



**UNITED
NATIONS**

EP

UNEP/MED WG.563/6



**ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

17 July 2023
Original: English

Final Event, Best practices workshop on IMAP implementation and MPA management, 4th Steering Committee of the EU-funded project Towards achieving the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea and coast through an ecologically representative and efficiently managed and monitored network of Marine Protected Areas (IMAP-MPA) project.

Tangier, Morocco, 11,12 and 13 July 2023

Report of the IMAP-MPA Final Event

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2023

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Introduction

1. The Final Event of the Project “Towards achieving the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea and coast through an ecologically representative and efficiently managed and monitored network of Marine Protected Areas” (hereafter referred to as “IMAP-MPA Project”), took place in Tangier, Morocco, on 11,12 and 13 July 2023, at the kind invitation of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and its Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC). The IMAP-MPA project is funded by the European Union’s (EU) Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR).

2. The overall objective of the IMAP-MPA Project is to contribute towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Mediterranean Sea and along its coast. In doing so, the Project proposes to consolidate, integrate and strengthen the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) management and their sustainable development. This will be achieved through the monitoring and assessment of environmental status in the Mediterranean Sea and its coast, including MPAs, in a comparative and integrated manner.

Participation

3. The final Event of the IMAP-MPA Project was attended by representatives of Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, EU Commission, UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit and SPA/RAC, as well as regional thematic experts/consultants.

4. The full list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the EU-IMAP-MPA final event

5. The Final Event of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project was opened on Tuesday 11 July 2023 at 10:00am (UTC+1), by the representative of the Ministry of Energetic transition and Sustainable development of Morocco, UNEP/MAP IMAP-MPA Project Manager and SPA/RAC Director.

6. Ms. Nassira Rheyati, representative of the Ministry of Energetic transition and Sustainable development of Morocco, welcomed the participants to the meeting on behalf of the Minister. She thanked the UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC for supporting the organisation of the final event of this important project, as well as to the European Union for the invaluable support to the efforts of the contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention in terms of sustainable management of marine ecosystems. The contributions of all the national partners, essential to the success of the various actions undertaken to achieve our common objectives in terms of the good ecological status of the sea and the Moroccan Mediterranean coast was also underlined

7. She recalled the richness of the Mediterranean region in terms of biodiversity, cultural and human heritage, and that it is one of the first regions in the world to have adopted innovative and collaborative solutions in terms of the environment and sustainable development. Nevertheless, it remains one of the regions most threatened by the impacts of climate change, the loss of its biodiversity and the increase in pollution, all of which threaten its sustainability and resilience.

8. She recalled Morocco's commitment at regional and international level, notably through the Barcelona Convention, but also through the 6th United Nations Environment Assembly, which Morocco is currently chairing. Strong partnerships, knowledge and expertise sharing and the mobilization of financial resources to implement innovative solutions are all necessary for sustainability and resilience in the Mediterranean. She identified the final event of the IMAP-MPA project as a real opportunity to debate together and explore once again possible ways of strengthening our collaboration and stimulating collective action by the various stakeholders at all levels - local, national and regional - for a healthy Mediterranean for present and future generations.

9. Mr. Philippe Théou, UNEP/MAP IMAP-MPA Project Manager, welcomed the participants, and thanked Moroccan Authorities for their support to the organization of this final event. While thanking the European Commission for the continuous support, he emphasized the importance of the IMAP-MPA Project and its results. He then presented the different objectives of this final event, articulated between three main meetings: a technical workshop on best practices (11th), the 4th and last Steering Committee meeting of the IMAP-MPA project (12th) and a high-level meeting (13th).

10. Mr. Khalil Attia, Director of SPA/RAC, welcomed the participants and thanked the Moroccan authorities for hosting the meeting and for their kind hospitality. He said that the IMAP-MPA project has been very rich in terms of activities, processes and achievements at both regional and national levels. He stressed the great work and efforts made so far by the beneficiary countries, under the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) component with regards the implementation of the IMAP at national levels which contributed remarkably to the preparation of the MED QSR 2023.

