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Agenda Item 3: Progress on Marine Litter MED II Project Implementation:

Progress Report on the Implementation of Marine Litter MED II Project

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1. Introduction

1. The EU-funded Marine Litter MED II Project implemented and coordinated by UN Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) aims to support the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention from the southern Mediterranean region to further expand and support the implementation of the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. The project's activities are coordinated by UNEP/MAP Secretariat with the support of UNEP/MAP Components (i.e., MED POL, SCP/RAC, SPA/RAC and REMPEC), in close cooperation with the beneficiary Contracting Parties (i.e., Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (hereunder referred to as BSC).

2. The Marine Litter MED II project also presents a special focus on Decision IG.24/4 on the "Roadmap and Needs Assessment for the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report"; Decision IG.24/10 on the "Main Elements of the Six Regional Plans to Reduce/Prevent Marine Pollution from Land-Based Sources; Updating the Annexes to the LBS and Dumping Protocols of the Barcelona Convention"; Decision IG.24/11 on the "Regional Marine Litter Guidelines", as well as the COP21 Naples Ministerial Declaration.

3. The project was launched in September 2020 and aims to achieve three principal outputs:

- Output A: 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 B: Scale up and expand the implementation of pilot implementation of selected marine litter reduction and prevention measures at national and local level.
- Output C: 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.

4. Since its launch, the project is progressing towards achieving the implementation of all three project outputs. The present progress report highlights the main activities carried out from September 2021 till June 2022. It is prepared by UNEP/MAP for the kind consideration and review of the Second Steering Committee Meeting of the Marine Litter MED II Project with the aim to review the progress achieved; provide comments and advice; and set the next steps and the way forward for the execution of the on-the-ground activities towards the timely and effective implementation of the Project.

5. The present progress report provides an overview of accomplishments made for each activity (as outlined in the project work plan). This is presented in Chapter 2 (Table 1) titled "Progress Table: Marine Litter MED II Project" providing detailed information for each activity and describing remaining work and arising issues preventing the timely completion of these activities. It also includes response measures taken to address the arising issues.

2. Progress Table: Marine Litter MED Project

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.	As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan	The progress in the implementation of this set of activities is progressing well and in line with the project's workplan.
	Level of collection of monitoring data for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.		The National Strategies/ Monitoring Programmes for monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 for Lebanon and Tunisia have been elaborated, and the first draft of these strategies has been reviewed by the main stakeholders and were approved at national levels.
	Level of agreement on updated baselines values, threshold values for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.		The final versions of the 2 National Strategies/Monitoring Programmes were shared during the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (Videoconference, 31 May 2022) ¹ .
	Number of Monitoring Protocols and methodologies prepared and implemented for riverine marine litter and microplastics coming from WWTP	As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan	The National Strategy/Monitoring programme has been launched and made operational in Lebanon since September 2021, and the first progress report was delivered in early 2022, including data on stranded marine turtles from January 2021 until December 2021.
			A dialogue has been initiated with the EU-funded projects INDICIT I & II as well as with the INTERREG MED Plastics Busters MPA Project regarding the sharing of data for the needs of updating the BV and establishing TV for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24. A relevant inventory has been prepared supplemented by national data from Lebanon, Tunisia and to some extent Algeria. The process for engaging a consultant will be initiated during summer 2022.
			The first version of the "Draft Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine Inputs of Marine Litter" has been developed by MED POL and presented for review to the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (31 May 2022; WG.534/4). Follow-up actions have identified towards updating the document and preparing its final version.

¹ UNEP/MED WG.534/Inf.4: Draft National Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 in Lebanon
 UNEP/MED WG.534/Inf.5: Draft National Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 in Tunisia

	Level of achievement of the approved marine litter environmental targets	Ongoing with delays	Currently MED POL is working in updating the BV-TV for IMAP CI23 in order together with the updated BV-TV for IMAP CI22 to be in a position to assess the level of achievement of the approved environmental targets.
	Number of assessment reports delivered including measures' identification	As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan	2 assessment reports developed. In addition: "Overview of measures/instruments to prevent, control and manage marine litter generation from wastewater treatment plants, aquaculture activities, riverine inputs, and shipping" (Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices, Seville, Spain, 17-18 May 2022 - WG.526/3).
Output 1-A 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	Level of preparation of national Monitoring programmes and strategies for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24	As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan	2 National Strategies/Monitoring Programmes for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 have been developed and approved at national level for Tunisia and Lebanon. The final version of the monitoring programmes was shared with the experts participated at the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (31 May 2022): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG.534/Inf.4: Draft National Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 in Lebanon • WG.534/Inf.5: Draft National Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 in Tunisia. The monitoring programmes are now at the phase of operationalization and data generation for both countries.
	Number of national teams and institutions involved in the process		National teams are in place in Lebanon (MoE, First-Aid Center of Tyre Coast Nature Reserve) since September 2021, and in Tunisia (INSTM, Sea Turtle Rescue Center in Monastir) since January 2022 and are working in full speed on the relevant aspects as described in the project document.
	Number of national experts trained		Trainings to be organized during Q3-Q4 2022.

