threshold values for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.

Project progress is expected to start as of second half of 2022 when datasets will be available from Output 1-A (and partially Output 1-B), when together with other data that are already in place, will be used for the elaboration of updated Baseline Values (BV) and the preparation of Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 at regional level. A first draft of this work is expected during Q3-Q4 2022 as currently an assessment is ongoing in the framework of the project regarding the availability of data, including those collected in the framework of other EU-funded projects. MED POL and SPA/RAC have consulted internally regarding the availability of relevant data from other sources, especially from EU-funded projects, and bilateral consultations will take place during Q1-Q2 of 2022.

Output 1.4: Assess and further specify the environmental reduction targets as agreed by COP 19 in 2016 and reconfirmed in Naples Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 in December 2019, including to prevent and significantly reduce plastic leakage in the Mediterranean Sea and to progressively achieve 100% plastic waste collection and recycling by 2025.

The approval in December 2021 by COP22 of the updated Baseline Values and Threshold Values for IMAP Common Indicator 22 have enabled the Secretariat to showcase a reduction in the recorded marine litter items from 450-1400 items/100 m in 2016 to 369 item/100 m in 2021. Similar work is currently ongoing for IMAP Common Indicator 23 (i.e. seafloor and floating marine litter) channeled to a great extent through IMAP Info System. A first draft is expected to become available during Q2-Q3 2022 which is expected to be presented during the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (May 2022, tbc). The overall update of the environmental targets for all IMAP EO10 Common and Candidate Indicators will be carried out within 2022 when the work for updating the BV and establishing TV will be completed and this will enable a more elaborated assessment and proposal at regional/sub-regional levels. A more elaborated assessment relevant to the indicators included in the 2019 Naples Ministerial declaration will be also completed towards the end of 2022, based on the aforementioned results.

Output 1.5: Assess knowledge and data gaps for the riverine inputs of marine litter in the Mediterranean; propose relevant monitoring methodologies based on existing experience and adjust them into the Mediterranean needs; ensure synergies with the EU MSFD TGML work. This would prepare the grounds for consider expanding the marine litter common indicators of IMAP to include an indicator on riverine inputs.

Preliminary desk-based literature work has been initiated focusing on the available information, existing protocols and methodologies for monitoring and assessing riverine inputs of marine litter. The 2020 UNEP guidelines⁸ are currently leading to a great extent this work and efforts are ongoing to adapt them to the needs of the Mediterranean and relevant exchange has been already initiated with Israel with the scope to share lessons learnt and relevant experience.

An expert to work on the development of the said protocol for riverine marine litter has been recruited and a draft version of the protocol is expected during Q1 of 2022. Relevant work pertinent to the collection of data for riverine marine litter has been already initiated in Israel since October 2021 and is under preparation in Morocco. Within 2022 the methodology will be prepared and reviewed by the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (tbc) and data sets will be in place to support the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

An expert to work on the development of the foreseen protocol for riverine marine litter has been recruited and a draft version of the protocol is expected during Q1 of 2022. Relevant work pertinent to the collection of data for riverine marine litter has been already initiated in Israel since Oct. 2021 and is under preparation in Morocco.

Output 1.6: Assess the main uses and sources of microplastics in the Mediterranean, as well as microplastic leakages into the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean, focusing on existing studies with the aim to fill the gap for the Mediterranean and subsequently will result in proposing accordingly necessary measures as well as a protocol for microplastic monitoring coming from WWTP.

Two reports are under development (draft versions are already available) which include information and knowledge gaps on marine litter. The undergoing desk studies include the collection of information on measures/instruments to prevent, control and monitor discharges of marine litter, specially from: (i) wastewater treatment plants (WWTP), (ii) aquaculture activities, (iii) riverine inputs, and (iv) ships with focus on microplastics emerging pollutants and packaging waste in the Mediterranean, as well as collection of information on available/existing information on sources of plastic pollution and their pathways and a proposal of measures to prevent and reduce the generation of plastic waste in the region. The said reports are contributing to fill in some of the knowledge gaps on riverine inputs of marine litter and those coming from WWTP, focusing on sources and pathways, monitoring and control the discharges of macro- and micro-plastics in the Mediterranean.

⁸ United Nations Environment Programme (2020). Monitoring Plastics in Rivers and Lakes: Guidelines for the Harmonization of Methodologies. Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35405/MPRL.pdf>

Output 1.7: Support national Governments and competent entities in building capacity through technical assistance, training and collaboration for monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24, riverine inputs, and microplastic deriving from WWTP.

The following countries received online support within 2021 in line with the project document and provided that COVID-19 situation allows, capacity building activities will be implemented through physical attendance modalities within 2022:

- Lebanon received support regarding: (a) monitoring of IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.
- Tunisia received support regarding: (a) monitoring of IMAP Candidate Indicator 24, (b) implementation of the decree for banning single-use plastic bags;
- Israel received support regarding: (a) assessing riverine input of marine litter.
- Morocco received support regarding: (a) assessing riverine input of marine litter; and (b) expanding the implementation of the fishing-for-litter measure; and (c) further the enhance

Outcome 2: Scale up and expand the implementation of pilot implementation of selected marine litter reduction and prevention measures at national and local level:

Output 2.1: Implement Adopt-a-Beach measures, with the scope to expand their geographical scope (at least 1 additional pilot per country) and related impact on further enhancing awareness raising of national/local communities.