11. On the other hand, regarding the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) component, he recalled that an ambitious Mediterranean strategy for the next 10 years and beyond, for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of marine resources "the Post-2020 SAPBIO" as well as a specific strategy on MCPAs and OECMs have been adopted by the Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their 22nd Ordinary Meeting in December 2021 in Antalya, Turkey, even before the adoption of the CBD global framework on biodiversity. In this regard, the MPA component served to bridge the gap between North and South in terms of means and capacity, and accelerate the pace so that the two shores of the Mediterranean arrive together to achieve the common objective of protection by 2030. He added that the Barcelona Convention offers an excellent framework for this regional cooperation with a view to achieving this highly ambitious but unavoidable objective of restoring biodiversity and marine ecosystems and achieving good ecological status for the Mediterranean.

12. The working languages of the Meeting were English and French. Simultaneous interpretation was available during the Meeting.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work for the Best practices workshop on IMAP implementation and MPAs creation and management

13. The meeting participants reviewed and adopted the provisional agenda of the Technical Workshop. The meeting Agenda appears as **Annex II** to the present report.

14. Egypt underlined the importance for participants to be able to travel to meetings by most direct and convenient way, in respect with UNEP rules and regulations, in order to ensure the best participation and attendance possible.

Agenda item 3: Best practices workshop on IMAP implementation and MPAs creation and management

15. The best practices workshop was initiated with the IMAP component and presentations from beneficiary countries.

16. Morocco started the presentation session underlining the best practices implemented during the IMAP-MPA at national level with cooperation between several national agencies, and at local level in the three selected pilot sites, with the three clusters targeted: Jbel Moussa proposed MCPA, Al Hoceima MPA and Nador Lagoon - Marchica Lagoon, as site under pressure. Capacity building aspects, including gender related approach, as well as data collection and synergies with other initiatives like the EU funded EcAp MED III project were presented. The importance of the coordination and the investment made at national level, especially for equipment, were considered as crucial for the sustainability of the project results. Finally, it was mentioned the on-going work done in parallel at Al Hoceima, with recent award received for the sustainability of the actions implemented.

17. Egypt presented the results of their work regarding biodiversity and pollution clusters in Protected Areas pilot sites (Salloum MPA, Omayed MCPA, Burullus MCPA, Ashtoum El-Gamil MCPA and Bardawil coastal depression) and Areas under human pressure pilot sites (Bagosh, Al Alamein, Alexandria Gov., Al Maadia, Rosetta, Burullus, Ezbet El Borg and Port Said Gov). Following the presentation, the participants discussed about the importance of data collection but also data accessibility and the crucial aspect of reaching common understanding with all involved stakeholders to better use this data at policy level. It was underlined that the Barcelona Convention offers a good example on how data collected are then used to produce solid scientific report that are feeding decision maker milestone document, such as the MED QSR 2023

18. Israel presented the work supported by the IMAP-MPA project and the result of the BioBlitz approach. This is based on the gathering of many divers and stakeholders in one area for a specific snapshot of the biodiversity at a specific moment in Autumn and Spring every two years. The results of this activity were completed by an innovative experiment on comparing open and closed air-system on the monitoring.

19. Tunisia presented the phases of the work implemented during the last years and the next steps to be finalized during the upcoming weeks in the three sites: Kuriat Island proposed MCPA, Kerkennah proposed MCPA and Gabes Gulf. Due to administrative reasons, a delay has been recorded for the launch of activities related to IMAP Biodiversity in Tunisia.

20. Following presentations from present delegations, Egypt mentioned the need to discuss the update the IMAP Indicators and EcAp, in order to include emerging issues, such as Climate change, but also new regulations at international level, as the new legally binding international instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national. The UNEP/MAP Coordination Unit mentioned that this matter will be promptly presented during upcoming MAP meetings, for Contracting Parties to discuss the next steps on this process.