<p>Output 1-B 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</p>	<p>Level of preparation of Data Standards and Data Dictionaries.</p>	<p>As planned and in line with Project's workplan</p>	<p>The "Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DS) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Candidate Indicator 24 (Ingestion and Entanglement on Marine Turtles)" has been developed from MED POL, SPA/RAC and InfoRAC and was presented for review to the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (31 May 2022) (WG.534/3).</p>
	<p>Level of preparation of quality assured reporting procedure of monitoring data sets</p>		<p>The Document was approved by the meeting with minor adjustments and the next step is for the Secretariat (MED POL, SPA/RAC and InfoRAC) to develop the relevant Module for IMAP InfoSystem and to make it operational. A relevant internal meeting is planned in June 2022 in order to agree on the way forward for developing the Module expected to be operation by Sept. 2022.</p>
	<p>Level of inclusion of DS and DD in the IMAP Infosystem and operationality</p>		<p>In the meantime, data generation and collection has been initiated in Lebanon and Tunisia (based on the national monitoring programmes) and additional data will be made available from Algeria.</p> <p>In terms of next steps, when the IMAP InfoSystem Module will be operational, MED POL and SPA/RAC with the technical support of InfoRAC will coordinate the uploading of the relevant datasets.</p>
<p>Output 1-C Update Baseline Values and establish threshold values for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24</p>	<p>Level of further development and update of baseline values and environmental targets</p>	<p>As planned and in line with Project's workplan</p>	<p>Due to the lack of national data, MED POL and SPA/RAC have investigated for the presence of relevant data required for the development/update of Baseline Values (BV) and the establishment of Threshold Values (TV). Based on the outcomes of this assessment a very active dialogue has been initiated with the EU-funded INDICIT I & II as well as with the INTERREG MED Plastics Busters MPA Projects. There is an agreement in place for the projects to share their data (dully acknowledged) with the scope to supplement the data collected and generated within the ML MED II project.</p>
	<p>Level of preparation of assessment threshold values</p>		<p>In this regard, an inventory of data has been prepared including data from 2018 to 2021 with the scope to use them for the need of updating the BV and establishing TV for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.</p> <p>Moreover, a discussion with relevant experts has been initiated and the current assessment finding is that the collected datasets are sufficient to enable such a detailed elaboration and statistical work.</p>

<p>Output 1-D 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.</p>	<p>Level of progress achieved in reaching the environmental targets approved by COP 19 in 2016.</p>	<p>Ongoing with delays</p>	<p>The Baseline and Threshold Values for the IMAP CI 22 (beach macro-litter) have been updated, approved, and annexed under Decision IG.25/9 (COP22, Antalya, Turkey, December 2021).</p> <p>The Secretariat (MED POL) is also working in updating the relevant values for IMAP CI 23 with a focus on floating microplastic and seafloor macrolitter. So far, 17 Contracting Parties have uploaded or are in the process of uploading (including conformity check controls and dataset revision) datasets to IMAP InfoSystem to enable the elaboration of updated BV and establishment of TV. This assignment is expected to be finalized by Sept. 2022 and a dedicated document will be prepared for the upcoming CORMON Marine Litter (Q4 2022).</p> <p>When updated BV and establishment of TV are in place for all IMAP EO10 Common Indicators, an assessment with regards to the environmental targets will be possible (esp. against the 2016 values), including for setting set environmental targets.</p>
	<p>Proposal on environmental targets or their update for IMAP Common and Candidate Indicators for Marine Litter</p>		
	<p>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</p>		
<p>Output 1-E 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 ground for expanding the marine litter common indicators of IMAP to include an indicator on riverine inputs.</p>	<p>Level of preparation of Methodologies developed for monitoring and assessing riverine inputs.</p>	<p>As planned and in line with project's workplan</p>	<p>The "Draft Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine Inputs of Marine Litter" are prepared and presented for review during the CORMON Marine Litter Meeting (31 May 2022) (WG.534/4).</p> <p>Technical input was received, and a decision was taken by the CORMON to further focus the document on the visual monitoring, including for micro/meso/macro-litter and the use/deployment of nets. The Online Working Group on Marine Litter (OWG-ML) will be assigned with the task of finalizing the document under MED POL's coordination with a timeline to finalize the document by Autumn 2022.</p>
	<p>Level of Data collected to feed 2023 MED QSR preparations with regards to marine litter riverine inputs</p>		
	<p>Number of national experts trained</p>	<p>Ongoing with delays</p>	<p>The pilots in Israel and Morocco are ongoing and the data collection through a standardized manner is ongoing with several pending fine-tuning technical elements to be pending based on the final version of the guidelines.</p>
<p>Output 1-F Assess the main uses and sources of microplastics in the Mediterranean, as well as microplastic leakages into the marine and coastal environment of the</p>	<p>Number of Regional/sub-regional reports on the sources, uses and leakages of microplastics in the Mediterranean</p>	<p>As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan</p>	<p>Two (2) assessment reports have been developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Report on measures/instruments to prevent, control and monitor of marine litter undertaken for wastewater treatment plants; aquaculture activities; riverine inputs and ships, with a focus on