Regarding the scale up and expansion of the AaB pilots progress is reported in Morocco with a legal agreement being in place and preparatory work already initiated (i.e. approved workplan, national teams in place). The first installment has been already processed, expected to be dispatched to the implementing partner by January 2022 at the latest. Bilateral exchange has been initiated regarding the preparation of relevant ToRs to enable a full team in place for the case of Morocco.

The legal agreements with the remaining countries (i.e. Egypt, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia) have been shared since August 2021, however this process is still inconclusive and thus progress cannot be reported during the current reporting period. Numerous bilateral meetings including a letter from UNEP/MAP Coordinator have been organized and dispatched aiming to have the SSFAs in place and operational. The remaining SSFAs are expected to be concluded during Q1 2022 and relevant delays in the implementation of the said activities will be assessed and presented for discussion during the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the Project (July 2022, tbc).

Output 2.2: Implement Fishing-for-Litter measures (i.e., passive scheme), in at least one additional fishing port with the scope to remove existing marine litter from the marine environment; Efforts will be made to test to the extent possible the FAO voluntary guidelines on marking of fishing gear and to cooperation with GFCM towards addressing the contribution of aquaculture on marine litter and microplastic generation.

Regarding the scale up and expansion of the FfL pilots progress is reported in Morocco with a legal agreement being in place and preparatory work already initiated (i.e. approved workplan, national teams in place) and the first installment expected to be dispatched in January 2021. Whereas the legal agreements have shared with the remaining countries (i.e. Algeria and Tunisia), this process is still inconclusive and thus progress cannot be reported during the current reporting period. Numerous bilateral meetings including a letter from UNEP/MAP Coordinator have been organized and dispatched aiming to have the SSFAs in place and operational. The SSFAs are expected to be concluded during Q1 2022 and relevant delays in the implementation of the said activities will be assessed and presented for discussion during the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the Project (July 2022, tbc).

Output 2.3: Further sensitize and engage fishermen to the purpose of minimizing sea-based sources; and contribute to extent possible with data on seafloor marine litter.

Relevant progress is not reported during the current reporting period. This activity is solely linked with the signature of the SSFAs and the commencement of the on the ground FfL activities, and thus the commencement of this set of activities has not been successful within 2021. Progress is expected during Q2-Q3 2022.

Output 2.4: Phase out priority single-use marine litter items from the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment, with a focus on advancing the existing work on single-use plastic bags promoting proper and sustainable alternatives, including on single-use plastic items intensively used, or produced during the COVID-19 Pandemic; and to further support the improvement of the legal framework for other single-use items ending up as marine litter, in line with the new EU Single-Use Plastics Directive and possibly the updated Marine Litter Regional Plan.

Progress is reported mainly in Tunisia, but also in Egypt, pertinent to phasing out single-use plastic bags, as well as in Morocco relevant to the implementation of an EPR scheme:

- a) Tunisia: While completing the communication materials in relation to the campaign to inform on the decree banning single-use plastic bags (MTF), SCP/RAC launched a call for proposals (annexed to the present report) as part of Marine Litter Med project. The call targets Tunisian associations that could implement actions in the field in terms of information and awareness, as well as a survey. 8 proposals were received and assessed, and 5 of them have been selected. Activities in the field will take place in the 1st quarter of 2022.
- b) Egypt: Presentation of current status of plastic bags in the country, and their alternatives, at the Green Climate and [Smart Waste Management International Conference](#), organised by WCECIE, 8-9th September 2021 in Cairo. Additionally, a coordination meeting was held the 27th November 2021 with other organisations working on plastic related issues in the country. The meeting was hosted by JICA and attended by SCP/RAC, UNIDO, GIZ, and The Ocean Clean up. JICA addresses particularly plastic bags, and hence SCP/RAC will continue coordination and ad-hoc work as need be.
- c) Morocco: An agreement is in place with the Ministry of Environment of Morocco to wait for the WES project's outcomes (roadmap) in order to base and narrow down the scope of work under Marine Litter MED II project. In this regard, coherence will be ensured, and complementarities will be secured pertinent to the support provided in the framework of the 2 EU-funded projects (i.e. Marine Litter MED II and WES Projects), as also described in the Project Document of the Marine Litter MED II project.

Output 2.5: Expand the implementation of pilots (at least one additional port and one marina for the countries participated to the first phase of the project and, where possible, one port and one marina for those countries that did not participate in the first phase of the project) related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas in the Mediterranean, with a focus on advancing the existing work on the application of charges at reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable, application of the No-Special-Fee system as well to the provision of reception facilities in ports and the delivery of ship-generated wastes, and to explore and establish synergies between the Marine Litter Regional Plan and the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships, as well as other relevant plans or initiatives.