21. Despite not being present in person at the meeting, Libyan national team involved in the implementation of the IMAP in the country shared presentations that were presented to participants by Mr Yassine Ramzi SGHAIER, SPA/RAC IMAP officer, underlining the key actions and results for the four pilots sites selected by the national authorities : Farwa Lagoon and Ain Al-Gazalla MPA (as sites less affected by human activity) and Tripoli coast and The Gulf of Sirt as areas with greater anthropogenic impacts.

22. Lebanese activities implemented by the CNRS-L were also presented despite their absence to the meeting. Targeted CI in the three pilot sites were mentioned, as well as capacity building activities organized in Palm Island MCPA, Beirut Bay and Tyr MCPA.

23. The second session of this technical best practices workshop was then targeting the Gender & MPAs aspects. Under the lead of the IMAP-MPA Gender expert, Ms. Carine Pionetti, several exercises were held with all participants to explore their familiarity with the topic.

24. Working groups were organised in order to develop concrete proposal based on three different subjects as follows:

- Topic 1: Encouraging the active participation of women in consultation workshops
You are organising a consultation with the residents of an MPA to implement the management plan. You have been asked to ensure the active participation of women in your workshops. This has never been done before because fishermen are not in favour of women attending these meetings. What are you going to do about it?
- Topic 2. Achieving parity among heads of department

You are the head of your country's Protected Areas Department. Recent legislation requires parity to be achieved in all positions of responsibility from 2024. You have divisions where almost all the heads of department are men, and others where almost all the heads of department are women. What steps are you going to take to achieve parity in all your departments?

- Topic 3. Integrating gender into a research project on marine biodiversity and global warming

You are taking part in a research project on the links between the loss of marine biodiversity, the acidification of the seas and global warming. Protocols are being deployed for scientific monitoring. One of the funders approaches your team and asks you to explicitly include the gender issue in this research project. What are the first steps in your work?

25. After twenty minutes of group work, each group presented its results to the audience.
26. The group rapporteur on the topic n°1 presented a 7-point approach inspired by the ICIC approach - inform, consult, involve, collaborate:
- To raise the awareness of the different parties - women and fishermen - by bringing them together separately. Women will meet other women and explain the benefits of taking part in discussions on MPA.
 - To encourage acceptance by the community: the fisherman (husband) must also be convinced of the role his wife is going to play so as not to block her involvement.
 - Semi-structured approach: the women meet and discuss amongst themselves, to develop a common approach and speak with one voice.
 - This participative approach must be sustained over time, thanks to multiple meetings (without being constrained by the framework of a project).
 - Offer coaching to overcome reticence on the part of women or men
 - Discuss the reasons why men are reluctant to involve women. Is it a question of women being overworked? How can this be managed? Seek consensus from men on women's participation.
27. The IMAP-MPA Gender Expert welcomed the presentation of this very successful approach to involving women fishermen. Working in separate, non-mixed groups is very useful in gender approaches. This approach is used in many countries to give women access to decision-making committees in mixed cooperatives.
28. The group rapporteur on the topic n°2 presented an action plan based on the theory of change:
- Analysis of the current situation: identify existing profiles, institutional needs.
 - Inform all structures of the new law (meetings)
 - Aim for voluntary rather than imposed job changes
 - Cross-analysis of the remaining posts with the missing profiles in order to create job descriptions adapted to the needs for MPAs and the needs for the remaining profiles.
 - Analysis of training and capacity-building needs
 - Change management workshop with all staff to encourage job transfers and achieve parity among all heads of department.
 - Assess whether the objective has been achieved, then define the next steps to be taken.

