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Introduction

1. In the context of implementing the project of preparing the Strategic Action Plan on Mediterranean marine and coastal biological diversity (SAP BIO), RAC/SPA organised in Athens, from 8 to 10 May 2003, the Second Meeting of the National Correspondents of the Project.
2. The objectives of the Meeting were to (i) inform the National Correspondents about the progress so far made in implementing the Project activities, (ii) examine the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO Document and (iii) review the other main outputs of the Project.

Participation

3. The National Correspondents appointed by the following Contracting Parties participated at the Meeting: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, European Community, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Turkey.
4. The following organisations were represented by observers: FAO, the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS and IUCN.
5. The Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MEDU) was represented at the Meeting.
6. RAC/SPA acted as the Secretariat for the Meeting.
7. The complete list of participants appears in Annex I to this Report.

Agenda item 1 - Opening the Meeting

8. Mr. Mohamed Adel Hentati, Director of RAC/SPA, after welcoming participants to the Meeting, recalled the recommendations made by the First Meeting of the National Correspondents concerning the process for preparing the SAP BIO. He congratulated the National Correspondents on the quality of the work they had done to prepare the National Reports and the National Action Plans on specific issues (NAPs).
9. Mr. Hentati emphasized that RAC/SPA was conducting the SAP BIO elaboration process based on the outputs of the national and regional processes. In this context, Mr. Hentati thanked the Advisory Committee members for their constant support of and assistance to RAC/SPA. He stressed the importance of the Meeting, particularly as regards the further elaboration of the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO Document.
10. Mr. Ante Baric, GEF Project Coordinator, welcomed the participants on behalf of GEF and stressed the fact that since the First Meeting of National Correspondents, held in Alicante, a lot of work had been done within the framework of the Project and that this had led to many valuable documents being prepared, in particular the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO. He also emphasised that the SAP BIO Document presented to the Meeting was a preliminary draft,

and invited participants to comment on it and make suggestions for its improvement.

11. Mr. Baric stressed that the SAP BIO is expected to be a basic document for planning and financing biodiversity conservation initiatives at national and regional level.

12. Mrs. Tatiana Hema, Programme Officer from MEDU, present on behalf of Mr. Lucien Chabason, the MAP Coordinator, who was unable to attend the Meeting, said the Meeting's importance lay in the fact that it constituted a significant step in the elaborating of the Strategic Action Plan on Mediterranean Biodiversity, to be reviewed by the next Meeting of the National Focal Points for SPAs with a view to submitting it to the Contracting Parties for adoption. She said that the SAP BIO Document had to be a realistic strategy for implementing the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean.

13. Ms. Hemma said it was essential to bear the national and international context in mind in order to be able to evolve within the context of a participatory approach.

Agenda item 2 - Rules of Procedure

14. It was decided that the internal rules adopted for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols (UNEP/IG,43/6, Appendix XI) would apply *mutatis mutandis* to the present Meeting.

Agenda item 3 - Election of Officers

15. After informal consultations, the Meeting elected the following officers:

Chairperson:	Mr. Robert TURK (Slovenia)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Mr. Javier PANTOJA (Spain) Mr. Eliezer FRANKENBERG (Israel)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Habib BEN MOUSSA (Tunisia)

Agenda item 4 - Adoption of the Agenda and organisation of work

16. The Provisional Agenda (UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.227/1), prepared by RAC/SPA, and annotated in the document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.227/2, was adopted by the Meeting. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the proposed timetable, which appears at the end of document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG. 227/2. The Agenda of the Meeting appears in Annex II to this Report.

Agenda item 5 - Presentation of the progress so far made

17. The Secretariat briefly summarised the progress made in implementing the Project, referring to document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG. 227/inf.3. The main outputs of the Project and the steps taken to elaborate the draft SAP BIO Document were

presented (National Reports, NAPs, Regional Documents).

18. Answering a question put by a delegate, the Secretariat said that some of the Regional Documents elaborated within the context of the Project would be published, and that they were being presented to the Meeting as a product of the Project, and also for them to be submitted to the representatives of the Contracting Parties for their opinion. He informed the Meeting that RAC/SPA saw these documents as being of great scientific and technical interest, deserving to be widely circulated around the Mediterranean, and even outside the Mediterranean region. To this effect, the Secretariat invited participants to let RAC/SPA know their possible observations about these documents.