An SSFA is in place with Morocco since November 2021 and preparatory work is ongoing. National team is in place in Morocco and a workplan has been agreed. A joint letter (UNEP/MAP and REMPEC) is under preparation and a first coordination team meeting will be organized with Morocco in Q1 2022. The scope of the meeting is to take stock of the results of the previous version of the project which will be used to build upon for Marine Litter MED II project. The discussion with Algeria and Tunisia has been inconclusive till the time of drafting of the present report and the Secretariat is following up with the countries towards having all legal agreements in place. Relevant delays deriving from the delay in signing the legal agreements will be presented and discussed during the 2nd SC Meeting of project (May 2022, tbc).

Outcome 3: Maximize synergies on marine litter actions in the Region with a focus on the collaboration with the Black Sea Commission and GFCM, and other regional partners:

Output 3.1: Assist the development of national marine litter monitoring programmes based on BS IMAP in two countries and their implementation; update the marine litter regional assessment for the Black Sea countries based on the structure of their regional and national IMAP.

Output 3.2: Implement selected reduction and prevention measures, namely “Adopt-a-beach” and “phasing out single-use plastic bags”, at pilot scale in the Black Sea based on the Mediterranean experience from the application of relevant measures.

The negotiations with the BSC have been concluded within 2021 and an SSFA is in place since Nov. 2021, and the first installment was made available to BSC in Dec. 2021. UNEP/MAP has requested BSC to progress and speed up the negotiations with the eligible Black Sea Countries in order to set the scene and to enable the execution of on the ground activities within 2022. A bilateral meeting between UNEP/MAP and BSC will take during Q1 2022 in order for the BSC to present the workplan, relevant timeline along with the technical details, modalities of execution, and specific information for the envisaged package of activities.

Output 3.3: Identify and implement common actions with GFCM and ensure synergies with other European Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes, related Regional Fisheries Bodies, and the G7 and eventually G20 work on marine litter without budget implications for the project.

A letter from UNEP/MAP Coordinator has been addressed to GFCM Executive Secretary in Dec. 2021 informing GFCM about the project activity towards supporting and aiming to further streamline marine litter issues into the fisheries agenda as well as to support the development of the GFCM Adaptation Strategy on Marine Litter.

Moreover, an updated MoU between UNEP/MAP and GFCM has been endorsed by COP22, including a section (Section 5) dedicated on the bilateral cooperation on marine litter. A bilateral meeting is expected to be organized during Q1 2022.

Output 3.4: Support the expansion of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean by supporting the participation of participants/organizations from the ML MED II Project eligible countries.

The 4th meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter was held online in Nov. 2021. The 2018 joint workplan was reviewed and a new one was agreed for the 2022-2023 biennium.

III CHALLENGES, MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, RISK MITIGATION PLAN

The timely response from few of the beneficiary countries has turned to be one of the major constraints of the project which may affect the relevant agreed project timelines. Some of the countries face administrative problems (e.g. Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria), whereas some other countries are facing other difficulties. UNEP/MAP is taking actions to address both cases, either through constant follow-up actions and official letters from UNEP/MAP Coordinator, or by exploring alternative modalities of support (e.g. working in Lebanon through UNEP ROWA office in Beirut), as well as expecting any positive development at country level. Mitigation actions are also time-consuming however UNEP/MAP is committed to concluding those processes in an efficient and timely manner to ensure a still feasible plan and workplan in line with the project document. The travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic are also adding to the delays; however, the delays are not exclusively caused because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding the work pertinent to the development and advancement on IMAP Cand. Indicator 24, the relevant national monitoring for Tunisia was not made operational within 2021 since the main actors (i.e. National Institute for Marine Sciences & Technologies (INSTM) and the Faculty of Sciences of Sfax) involved in the respective activities were already occupied and committed in executing activities in the framework of other EU funded projects (i.e. INDICIT II, COMMON and LIFE MED TURTLE), having comparative objectives with those of the Marine Litter MED II project, the national activities of which are implemented in a different geographical context. To maximize the synergies, SPA/RAC had to undertake lengthy consultations with the said partners to ensure coordination and communication among all actors. Finally, SPA/RAC came in agreement with INSTM to supervise the implementation of the monitoring programme of IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 in Tunisia starting as of January 2022 while ensuring synergies between projects and avoiding overlap in data collection.

Regarding the work on phasing out single use plastic items, the following challenges have been faced: (a) in Tunisia a challenge that was faced was to develop and come up with a communication campaign that would not create opposition by the plastic industry. In this regard, the communication messages have been tailored, giving them a positive approach that could be more easily acceptable by all relevant stakeholders. (b) the difficult situation that is in place in Lebanon has led SCP/RAC to put on hold the activities, expected to start in Q1 2022. In the meantime, informal consultation has taken place in order to know the current initiatives in relation to single-use plastics.

Delays have been also encountered towards receiving the final confirmation from the BSC to move forward with the countersignature of the SSFA and the commencement on the execution of the envisaged activities. The constant follow-up from UNEP/MAP Secretariat including the letters sent from UNEP/MAP Coordinator have resulted in having the SSFA signed in November 2021 and the first installment was dispatched in December 2021.