29. The IMAP-MPA Gender Expert underlined the step-by-step support approach that allows the people involved to adapt, reflect and take ownership of the approach, and confirmed its importance when working on gender issues, and particularly on the question of parity.
30. One of the group rapporteur on the topic n°3 presented the group's main ideas:
- Develop Environment, Marine Waste, Marine Protection and Pollution programmes in Egyptian, Moroccan, Israeli and Tunisian universities.
 - Encourage women to work in these research and teaching programmes through awareness-raising and communication campaigns.
 - Organise scientific days dedicated to women; encourage women to go scuba diving, organised and supervised by women researchers with diving experience (there is such an example in Tunisia).
 - The desire to develop such a research centre in Nador by mobilising women students and researchers.
 - Take the cultural aspect into account: the community must accept that women have the same rights and must be free to investigate, carry out work, go to sea and dive.
31. The other group rapporteur on the topic n°3 presented the proposed solutions on how to hire women in a gender-inclusive way:
- Put forward gender equality as a key objective of the research programme (including in looking for funding)
 - Set quotas for women researchers (say 60%) in the organisational chart
 - Better salaries for women
 - Advertise the positions for women using different platforms
 - Hiring conditions to support researchers who also have family responsibilities
 - Opportunities for self-development in the work: get a higher degree while working
 - Offer exposure in international forum
 - Make sure that success stories are made public
 - Highlight the contribution of women to this programme in all communication
32. The IMAP-MPA Gender Expert welcomed the very good ideas from the two groups. She highlighted the importance of understanding the difficulties faced by women in gaining access to positions of responsibility (combining work and family life) and to find practical solutions.

Agenda item 4: Closure of the Workshop

33. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Meeting was declared closed at 17:15 on Tuesday, 11 July 2023 by the IMAP-MAP Project Manager.

Agenda item 5: Opening of the 4th IMAP-MPA Steering Committee meeting and Adoption of the Agenda

34. The 4th IMAP-MPA Steering Committee of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project was opened on Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at 09:30am (UTC+1), by UNEP/MAP IMAP-MPA Project Manager and SPA/RAC Director.

35. Mr. Philippe Théou, UNEP/MAP IMAP-MPA Project Manager, welcomed the participants to this Steering Committee. He thanked the EU Commission for its financial support to the IMAP-MPA project and underlined that this 4th and final Steering Committee will be the opportunity to present and discuss the activities implemented and results obtained within the last year of the project implementation period. The discussion will allow to consolidate the results of the project and recommendations will be

included in the inception period of the upcoming new project, “Bolstering Mediterranean biodiversity and MCPAs for nature” (SEMPA), funded by the EU Commission.

36. Mr. Khalil Attia, Director of SPA/RAC, welcomed in his turn the participants to the fourth and final Steering Committee of the project, recalled its main activities in relation to both IMAP and MPA components and commended the huge work made by the beneficiary countries towards the good implementation of the project despite the issues and difficulties faced. He stressed the need of the southern and eastern Contracting Parties for benefiting from this EC-funded project to respond to their commitments towards the Barcelona Convention and its protocols at national and regional levels for both integrated monitoring and assessment programme (IMAP) and the boosting of the Mediterranean system of marine protected areas (MPAs) in line with the orientations of the (i) Post-2020 SAPBIO (ii) the regional strategy on marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and the global CBD targets. He also emphasizes that the projects achievements will serve to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices among the beneficiary countries in view of their replication at both national and Mediterranean levels.

Agenda item 6: IMAP-MPA Project: Progress achieved since the last meeting of the Steering Committee

37. Mr. Philippe Théou initiated the presentation by the structure of the IMAP component of the project and its national and regional objectives. He thanked the work carried out during the project duration by regional experts and national authorities, through a collaborative approach to answer needs identified at national level.

38. Mr Yassine Ramzi SGHAIER, SPA/RAC IMAP Officer, recalled that the IMAP-related component of the project aims to contribute towards the achievement of the Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Mediterranean Sea and coast through the monitoring and assessment of the IMAP common indicators, in MPAs and high-pressure areas, in a comparative and integrated manner.