<p>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.</p>			<p>microplastics, emerging pollutants and packaging waste management in the Mediterranean.</p> <p>b) Report on sources for plastic pollution and measures to prevent and reduce generation of plastic waste management in the Mediterranean.</p>
	<p>Number of key management and prevention measures proposed</p>	<p>As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan</p>	<p>Moreover, a report titled "Overview of measures/instruments to prevent, control and manage marine litter generation from wastewater treatment plants, aquaculture activities, riverine inputs, and shipping" (WG.526/3), was prepared and presented during the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (Seville, Spain, 17-18 May 2022) including a series of specific key management and prevention measures for effectively managing marine litter inputs from rives, aquaculture, shipping and wastewater treatment plants.</p>
	<p>Number of Protocols developed to monitor microplastics</p>	<p>Ongoing with minor delays</p>	<p>A ToR is under development for the recruitment of an external/international expert/consultant with the scope to develop a protocol for monitoring inputs of microplastics coming from WWTPs. Potential experts from Israel and Italy have been identified as the relevant work is more progressed in these 2 countries.</p>
<p>Output 1-G 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.</p>	<p>Number of national experts trained</p>	<p>As planned for some aspects and with minor delays for some other</p>	<p>2-day training workshop was organized on 21-22 December 2021 in cooperation with the COMMON project team and INSTM/Tunisia with the scope to improve knowledge on monitoring and assessing the impact of marine debris on AMCP and threatened species.</p>
	<p>Number of teams involved in the pilot projects at country level</p>		<p>A sub-regional training on marine turtles was organized in Lampedusa Turtle Rescue Centre (15-19 Nov. 2021) in cooperation with MAVA funded "Marine Turtles Project" where marine turtle experts from Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Lebanon benefited from the workshop.</p> <p>Additional capacity building/ training activities will take place during Q3-Q4 2022 and Q1 2023 for the remaining aspects of the project.</p>

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	Ongoing with delays	AaB pilots are ongoing in Morocco since Nov. 2021, beaches have been selected, pilots are executed, and national teams are in place
	Number of national reports submitted showcasing and presenting results from the implementation of Fishing-for-Litter pilots	Ongoing with delays	AaB pilots are ongoing in Morocco since Nov. 2021, beaches have been selected, pilots are executed, and national teams are in place.
	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	As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan	In relation to SUPB, work is progressing very well in Tunisia with the communication campaign on the ban decree on single-use plastic bags being effectively executed at national level, including high visibility. In Lebanon, consultations took place with the Ministry of Environment to define the scope of action of ML MED II.
	Number of EPR schemes prepared and developed with a particular focus on plastic packaging and beverage containers	Ongoing with delays	Work is progressing in Morocco for an EPR scheme for plastic (PET) bottles in a joint manner with the respective activities implemented in the framework of the WES project based on the relevant roadmap that has been agreed at national level.
	Number of pilots related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas	Ongoing with delays	The work has been initiated in Morocco since Nov. 2021, ports have identified, pilots are under execution, and national teams are under establishment.