Project Management has been significantly strengthened through the recruitment of the Project Manager as of 1st October 2021. At interim and since the project commencement, the project was managed and supervised by the MED POL Programme Management Officer. Moreover, the process for the recruitment of the project assistant (G5 – 50%) will be concluded during Q2-Q3 2022.

IV OUTCOME PERFORMANCE

Outcome	Indicators	Progress
<p>Outcome 1: Enhance national capacities on monitoring and assessing marine litter addressing pressures/sources and impacts to contribute to 2023 MED QSR with quality assured data addressing pressures and effectiveness of measures in line with COP 20 Decision on 2017 MED QSR</p>	<p>1. National Monitoring Programmes and Strategies Prepared for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24. <i>Target: 2 Monitoring Programmes and 2 Strategies.</i></p>	<p>Indicator 1: 2 draft National Monitoring Programmes and Strategies for monitoring IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 are in place for Lebanon and Tunisia.</p>
	<p>2. Level of collection of monitoring data for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24. <i>Target: Quality-controlled and quality-assured data are collected and uploaded into IMAP (Pilot) Info System by 3 countries.</i></p>	<p>Indicator 2: The ground has been enabled in Lebanon and Tunisia for the collection of monitoring data for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24. Draft datasets are available for the case of Lebanon.</p>
	<p>3. Level of agreement on updated baselines values, threshold values for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24. <i>Target 1: 1 report on updated baseline values and environmental targets approved at Mediterranean level for IMAP CI 24.</i> <i>Target 2: Threshold Values for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 are established.</i></p>	<p>Indicator 3: The project is working in setting the ground for the generation and collection of datasets for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24. Additional consultations are ongoing with other data owners. Substantive progress will be reported within 2022.</p>
	<p>4. Number of Monitoring Protocols and methodologies prepared and implemented for riverine marine litter and microplastics coming from WWTP. <i>Target 1: 2 Monitoring Protocols drafted.</i> <i>Target 2: Methodology developed and implemented at pilot scale by three beneficiary countries for monitoring and assessing riverine inputs.</i></p>	<p>Indicator 4: Collection of all available information on existing protocols and methodologies for monitoring and assessing riverine inputs of marine litter has been initiated during Q4 2021. The drafting and preparation of a protocol will be concluded during Q1 2022. Relevant work is already ongoing in Israel since Oct. 2021, including the preparation of draft data sets. The ground is also set in Morocco for the commencement of the relevant work.</p>
	<p>5. Level of achievement of the approved marine litter environmental targets. <i>Target: Assessment of environmental targets for marine litter agreed during COP 19 in 2016 is conducted and targets are updated as necessary.</i></p>	<p>Indicator 5: The available data and information does not allow for the moment a thorough assessment of the approved marine litter environmental target however; the project has set the scene to enable a secure assessment within 2022.</p>
	<p>6. Number of assessment reports delivered including measures identification. <i>Target 1: Regional report on the sources, uses and leakages of microplastics in the Mediterranean.</i> <i>Target 2: Shortlist of measures to minimize the leakage of microplastics in the marine environment identified.</i></p>	<p>Indicator 6: 2 reports have been initiated within the reporting period and are under development focusing on the collection of all available information, including knowledge gaps, on measures and instruments to prevent, control and monitor discharges of marine litter, specially from WWTP, aquaculture activities, riverine inputs, and ships.</p>

Outcome	Indicator	Progress
<p>Outcome 2: <i>Scale up and expand the implementation of pilot implementation of selected marine litter reduction and prevention measures at national and local level</i></p>	<p>1. Number of national reports submitted showcasing and presenting results from the implementation of Adopt-a-beach pilots. <i>Target: 5 beneficiary countries increase the number of pilots to apply Adopt-a-beach measure (at least one additional site per country).</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 1:</u> Work has been carried out to enable the conditions for the on the ground execution of AaB pilots, however the finalization of the legal instruments with all the beneficiary countries has suffered from delays. The national reports will be made available within 2022.</p>
	<p>2. Number of national reports submitted showcasing and presenting results from the implementation of Fishing-for-Litter pilots. <i>Target: 3 beneficiary countries advance the implementation of the Fishing-for-Litter pilots (at least one additional pilot area).</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 2:</u> Work has been carried out to enable the conditions for the on the ground execution of FfL pilots, however the finalization of the legal instruments with all the beneficiary countries has suffered from delays. The national reports will be made available within 2022.</p>
	<p>3. Number of national reports submitted showcasing and presenting results from the implementation of measures related to the reduction of single-use plastic bags, including on single-use plastic items intensively used or produced during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and promote alternatives to SUPB, including preparation of adaptation programmes for concerned national industry. <i>Target: 3 beneficiary countries draft and review national laws/regulations for the reduction of single-use plastic bags, and promote alternatives to SUPB, including on single-use plastic items intensively used or produced during the COVID-19 Pandemic, including preparation of adaptation programmes for concerned national industry.</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 3:</u> In Tunisia, the plastic bags ban decree established in the framework of the previous version of the project will be supported by a national campaign, which is currently under review. In Egypt, work is ongoing to develop the roadmap to phase out single-use plastic bags. The national reports will be made available within 2022.</p>