The SPA/RAC IMAP Officer presented the progress achieved during the reporting period related to the implementation of the IMAP in the beneficiary countries including:

- National and Sub-regional levels : National experts from Egypt, Israel, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia were supported through the Small-Scale Fund Agreement (SSFA) and Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). A meeting took place in Tunis on 11 October 2022 with the Libyan experts, alongside a training workshop on reporting monitoring data into the IMAP Info System for Libya from 12-13 October 2022. The national experts responsible for implementing IMAP in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, and Israel actively participated in two sub-regional workshops: (i) the first workshop taking place in Athens on 7-8 March 2023; (ii) The second workshop also took place in Athens on 20-21 March 2023. In line with the MoAs signed between the Ministry of Environment in Libya and SPA/RAC, as well as ANPE and APAL in Tunisia and SPA/RAC, and in synergy with the EcAp MED III and Marine Litter II projects, national meetings were organized in Tunis on 7 and 8 December 2022.
- Regional level : A national list of Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) and regional/sub-regional NIS baselines have been prepared. The development of monitoring and assessment scales, criteria, thresholds, and baseline values for common indicators 1 and 2, focusing on benthic habitats, was presented at the CORMON meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries in Athens on 9 and 10 March 2023. Representatives from the IMAP-MPA project beneficiary countries received assistance to participate in CORMON meetings held in March and June 2023. During the Mediterranean symposia on marine vegetation, coralligenous, dark habitats, and non-indigenous species in Genoa, Italy, from 19 to 23 September 2022, the results of the assessment scales, criteria, thresholds, and baseline values for marine habitats and NIS were shared. Experts and scientists from the IMAP-MPA project beneficiary countries were supported in attending the symposia and presenting their national monitoring activities and preliminary results related to IMAP. To facilitate the implementation of the IMAP component for the Biodiversity cluster, a

report is being updated by the regional biodiversity expert. The report includes an analysis of the national IMAPs and proposes the integration of national monitoring programs on biodiversity with the pollution and hydrography clusters.

39. Mr. Atef Limam, SPA/RAC MPA Officer, recalled that the MPA-related component of the Project aims at strengthening and further developing the Mediterranean network of ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored MPAs, and presented together with Ms Asma Kheriji, SPA Programme Officer, the progress made so far, as follows:

- At regional level: the project supported (i) the organisation of the 3rd edition of the Mediterranean MPA Forum and delivery of its Post-2020 MPA Roadmap, which is meant to be a tool to contribute to the implementation of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (SAPBIO) and in particular the Barcelona Convention Post-2020 Strategy for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean, and (ii) the elaboration of an active and transformative Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean.
- At national level, the project has paved the way and led to:
 1. elaborate the national strategy for MPAs and OECMS in the Mediterranean coast of Egypt
 2. elaborate the management plan of Rachgoun island in Algeria, Tyre Coast Nature Reserve in Labanon and Shash area in Libya. It led also to declarations of Shash MPA in November 2022 and Rachgoun island in April 2023.
 3. develop and implement a regional capacity-building programme with the organisation of two training courses as follow: 1. Training on management effectiveness and sustainable financing of Mediterranean MPAs that was held from 7 to 10 February 2022 online; and 2. Training on the socio-economic sustainability of Mediterranean MPAs that was held from 14 to 18 November 2022 in Gokova, Türkiye. Within these trainings, and in order to apply the knowledge gained during the training and to contribute to the effective management of their MPAs, several post-training activities were proposed by the different participant delegations, are currently being implemented.
 4. elaborate Integrated Socio-economic Programmes and communication strategies for Jbel Moussa (Morocco) and Kerkennah Islands future MCPA
 5. organize a scientific and technological immersion camp in Kerkennah in July-August 2022, engaging 53 children aged 9 to 13. The camp aimed to raise awareness, foster a sustainable approach, and involve local youth in the project to support the creation of the future MCPA.

40. The SPA/RAC Director recalled that The MedFund is supporting the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, which are the same beneficiary IMAP-MPA Project countries as well as some Adriatic countries, and that these countries could also benefit of their support.

41. The representative of Egypt, while thanking SPA/RAC for the work done, highlighted the great efforts and assistance provided for the successful and collaborative process to elaborate the National Strategy of MPAs in Med Egypt. He stressed the need to improve the procedural aspect related to logistics such as visa obtention, travel, reimbursements, etc. Also, he added that in terms of substantial aspect, further attention should be paid to the evaluation of the Project activities impact and capacity development of national teams.