<p>Output 2-A 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.</p>	Number of countries implementing Adopt-a-beach pilots	Ongoing with delays	<p>1 Country (Morocco) is implementing AaB pilots since Nov. 2021. A national tender is published, a workplan has been prepared and agreed and a national team is in place consisting of 7 persons representing 5 institutes/organizations. 6 sites/beaches have been selected and the collection of datasets is following the periodic yearly cycle of the surveys.</p> <p>Negotiations with Lebanon and Tunisia are mature enough and the legal agreements should be operational by July 2022.</p> <p>The project supported the organization of the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (17-18 May 2022) held back-to-back with MARLICE 2022 Conference which supported the exchange on marine litter best practices showcasing the successful examples deriving from the implementation of key reduction and prevention measures within the framework of the project.</p>
	Number of sites selected per country to implement adopt of beach measures.		
	Number of data collected in line with IMAP guidance factsheets and Adopt a Beach Guidelines		
	Number of local actors involved in the process		
	Level of marine litter reduction in pilot areas		
<p>Output 2-B 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 in marine litter and microplastic generation</p>	Number of countries implementing FfL pilots	Ongoing with delays	<p>1 Country (Morocco) is implementing FfL pilots since Nov. 2021. A national tender is published, a workplan has been prepared and agreed and a national team is in place consisting of 7 persons representing 5 institutes/organizations. 1 additional port has been selected and the work is ongoing.</p> <p>Negotiations with Tunisia are mature enough and the legal agreements should be operational by July 2022.</p> <p>The project supported the organization of the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (17-18 May 2022) held back-to-back with MARLICE 2022 Conference which supported the exchange on marine litter best practices showcasing the successful examples deriving from the implementation of key reduction and prevention measures within the framework of the project.</p>
	Number of sites selected per country to implement FfL measures		
	Number of data collected in line with IMAP guidance factsheets and FfL Guidelines.		
	Number of local actors involved in the process.		
	Level of marine litter item reduction in pilot areas.		

<p>Output 2-C Further sensitize and engage fishermen to the purpose of minimizing sea-based sources; and contribute to extent possible with data on seafloor marine litter.</p>	<p>Number of fishermen engaged in the implementation of the pilots.</p>	<p>Not yet started</p>	<p>The capacity building component of the project will be executed after the FfL projects are initiated by all beneficiary Countries and national teams are in place.</p>
<p>Output 2-D 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 legislator 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 Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean</p>	<p>Number of countries to review and draft up to date regulations and law on reduction of single use plastics.</p>		<p>As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan</p>
	<p>Number of laws/regulations developed on reduction of single use plastics.</p>		
	<p>Number of counties and sectors implementing EPR schemes for plastic packaging and beverage containers</p>	<p>Ongoing with delays</p>	<p>In Morocco the project will focus on the development of an EPR scheme for packaging with a focus on plastic (PET) bottles. This activity is implemented in conjunction with the EU-funded WES project which will have as an outcome a national roadmap to</p>

			<p>implement EPR in Morocco. The outcome is expected in Q3 2022. This will serve to detail the scope of the contribution of ML MED II in 2022.</p> <p>In Algeria, a consultation took place during Q1 2022 with the scope to update on the national developments pertinent to the various EPR initiatives that have been carried out or are ongoing. The project will focus its pilot intervention in the Willaya of Oran (exp. Q3 2022), following up the feasibility assessment of the first phase of the project.</p> <p>The project supported the organization of the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (17-18 May 2022) held back-to-back with MARLICE 2022 Conference which supported the exchange on marine litter best practices showcasing the successful examples deriving from the implementation of key reduction and prevention measures within the framework of the project.</p>
<p>Output 2-E 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</p>	<p>Number of pilots related to the enhanced management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas implemented.</p> <p>Number of targeted diagnosis prepared for the selected ports and marinas.</p> <p>Number of Waste Reception and Handling Plans (WRHP) prepared or revised.</p>	<p>Ongoing with delays</p>	<p>The enabling conditions for the execution of the pilots in Morocco are in place since Nov. 2021. A national tender is published, a workplan has been prepared and agreed and a national team is in place consisting of 7 persons representing 5 institutes/organizations. 1 additional port has been selected and the work is ongoing.</p> <p>Negotiations with Tunisia are mature enough and the legal agreements should be operational by July 2022.</p> <p>A call for a “Regional Consultancy to support the execution of pilots related to the better management of sea-based litter in ports and marinas in the framework of the "Marine Litter MED II" Project” was launched in April 2022 and a suitable expert has been selected among 21 candidates. The process for officially engaging the expert is ongoing and expected to be finalized by June 2022.</p> <p>Moreover, MED POL has drafted a template for national experts (English and French) to facilitate and assist the beneficiary</p>