	<p>4. Number of EPR schemes prepared and developed with a particular focus on plastic packaging and beverage containers. <i>Target: 3 beneficiary countries develop and implement EPR schemes with a particular focus on plastic packaging and beverage containers.</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 4:</u> Preparatory work has been initiated in Morocco for an EPR scheme and a tangible cooperation with the WES project is also foreseen. Work is in the pipeline and is expected to commence in Algeria and Lebanon during Q2 2022.</p>
	<p>5. Number of pilots related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas. <i>Target: 3 beneficiary countries expand the implementation of the pilots related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas (at least one additional major port and one additional marina per country).</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 5:</u> Preparatory work has been streamlined in Morocco since November 2021. The support to Algeria and Tunisia is expected to be formalized during Q1 2022. The on the ground implementation of the pilots will commence within 2022.</p>

Outcome	Indicator	Progress
<p>Outcome 3: Maximize synergies on marine litter actions in the Region with a focus on the collaboration with the Black Sea Commission and GFCM, and other regional partners</p>	<p>1. Level of marine litter reduction observed in pilot areas in two eligible BS countries addressing beach marine litter (Adopt-a-beach) and prevention measures (phasing out single-use plastic bags). <i>Target: Decreasing trends are observed.</i></p>	<p><u>Indicators 1, 2, 3:</u> Lengthy negotiations with the BSC have been concluded in November 2021 and thus no tangible results can be reported. Consultations are ongoing between BSC and the eligible BS countries to set the scene and enable the streamlining of the envisaged support. Tangible results and more elaborated information will be reported within 2022.</p>
	<p>2. Number of national marine litter monitoring programmes prepared. <i>Target: At least 2 national monitoring programmes are prepared.</i></p>	
	<p>3. Number of marine litter assessment reports for the Black Sea region updated/prepared. <i>Target: 1 regional assessment report is prepared.</i></p>	
	<p>4. Number of joint workplans prepared and established with GFCM and BSC on marine litter issues and cooperation with regional partners enhanced, including with G7 and G20 as appropriate. <i>Target: 2 joint workplans are prepared.</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 4:</u> Official exchange between UNEP/MAP and GFCM has been initiated within 2021. The drafting of the joint work plan is expected to commence in early 2022 during bilateral meeting that is expected to be organize during Q1 2022.</p>
	<p>5. Number of additional memberships from organizations/institutions from the project eligible countries join the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine litter in the Mediterranean. <i>Target: At least 5 new members from Eastern Mediterranean become members of the Platform.</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 5:</u> The memberships of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine litter in the Mediterranean have been increased from 22 to 31. Its 4th Meeting was organized in Nov. 2021 during which a new workplan was agreed for the 2022-2023 biennium.</p>
	<p>6. Number of project reports prepared and submitted, and steering committee meetings successfully organized. <i>Target: At least 3 annual progress and 3 steering committee reports are prepared and approved.</i></p>	<p><u>Indicator 6:</u> 2 annual reports, including the one for 2020 and the current report for 2021, and 1 SC meeting organized.</p>

V INTER-LINKAGES AND SYNERGIES WITH OTHER PROJECTS FROM SAME UNEP SUB-PROGRAMME/MEA SECRETARIAT FUNDED UNDER DG ENV AND DG INTPA ENRTP SCAS/DG ENV GPGC PCA

The Project falls under the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategies (MTS) 2016-2021 and 2022-2027, as well as the Programme of Work (PoW) 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. In line with the Project Document, synergies and coherence are being ensured with several projects and initiatives in order to strengthen their impacts and avoid duplication and fragmentation.

Marine Litter MED II project was launched jointly with the ENRTP GPGC-funded EcAp MED III project. Together, they are contributing to enhance national capacities on IMAP implementation and particularly ML MED II project aims in further advancing monitoring and assessing for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 (litter ingested by or entangling marine organisms) in a way to supplement the support for Ecological Objective 10 (EO 10); to address pressures/sources and impacts; and to assess knowledge and data gaps for the riverine inputs of marine litter in the Mediterranean and the main uses and sources of microplastics in the region. The current work of ML MED II together with the work under the EcAp MED III project contributes to the development of the assessment of marine litter-related Common Indicators, which will be part of the 2023 MED QSR. At the thematic CORMON meeting held on 30/03/21, the Regional Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP CCI 24 was presented for review and endorsement. Its aim is to provide practical guidelines in designing and developing monitoring programmes to collect standardised data on marine litter ingested by sea turtles.