42. The representatives of Morocco commended the efforts made to put in place the different project activities at both regional and national levels, and expressed the interest of Morocco to benefit from the education awareness activities targeting youth in the framework of the following project. She also added that it would be important to communicate on the project results at national and regional levels, including in the forthcoming Barcelona Convention COP23 in December 2023.

43. They highlighted the key outcomes of the IMAP-MPA project in Morocco, specifically focusing on the IMAP component. Firstly, the project facilitated the establishment of national governance for

IMAP in Morocco, ensuring the country's ongoing commitment to the Barcelona Convention. Secondly, it fostered stronger collaboration among government institutions, the research community, and civil society. The project also contributed to Morocco's implementation of the Ecosystem Approach, particularly in monitoring IMAP indicators related to biodiversity, pollution, coastline, and hydrography. Moreover, it led to the development of a national information system platform that integrates IMAP Common Indicators and environmental indicators, aligned with sustainable development objectives and regional conventions. The project's support was crucial for the MED QSR 2023 by providing historical and newly collected data to the IMAP-Info system. Additionally, awareness-raising initiatives, including marine litter campaigns with NGOs and fisher-focused programs, were carried out. The project included an extensive capacity-building program, benefiting over 200 participants through 13 training modules.

44. They raised a number of issues related to data collection and data reporting and recommended to make the platform more friendly-user in order to facilitate data upload and emphasized the need to enhance and update the CI 15 related to Coast and Hydrography component to consider integration with CI1 and CI 2 related to benthic habitats and to adapt the list of species and habitats monitored under IMAP to the context of the countries concerned.

45. In response to this request, SPA/RAC explained that the implementation of the IMAP-MPA project provided an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the IMAP information/system, as well as Data standards DS and Data dictionaries DD, within the national context. The feedback received and lessons learned from this project will serve as the foundation for the upcoming cycle of the EcAp roadmap.

46. Finally, a recall on the work undertaken by SPA/RAC since 2012 through the EU-funded MedMPAnet and MedMPA Network projects, the MAVA-funded MedKeyHabitats and NTZ/MPA projects has been made which led to set up a national roadmap to help Morocco establishing and boosting its national MCPAs network, where Jbel Moussa was identified as a priority area. An integrated management plan and a communication strategy were developed, along with concrete actions towards the effective management of the site, in synergy with initiative from other regional and local partners, such as The MedFund and GREPOM association.

47. The representative of Tunisia acknowledged the SPA/RAC support and highlighted the importance of the scientific camp and its indirect impacts on local sustainable economy, in particular related to the eco-tourism in Kerkennah. Besides, he underlined the importance of the post-training activities developed within the Capacity building programme, since it helps to implement the knowledge gained in the training courses, and to regain the trust of the local communities and in particular the locals, which are the main actors of the area. On another note, he highlighted the importance of the integrated socio-economic programme as well as the communication strategy both elaborated with the project activities, which would help to communicate on the role and benefits of the MPA.

Agenda Item 7: IMAP-MPA Project: Annual Work Plan and Budget

48. The Secretariat presented the detailed review of the workplan and budget until the end of the proposed extension of the Project as reflected in the document UNEP/MED WG. 524/3 “Annual Work Plan and Budget”.

49. Israel delegation requested the PMU to share additional information regarding budget allocation by country.

50. The project coordination unit took note of the steering committee's request and suggested to add the table to the final report.

51. The IMAP-MPA Steering Committee approved the proposal from the PMU to include the requested information in the 4th Steering Committee Meeting Report (UNEP/MEDWG.623/5), to be approved by the Steering Committee after the meeting as per UNEP/MAP rules

52. In addition to regional activities including all beneficiary countries, part of the IMAP-MPA project budget was allocated to countries for the implementation national specific activities as per project document.