<p>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</p>			<p>countries with the scope to have aligned the tasks/outputs of the national experts with the respective of the regional expert.</p> <p>The project supported the organization of the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (17-18 May 2022) held back-to-back with MARLICE 2022 Conference which supported the exchange on marine litter best practices showcasing the successful examples deriving from the implementation of key reduction and prevention measures within the framework of the project.</p>
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Outcome 3	Indicator(s)	Target vs. Actual result	Description of the results achieved
<p>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>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)</p>	<p>Ongoing with delays</p>	<p>An SSFA has been signed since Nov. 2021, bilateral exchanges are taking place, however no substantive progress can be reported for both the national and regional component of the activities due to the emerging situation in the Black Sea region.</p>
	<p>Number of national marine litter monitoring programmes prepared</p>		
	<p>Number of marine litter assessment reports for the Black Sea region updated/prepared</p>		
	<p>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</p>	<p>Ongoing with delays</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Number of additional memberships from organizations/institutions from the project eligible countries join the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine litter in the Mediterranean.</p>	<p>As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan</p>	<p>The 4th meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter was held online in Nov. 2021, and additional memberships have been received.</p>
	<p>Number of project reports prepared and submitted, and steering committee meetings successfully organized.</p>	<p>As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan</p>	<p>2021 Annual Project Progress Report and TLS reports prepared and timely submitted to the donor during the reporting period. 1st Steering Committee of the Project organized (20 Sept. 2021).</p>

Output 3-A	Number of national monitoring programmes	Ongoing with delays	An SSFA has been signed since Nov. 2021, however no substantive progress is reported regarding the national and regional components of the project. The current emerging situation in the Black Sea Region do not allow for the effective execution of the activities as provided for in the signed SSFA.
	Number of regional assessment reports		
	Number of baseline values formulated		
Output 3-B	Adopt-a-beach pilots are implemented in at least, two Black Sea countries	Ongoing with delays	
	National regulatory framework for phasing out single-use plastic bags is reviewed, and technical assistance is provided in two countries		
Output 3-C	Joint workplan between UNEP/MAP and GFCM is prepared and agreed.	Ongoing with delays	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Output 3-D	Participation and membership of key Mediterranean actors and stakeholders into the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean expanded; and synergies maximized.	As planned and in line with the Project's Workplan	The 4th meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter was held online in Nov. 2021. The 2018 joint workplan was reviewed, a new one was agreed for the 2022-2023 biennium, and a number of additional memberships have been received.
	Additional memberships from organizations/institutions from the project eligible countries join the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine litter in the Mediterranean		

3. Progress Report on Project Management

6. Progress in the second year of implementation has mainly focused in operationalizing the Project's national activities in all beneficiary countries and undertaking all necessary administrative and required regulatory steps towards the on-the-ground execution of the planned activities.

7. In terms of reporting, the UNEP PMU has successfully submitted the second Annual Project Progress Report of the Project, covering the period January to December 2021, including the relevant periodic ENRTP/GPGC traffic light reports required during the reporting period.

8. The Associate Programme Management Officer (P2) (Marine Litter MED II Project Manager) is on board since October 2021. At the Secretariat, the UNV assigned with the role of the programme/project assistant (50%) will be extended until October 2022 (tbc) until the G5 position envisaged in the project is covered (expected during Q2 2022).

9. The Project budget was released for 2022 in accordance with yearly allocations, as per the Project document and is operational in UMOJA/UE2. Moreover, the 3rd installment of the project has been effectively released from UNEP HQ's and is now operational in UMOJA/UE2. More information on the budget can be found under working document UNEP/MED WG.536/3.

10. The SSFA with SCP/RAC was signed and made operational in October 2021 and amended in March 2022, whereas the SSFA with SPA/RAC was signed and made operational in April 2021. Moreover, 2 legal agreements have been signed with the beneficiary countries (i.e., Israel in October 2021, and Morocco in November 2021).

11. SSFAs have been prepared from UNEP/MAP MED POL also for Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia; however, have not yet been made operational. For the case of Tunisia, it seems that the persisting issues have been resolved/clarified and the SSFA is expected to be signed within June 2022.