Cooperation with several other projects can be showcased in Tunisia for the component of the project which focuses in further developing IMAP Candidate Indicator 24:

- a) Life MEDTURTLES Project: SPA/RAC established an MoU, through which the Faculty of Sciences of Sfax, who is coordinating the project in Tunisia, particularly the data collection on marine litter ingested by stranded sea turtles, is committed to putting its expertise and the data acquired for the execution of the Marine Litter MED II project.
- b) COMMON Project: The "Coastal Management and Monitoring Network for tackling marine litter in Mediterranean Sea" (COMMON) project is funded by the ENI CBC MED program. In the framework of its work package 3.3, SPA/RAC is discussing the possibility to retrieve the data collected from the monitoring of macrolitter and microlitter on the stranded and live turtles. The project has ensured the characterization and quantification of litter ingested by sea turtles and the centralization of stomach content samples.
- c) SPA/RAC supported the COMMON project team (INSTM) for the organization of 2-days training workshop (21-22/12/2021) aimed to improve knowledge on monitoring and assessing the impact of marine debris on AMCP and threatened species. The training was an opportunity to present the Marine Litter MED II Project and to implement a practical training on the implementation of the Protocol for monitoring interactions between marine litter and marine turtles (ingestion and entangling) with a view to harmonizing methods of data collection for monitoring and assessment (Prepared within the phase I of the project).
- d) Marine Turtles Project: the MAVA funded project aims to reinforce sea turtles stranding national monitoring. SPA/RAC organised a sub-regional training on marine turtle rescue, networking at the Lampedusa Turtle Rescue Centre during 15-19 November 2021. This regional training included lectures and practical sessions on onboard first aid, sampling techniques, turtle rescue surgery, clinical treatments and necropsy. Marine turtle specialists and veterinarians from Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Lebanon benefited from the workshop.

In relation to the project's activities pertinent to phasing out single-use plastic items the following synergies can be reported grouped as follows:

- A. MTF:
 - o During 2021 MAP Programme of Work activities with MTF funding contributed to the elaboration of policy guidelines to tackle single-use plastic products in the Mediterranean region, as requested by Contracting Parties, which were published at the occasion of the COP 22. The guidelines were reviewed by the target countries, particularly through SCP/RAC Focal Points meeting and the WES project (see below). Hence, they are instrumental in guiding related activities under Marine Litter MED II and complement the existing guidelines on single-use plastic bags.

- In Tunisia⁹, MAP Programme of Work activities undertaken with MTF funding have been undertaken to support the country in implementing the plastic bags ban decree, through the conception and production of a communication campaign. The tools will be used in Marine Litter MED II to implement the campaign in the field.
- B. WES project:
- A regional activity on capacity building in relation to single-use plastics has been completed, led by SCP/RAC. This has allowed for raising awareness on the issue in Southern countries and increasing their capacities to address it, which will ease the implementation of Marine Litter MED II project.
 - The project includes several national activities in relation to the scope of work of Marine Litter Med. In Morocco, work is ongoing on elaborating an EPR framework agreement and roadmap focusing on PET bottles, which will start being implemented through Marine Litter MED II project. In Egypt, a similar approach will follow concerning packaging waste, whereas in Lebanon the activity should address single-use plastics (confirmation pending).
- C. Plastic Busters MPAs:
- This Interreg Med project includes several mitigation demo activities in EU countries related to the work in Marine Litter Med, which outcomes serve to inform actions in Southern countries supported by Marine Litter MED II project.
- D. BeMed-Islands capitalisation process:
- SCP/RAC and SMILO are conducting a regional capitalisation process on the BeMed supported projects in Mediterranean islands. This provides for hands on learning and building a community of practice which is useful for the work in Marine Litter Med, since most projects focus on prevention of land-based plastic pollution sources. Likewise, Marine Litter Med outcomes will be disseminated through this community.

VI RESOURCES AND BUDGET¹⁰

Up to day project budget has been released for the years 2020 and 2021, including one additional line to support the full amount envisaged for the legal agreements (IP Direct) that will be in place in the framework of the project, inclusive of 7% Programme Support Cost (PSC). The approved budget for 2020 was at the level of USD 66,645, and for 2021 at the level of USD 409,429. Moreover, IP Direct budget was released at the level of USD 336,814.00 to obligate the full amounts for the envisaged legal agreements (i.e., SSFAs). The total release of the budget in 2020 and 2021 is at the level of USD 812,888.

A summary of the expenditures incurred as of 31 December 2021 is provided herewith to present report, with the total actual expenses reaching the level of – USD 76,615, whereas the total actual including the commitments reached up to USD 364,382.

According to the General Conditions of the ENRTP-GPGC Framework, unspent funds from 2021 would be rolled over to 2022. The reallocation of potential savings (e.g. absence of travel and in person meetings) will be reviewed at a later stage and a relevant proposal will be submitted to the Steering Committee Meeting to be organized in first half of 2022.

Specific information on incurred expenses will be shared through the annual 2021 financial report for the Marine Litter MED II project which will follow to the submission of the present narrative progress report.

⁹ Appel à propositions pour les associations tunisiennes : mise en place d'une campagne de Communication sur les sacs en plastique: <http://www.cprac.org/en/news-archive/general/appel-a-propositions-pour-les-associations-tunisiennes-mise-en-place-d-une-camp>

¹⁰ This section will provide a narrative description of the project financial implementation only but should be developed in close liaison with the Fund Management Officer. Financial reporting will provide detailed figures.