53. The following table is providing the budget allocation by country for specific national activities, as per Add. 2 approved by the 3rd Steering Committee of the project:

Beneficiary Country	IMAP Component	MPA Component	Total USD
Algeria		80,741	80,741
Egypt	196,898	128,140	325,038
Israel	171,038		171,038
Lebanon	196,898	128,140	325,038
Libya	200,828	72,524	273,352
Morocco	211,123	124,089	335,212
Tunisia	156,813	148,564	305,377
	1,133,598	601,457	1,815,796

54. The document UNEP/MED WG. 524/3 “Annual Work Plan and Budget” was approved by the Steering Committee.

55. The Meeting’s final conclusions and recommendations concerning this agenda item are presented in **Annex III** to this report.

Agenda Item 8: Review of the Communication during the project implementation

56. The Secretariat presented an updated version of the project communication and visibility progress (UNEP/MED WG.563/4) including specific information on its objectives and target groups, the regular communication activities, and the required resources. Special attention was provided by the Secretariat on the proposed innovative communication activities.

57. Israel asked to rectify the title of the Agenda Item 8, to be in line with the UNEP/MED WG. 524/4 “Communication and Visibility Plan”

58. Participants expressed the need to further explain the relevance and the impact of the Communication activities presented during the Steering Committee meeting, notably the international events attended. It was underlined that participation to international events is a tool of communication as it supports sharing best practices among the region.

59. One representative underlined the importance of Communication language used between stakeholders with different background as a key to have positive impact and share the data and results collected in the frame of project activities.

60. The Meeting’s final conclusions and recommendations concerning this agenda item are presented in **Annex III** to this report.

Agenda Item 9: Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives

61. The Secretariat briefly presented the links with the EU-funded Projects, EcAp MED III and Marine Litter MED II, as well as the MED Programme, which are coordinated by UNEP/MAP and MAP Components.

62. The Project Steering Committee welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to coordinate and enhance the synergies between the projects in an effective manner.

63. The SPA/RAC Director recalled the current programme and initiatives that are being implemented by SPA/RAC ensuring synergy and complementarity with the IMAP-MPA Project such as the Post-2020 SAPBIO, the PAMEX initiative and The MedFund support.

64. Several participants highlighted also other initiatives and programmes such as the EU-funded ODYSSEA and ILIAD Projects.

65. The IMAP-MPA Steering Committee pointed out the importance of ensuring full complementarity among those projects and other related activities with a view to ensuring and providing enhanced and well-coordinated support to the project's beneficiary countries. To this aim, it requested the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to pay necessary attention to ensure a high level of synergies and complementarities among these projects at national level, especially for future projects.

66. The Meeting's final conclusions and recommendations concerning this agenda item are presented in **Annex III** to this report.

Agenda Item 10: Any Other Business

67. With the approval of the Steering Committee, a presentation regarding the Institut National de Recherche Halieutique (INRH - Morocco) was made, to present this national institution mission and relevant programmes. The Moroccan authorities kindly invited all participants to the Steering Committee to visit the regional center of the INRH located in Tangiers after the closure of the IMAP-MPA Final Event on Thursday 13th July, as well as the proposed MCPA of Jbel Moussa.

Agenda Item 11: Conclusions and Recommendations

68. The Meeting reviewed the draft conclusions and recommendations and adopted them as revised and presented in **Annex III** to the present report.

Agenda Item 12: Closure of the Meeting

69. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the 4th Steering Committee Meeting of the IMAP-MPA project was declared closed at 17:05 on Wednesday, 12 July 2023 by the IMAP-MAP Project Manager.

Agenda Item 13: High level Meeting

70. Mr. Philippe Théou welcomed the participants to the high level meeting and introduced the three members of the panel: Ms. Nassira Rheyati, representative of the Ministry of Energetic transition and Sustainable Development, Mr. Jean-Christophe Filori, Chargé de Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to Morocco, and Mr. Khalil Attia, Director of the SPA/RAC.