Agenda item 6 – Detailed examination and analysis of the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO document

Session 1: Presentation and review of the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO document

19. RAC/SPA presented the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO document, referring to the document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG 227/3. After making a general presentation of the document, the Secretariat continued with detailed presentations of each part of the document, every time providing the recommendations of general character concerning the document made by the Advisory Committee of the Project, which had met the day before the beginning of the present Meeting of National Correspondents. After the Secretariat had made each presentation, the Chairman of the Meeting asked participants to offer their opinions.
20. Several delegates, speaking about the overall content of the document, congratulated RAC/SPA on the work it had done within the context of the SAP BIO Project, and stressed that it was necessary that the SAP BIO document constitute a true strategy and that, to this effect, its various sections should be concise and action-oriented. It was also suggested that a summary, several pages long, should be produced on the basis of the final SAP BIO text, once this was adopted by the Contracting Parties, to be circulated in the form of information leaflets targeting decision-makers.
21. Taking into account a recommendation made by the Advisory Committee, the Meeting agreed making some changes to the SAP BIO document's outline. These modifications involved merging Chapter III, *Synthesis of National Reports*, with Chapter IV, *Regional Assessment*, to give one single chapter on the present situation of Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity. This Chapter would be organized as follows:
- Marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean: Situation, threats and trends
 1. Analysis and assessment at national level (contents of the original Chapter III, as amended by the Meeting)
 2. Analysis and assessment at regional level (contents of the original Chapter IV, as amended by the Meeting)
22. After a long debate on the document's introductory Chapters (*Preface, Rationale, Background Information and Conceptual Framework*), it was agreed that these Chapters would focus more on the general context and the participatory approach

which had led to the SAP BIO's being elaborated, avoiding details about the implementing of the Project. The Meeting also agreed to present these introductory Chapters as an *argumentaire* to appear in the SAP BIO document without being integrated into the body of the Strategic Action Plan, which will include an introduction.

23. Given that the preliminary draft of SAPBIO dealt with several coastal species having a totally-terrestrial life cycle, a discussion took place about the geographical scope of the project. In this context, the meeting generally agreed that initiatives concerning those exclusively terrestrial *species* exist within the framework of other international fora and stressed the need for focusing on marine species and species whose life cycle includes a marine component. Nevertheless, the meeting recommended seeking guidance on the issue from the relevant MAP structures.
24. At the suggestion of several participants, the Meeting recommended that SAP BIO implementation indicators should be identified that would enable the implementing of the SAPBIO, and the effectiveness of the actions carried out as part of SAP BIO at national and regional level, to be assessed. When possible these indicators will be identified in the SAPBIO or during the preparatory phase.
25. After discussion, it was decided to make some improvements to Chapter III and Chapter IV. As well as adding a few words/sentences and deleting others, the Meeting proposed merging two sections (introduced species and Lessepsian immigrants) and introducing a table in the first part of Chapter IV to link the main problems concerning biodiversity with the main threats. It was also recommended to include the Tuna farming issue in the fisheries and aquaculture sections.
26. Besides making some minor changes (adding some specifications and deleting a few word/sentences) to amend the contents of Chapter V, the Meeting proposed removing the table listing NAPs from this Chapter.
27. Subchapter 3 of Chapter V, *Identification and categorization of targets, objectives and specific actions*, which is the core of the SAP BIO Document, was discussed by the participants section by section. It was set out that the actions listed in the table (§ 3.2) did not appear in order of priority; moreover, to make the document more attractive to political circles and donors, it was suggested that the order of the categories and priority actions should be reviewed.
28. Several suggestions and observations for improving the contents of the table (§ 3.2) were debated by the participants. The main decisions that emerged from the discussion concerned deleting a number of sentences and example lists which defined the activities too precisely, thus limiting their field of action; moving some priority actions from one category to another, and merging others; adding more details about the actors, in particular for several priority actions that deal with issues more pertinent to other international treaties than to the Barcelona Convention; the need to reformulate the titles of some priority actions; and adding further specific actions to better achieve the desired objective.
29. As regards actions dealing with fishing activities, some delegates expressed doubts as to whether they were pertinent to the SAP BIO, since they were reflected in other strategies and projects, and stressed the importance of

coordinating with the concerned international organisations.