VII VISIBILITY¹¹

The planned communication actions and deliverables are stemming from the initial Project Communication and Visibility Plan annexed to the project document and as revised for the 2021-2022 period (UNEP/MEDWG.516/4) and presented during the 1st Steering Committee Meeting in September 2021.

The activities already undertaken are described underneath, following the structure of the abovementioned Workplan. In all of them, particular attention was paid to EU visibility and the acknowledgement of its financial contribution.

A brochure (*A push for the achievement of Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean*) was prepared in 2021 and is under procurement. It describes the three EU-funded projects (i.e. Marine Litter MED II, EcAp MED III and IMAp MPA) contributing to the implementation of the upgraded Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) and the 2023 MED QSR. Drafted in English, it will be available in 3 more languages (i.e. Arabic, French and Spanish), expected to become available during the first quarter of 2022. The brochure will be distributed through UNEP/MAP, MAP Components and IPs' communication and visibility channels, including websites, social networks and relevant events). Its content is annexed to this report.

In addition, a 2-minute video associated with the brochure is being produced. The script was finalised, and it will be disseminated in 2022 alike the brochure.

A [project mini site](#) was created in 2020 within the UNEP/MAP website. The page – in both English and French – is regularly updated with new developments.

The MAP Components involved to the implementation of the project contributed to the visibility of the Project by presenting its activities at their respective Focal Points and UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention meetings. They channelled the communication of Secretariat through their networks, social media and websites.

Due to late or delayed legal agreements with BCs, communication at national level was kept to a minimum. The implementing partners will communicate on tangible results through local media to a greater extend in 2022 and 2023 in particular.

COP meetings occur every two years and are the most important event of the Barcelona Convention and the principal gathering on environment and sustainable development in the region. COP 22 (7-10/12/2021 in Antalya, Turkey) offered an inclusive platform for renewed commitment in the Mediterranean and sent a clear signal that the UNEP/MAP system was ready to act effectively and in a timely manner to support the region in building back greener with strong environmental objectives. During COP22 the upgraded Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean was approved and the activities of the project contributing to its implementation were discussed and presented into details. A [slideshow](#) was used for that purpose. It was displayed in four languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish) in the main hall and in the background of multiple events. A [virtual exhibition](#) was developed by INFO/RAC to showcase the videos, panels and documents displayed physically at the venue. A few pictures illustrating the exhibition are annexed to the report.

¹¹ With communication activities, increasingly important for the EU, please raise where and how EU support has been mentioned and acknowledged in your communication activities.

VIII WAY FORWARD¹²

COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention held in Antalya, Turkey in December 2021 adopted substantive revisions of the 2013 Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management and thus the advancement on project implementation is a key element for UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System.

The lessons learnt from the actions undertaken in 2021, the problems encountered, and the measure taken to overcome the difficulties will serve the PMU for the implementation of the Project activities in 2022. Enhanced cooperation at each level will be essential. Major activities, key milestones and main outputs to be achieved during the next reporting period are highlighted below.

The major element that will be tackled during the first two months of 2022 (i.e. January – February 2021) is to conclude all the legal instruments with the project's beneficiary countries towards streamlining the provided support and commencing the execution of the national activities in full speed. Below, the way forward planned for 2022 is presented per project output:

Output A:

- The National Monitoring Programme for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 in Lebanon, launched on 1st September 2021, will be continued in line with the project's workplan, as well as the design and requirements of the national operational strategy. The collection of data will be continued also in 2022.
- The National Monitoring Programme for IMAP Cand. Indicator 24 in Tunisia will be launched in Tunisia in January 2022 in synergy with EU ongoing projects implemented by the INSTM (COMMON & INDICIT II). The collection of data in the framework of the project will also take place within 2022.
- MED POL and SPA/RAC will jointly prepare the relevant reporting templates based on the agreed standardized monitoring protocols, to enable the preparation of the relevant Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) that will be reviewed and fine-tuned by INFO/RAC within 2022.
- Terms of References for the elaboration of a proposal for updated Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 will be advertised, a consultant will support SPA/RAC team, and the relevant values will be presented during the CORMON Marine Litter and Biodiversity Meetings in 2022/2023.
- Data deriving from project activities will be collected in 2022 and along with other sourced data will be used to assess whether the environmental targets approved by COP 19 in 2016 have been reached, and relevant environmental targets will be proposed or will be updated in 2022-2023 for IMAP Common and Candidate Indicators for Marine Litter.
- A methodology for monitoring inputs of marine litter coming from riverine sources will be developed in 2022 and will be reviewed by the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting/s in 2022/2023.
- A methodology for monitoring microplastics from treated waste water will be developed in 2022 and will be reviewed by the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting/s in 2022/2023.
- A draft report on the sources, uses and leakages of microplastics in the Mediterranean and a shortlist of measured will become available in 2022.