12. Covid-19 and its consequences continued in 2022 and the Secretariat is increasing its efforts towards overcoming the persisting delays through constant follow-ups and bilateral exchanges/meetings.

4. Interlinkages and Synergies with Other Projects

13. The project is executed in full synergy and complementarity with the approved UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027 (Decision IG.25/1, COP22) and the Programme of Work (PoW) 2022-2023 (Decision IG.25/19, COP22).

14. The project will also ensure that synergy and coherence are enhanced as much as possible with other relevant projects and initiatives, and in particular with other EU-, Interreg-MED and GEF-funded projects (i.e., GEF Med Programme Child 1.1; EcAp MED III; IMAP-MPA; PlasticBusters MPAs; INDICIT II; Water and Environment Support (WES); GloLitter; etc.), as well as with the activities supported from the Cooperation Agreement between UNEP/MAP and the Italian Ministry for Ecological Transition.

15. The work pertinent to single-use plastics and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is having a very strong synergistic component with the EU-funded WES Project in both the regional and national components. The respective synergies are listed hereunder (Table 2):

Table 2: Synergistic execution of activities between Marine Litter MED II and WES projects relevant to SUPs and EPR.

	Marine Litter Med II	WES
Regional	Contribution to Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter, and the Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (May 2022)	Regional training on microplastics (May-June 2021)
Morocco	Implementation and support through providing technical assistance for the implementation of selected measures included in the national roadmap	Development of a national roadmap for the implementation of EPR scheme on PET drink bottles
Tunisia	Implementation of field actions to disseminate the communication campaign focusing on the ban decree on single-use plastic bags	N/A
Algeria	Implementation of EPR pilot project in Willaya of Oran	N/A
Lebanon	Technical support to MoE in moving forward with policy measure/s on single-use plastic bags: tax system or consumers reward system	Technical assistance to the MoE in defining and implementing policy measures to tackle on-the-go single-use plastics

16. 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 December 2021) aimed to improve knowledge on monitoring and assessing the impact of marine debris on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (M&CPA) 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.

17. Within the Project Output 1.3 "Update baseline values and threshold values for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24", synergies have been established with the EU-funded INDICIT I and II projects, as well as with the INTERREG-MED Plastic Busters MPA Projects, including an exchange of results and datasets for the need of updated the Baseline Values (BV) and establishing Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24.

5. Gender aspects

18. Gender balance and equity are among the ML MED II Project's core values, and pertinent provisions are taken into account in Project's activities. Gender equality and women's empowerment are also recognized as a cross-cutting priority across all aspects of UNEP's work, including for UNEP/MAP. The Secretariat, through its core work but also through projects' implementation, promotes women and men's participation in all environmental protection and sustainable development activities.

19. Provisions for gender balanced participation is also included in correspondence between UNEP/MAP and the beneficiary Countries for the nomination of Project Focal Points, as well as in the future calls for the recruitment of experts/consultants.

20. The Secretariat is exploring ways and means to streamline gender parity and gender dimension in the Project activities from the substantive point of view based on best practices from other projects and at UNEP level.

21. For the selection of experts and executing partners at national level under the Project activities of the Marine Litter MED II Project it is also required to take into consideration the gender equality.

6. Communication

22. The Project's mini site has been significantly updated in line with the guidance and recommendations received during the 1st Steering Committee Meeting:
<https://www.unep.org/uneppmap/what-we-do/projects/MarineLitterMED-II>

23. The brochure presenting the three EU-funded projects is available on the website of [UNEP/MAP](#) including on the [project's mini-site](#).

24. A complementary video is being produced including for Marine Litter MED II project and has been uploaded in [project's mini-site](#).

25. The Project received great visibility during the "Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices" (Organized back-to-back with the MARLICE 2022 International Forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy) (Seville, Spain, 17-18 May 2022).

26. The Second Steering Committee Meeting of the Project could be the occasion to shed lights on the progress made in the past months through an article to be published on the website of UNEP/MAP during the summer 2022.

27. UNEP/MAP always ensured appropriate EU visibility and the acknowledgement of its financial contribution in the abovementioned actions. All the UNEP/MAP Components are paying particular attention to the promotion of Marine Litter MED II project in the framework of the numerous international and regional meetings and activities planned during the lifespan of the project.

28. A detailed list of communication activities and products are included under working document UNEP/MED WG.536/4.