30. Considering the importance of collecting basic scientific data, the need to give more importance to priority actions for the inventorying of sensitive habitats was stressed by various delegates.
31. After examining Chapter V, Part 4, *General Recommendations*, the Meeting agreed to change the title of this point to devote it to governance, while stating that for the aspects of governance relating to legislation, priority actions appeared in Table 3.2, immediately before Part 4.
32. In accordance with a recommendation made by the Project's Advisory Committee, the Meeting agreed that Chapter VI had to be redrafted with a view to improving it. The participants suggested extending the list of organisations proposed as potential partners for the implementation of the Project and made some suggestions to the Secretariat about the changes needed in this Chapter.
33. The Secretariat made a special detailed presentation of Chapter VII, *Investment Portfolio*. Firstly, it emphasised that the presented version includes information analysis and some operational details to provide the deeper insight needed for discussion and that the next draft version will contain the essential facts, figures and tables only. Secondly, an extensive Investment Portfolio containing all the essential relevant information will be prepared. Furthermore, a number of actions concerning heavy infrastructure and other prerequisites not directly belonging to SAP BIO that were included in the National Reports required very great investment. This distorted the overall investment aspect.
34. Mr Ante Baric, GEF Project Coordinator, informed the Meeting that GEF was ready to provide funding for the first phases of the implementation of the Project.
35. The need to revise the cost estimation for the regional actions (Table 2) and to increase the amount allocated for basic research on marine biodiversity and the collection of data was stressed by some participants.
36. To conclude the discussion of this agenda item, it was agreed that RAC/SPA would provide the National Correspondents with the details that had allowed an estimation to be made of the sums allocated to regional actions, as well as an analysis showing the breakdown (as a percentage) of the total cost of implementing SAP BIO by category of action. A fresh assessment of the cost of the regional actions will be prepared by RAC/SPA on the basis of the said analysis and possible remarks from the National Correspondents, and submitted to the forthcoming Meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs.
37. As well as the main recommendations made by the Meeting, presented above, the Meeting's discussions concerning this agenda item will be taken into account by RAC/SPA when preparing a new version of the draft SAP BIO Document. This new version will be reviewed by the Sixth Meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs (17-20 June 2003) in order to submit it to the MAP's National Focal Points and to the Contracting Parties.

38. The presentation of Chapter 8 "Provisions for follow-up" was followed by an in-depth discussion concerning actions to be implemented, the role of RAC/SPA in assisting countries and the need for immediate actions after approval of SAPBIO, concerning funding, cooperation and international support. The need for strengthening the capacities of RAC/SPA in order to allow the implementation of SAPBIO was stressed. Finally, amendments were proposed, concerning the need to clarify the role of RAC/SPA, to better define the role of partners, as well as few other specific amendments.

Session 2: Consultation with National Correspondents to review the documents Draft synthesis of the National Reports and Draft summary of the National Action Plans elaborated within the context of the SAP BIO Project.

39. This agenda item was not dealt with in plenary session. Each National Correspondent had a half-hour meeting with RAC/SPA, according to a schedule proposed by the Secretariat, to review the pertinent information contained in the documents UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.227/4 and UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.227/5. In these meetings, questions concerning the investment assessments appearing in the National Reports and NAPs were also discussed.

40. The work of this session enabled the contents of the two documents to be further refined. For certain National Correspondents, it was agreed that additional information would be sent to the Secretariat after the Meeting. For this information to be integrated into the documents for submission to the forthcoming Meeting of National Focal Points for SPAs (Marseilles, 17-20 June 2003), it was agreed that it would reach RAC/SPA before 25 May 2003.

Agenda item 7 – Other activities

41. No other questions were raised by participants.

Agenda Item 8 – Adoption of the Report by the Meeting

42. The Meeting adopted its Report, as amended.

Agenda item 9 – Closure of the Meeting

43. After the customary exchange of civilities, the Chairman closed the Meeting on Saturday 10 May 2003 at 6.15 p.m.

Annex I
Agenda of the Meeting

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

Agenda item 1 - Opening the Meeting

Agenda item 2 - Rules of Procedure

Agenda item 3 - Election of Officers

Agenda item 4 - Adoption of the Agenda and organisation of work

Agenda item 5 - Presentation of the progress so far made

Agenda item 6 - Review and in-depth analysis of the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO Document

Session 1: Presentation and review of the preliminary draft of the SAP BIO Document

Session 2: "Vis à vis" meeting with each National Correspondent for the revision of the documents: "Draft synthesis of the National Reports elaborated within the SAP BIO Project" and "Draft summary of the National Action Plans elaborated within the SAP BIO Project"

Agenda item 7 - Any other matters

Agenda item 8 - Adoption of the Report of the Meeting

Agenda item 9 - Closure of the Meeting

ANNEX II
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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