Output B:

- 5 new SSFAs with Algeria Egypt, Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia are concluded for the execution of activities pertinent to AaB, FfL, riverine marine litter and sea-based sources. 5 national reports will become available by the end of 2022.
- 3 countries advance on the implementation of on the ground activities pertinent to FfL. 3 national reports will become available by the end of 2022.
- 2 countries advance on the implementation of on the ground activities pertinent to riverine marine litter. 2 national reports will become available by the end of 2022.
- 3 countries advance on the implementation of on the ground activities pertinent to sea-based sources. 3 national reports will become available by the end of 2022.

¹² A milestone is not equal to a summation of tasks or activities. Rather it represents the achievement of a feasible project management stage and be strictly answerable as yes or no answer.

- A regional expert is recruited in 2022 to support the Project Management Unit in the execution of the activities pertinent to sea-based sources.
- In relation to single-use plastic products:
 - a) Tunisia: full implementation of communication campaign, including press conference and 5 field awareness actions. As a result, an important segment of Tunisian population will be aware of the existence and content of the decree and favourable to switch to alternatives.
 - b) Lebanon: it is expected to consult with the Ministry of Environment and other key stakeholders on the adequacy of different policy measures to address single-use plastic bags and agree on the implementation of a number of measures.
 - c) Egypt: continue coordination with other international organisations and provide ad-hoc advice on policy and technical developments.
- In relation to EPR:
 - a) Morocco: Following the roadmap being prepared under WES project, specific elements will be implemented through Marine Litter MED II support. This may relate to the need for additional studies, particularly on the costs of waste management and estimation of producers' financial contributions.
 - b) Algeria: Following the 1st phase of Marine Litter MED, in 2022 work would start by seeking the agreement between national beverage producers' association and recycling industries on the system by which producers would financially contribute to the collection of PET bottles.
 - c) Lebanon: specific scope is to be discussed with the Ministry of Environment.

Output C:

- BSC streamlines the support to the beneficiary Black Sea countries and a bilateral meeting is organized between UNEP/MAP and BSC.
- A bilateral meeting is organized between UNEP/MAP and GFCM and a joint workplan is prepared.
- The 5th meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter is organized in summer 2022.
- The 2nd Steering Committee Meeting is organized in Spring 2022.
- The marine litter best practices meeting is jointly organized together with MARLICE 2022 Conference on May 2022.
- Annual and interim progress reports are submitted to the donor.

Awareness and advocacy efforts should continue in 2022. The dissemination of newly produced communication material (such as the brochure and the video) will resume in the post-COP agenda and will stick to the Marine Litter MED II schedule. The Marine Litter Best Practices and the CORMON ML meetings will be the occasion to shed lights on the progress of the Project within 2022.

IX FINAL REMARKS ON REPORTING PERIOD 2021

This Annual Progress Report provided a comprehensive account of all aspects of the implementation of the Project for the period covered. Overall, Marine Litter MED II project made good progress in 2021. The initial delays and challenges do not affect the relevance of the Project which will continue at full speed in 2022. As planned, it will support the Beneficiary Countries in the implementation of the upgraded Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and of selected aspects of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP).

The issues faced were mitigated by the long-standing experience within the Secretariat and the Components. It allowed the Project Management Team to draw several lessons from this first implementation phase (developed under Section III). Coordination among EU-funded projects allowed for constant exchanges of experience, knowledge and best practices.

The successful implementation of Marine Litter MED II project requires strong and solid engagement by the Beneficiary Countries and in this context, there is room for improvement to shorten the time needed for bilateral consultations and related actions.

The donor will be kept informed of the Project performance and fully updated ahead of the next Steering Committee meeting in spring 2022 through a dedicated Project report and workplan for the upcoming period

X ANNEXES

- Annex I: Report of the 1st Steering Committee Meeting of the Project.
- Annex II: Report of the 4th Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter.
- Annex III: 2022-2023 Joint Workplan of Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter.
- Annex IV: Letter from UNEP/MAP Coordinator to GFCM Executive Director.
- Annex V: Letters from UNEP/MAP Coordinator to Project Beneficiary Countries Regarding the Execution of the Envisaged Activities.
- Annex VI: Terms of Reference for the Implementation of Field Awareness Actions on the Plastic Bags Ban Decree in Tunisia.
- Annex VII: Draft Terms of Reference for a Regional Expert to Support the Execution of the Activities Related to Sea-based Sources.
- Annex VIII: Draft Terms of References to Support Beneficiary Countries for the Engagement of National Experts to Support the Execution of the Activities Related to Sea-based Sources.
- Annex IX: Draft National Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 in Lebanon.
- Annex X: First Progress Report from the Implementation of the National Monitoring Programme of IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 in Lebanon.
- Annex XI: Draft National Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 in Tunisia.
- Annex XII: Report of the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Marine Litter Monitoring (CORMON Marine Litter), 30 March 2021.
- Annex XIII: Brochure – A push for the achievement of Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean.
- Annex XIV: Pictures taken during COP 22 illustrating the exhibition.
- Annex XV: Presentation of current status of plastic bags in the country, and their alternatives, at the Green Climate and Smart Waste Management International Conference, organised by WCECIE, Cairo, Egypt, 8-9 September 2021.