71. Ms. Nassira Rheyati recalled Morocco's efforts to meet its commitments under the Barcelona Convention and stressed that a number of strategic and operational measures have been put in place, including the development of integrated coastal zone management plan and a pollution monitoring programme as part of the national IMAP. She also emphasised that nature-based solutions were a priority area for cooperation in Morocco which was important for a coordinated, sustainable and integrated approach within the IMAP-MPA project producing tangible results on the ground despite the challenges encountered.

72. Mr. Jean-Christophe Filori, emphasised the importance of marine protected areas for the protection of biodiversity, and stressed that this is a priority area for the European Union. In this respect,

he recalled the adoption of the European law on the restoration of nature by the European Parliament on 12 July.

73. While recalling that the IMAP-MPA project had achieved very concrete results, in particular the creation of new MPAs in the southern and eastern Mediterranean and the development of effective management of the beneficiary sites, he stressed the importance of coordination with other initiatives in the implementation of the project, which has brought it closer to international objectives, such as the development of the regional strategy for MCPAs and OECMs adopted at COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention.

74. He added that the European Union is financially supporting actions that promote North-South and South-South cooperation and will continue to support the Barcelona Convention in its mandate by announcing a follow-up phase of the IMAP-MPA project through the funding of a new project for a total of €4 million over a period of 4 years. The new SEMPA project will take over from the IMAP-MPA project and will keep putting the local population at the center of the action, including through the participation of women in decision-making.

75. Mr Khalil Attia recalled that the implementation of the ecosystem approach, EcAp, was a process, involving field monitoring of indicators relating to biodiversity, pollution and hydrography using a scientific approach and highlighted two major achievements of the IMAP component of the project, namely the development of national monitoring programmes and the involvement of multidisciplinary teams and complementary players in their implementation leading to enriching the 2023 quality status report on the Mediterranean Sea, the MED QSR 2023, by data collected thanks to the IMAP-MPA project.

76. Mr Attia also highlighted the main results relating to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) component, notably the creation of two MPAs during the project in Algeria and Libya.

77. He recommended to continue involving countries not only in the steering committees but also from the very start of project design and stressed the role played by the Barcelona Convention, which provides a suitable framework for cooperation and synergistic action towards biodiversity conservation.

78. He finally recalled that two regional strategies adopted at the last COP in December 2022, namely the Post-2020 SAPBIO and the Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs, and need of resources for their implementation underlining hence the importance of EU support for the region in order to achieve its conservation objectives and the MedFund, which supports the effective management of MPAs.

79. Egypt positively underlined the project's impact, which remarkably contributed to creating transformative change. He commended the work done that led to setting national multidisciplinary teams, developing capacities and strengthening synergies between institutions and local stakeholders including women.

80. The remarkable work in the IMAP leading to setting baselines and providing quantitative data that served to develop the MED QSR 2023 was appreciated. It was then recommended documenting the successes and lessons learned from the project using appropriate communication language that would facilitate the mobilization of the budgets and ease connection between data collection and policy development and implementation.

81. Egypt commended SPARAC for its ability to establish successful partnerships, to communicate well with stakeholders, and to cultivate a fruitful relationship with them.

82. Tunisia stressed that the activities on IMAP and MPAs were implemented based on a process approach and recalled that Kerkennah area had benefited from several activities prior to the IMAP-MPA project, in particular the EU-funded MedMPAnet and MedMPA Network projects which led to initiate the implementation of the management plan, in particular the development of an integrated

socioeconomic programme along with a communication strategy for the future MCPA. Furthermore, Kerkennah future MCPA has recently benefited from The MedFund financial support to boost its effective management.

83. The representative of GREPOM Association in Morocco underlined the importance of the work carried out by the SPA/RAC, in particular the elaboration of the management plan of Jbel Moussa which served to identify the actions being implemented by the GREPOM association, as a co-manager of the Jbel Moussa future MCPA in Morocco. She commended the coordinated and synergetic exchanges with SPA/RAC that were essential to avoid redundancy and harmonize the actions carried out on Jbel Moussa with regards to the integration of socio-economic and communication activities.

84. She also underlined the importance of involving civil society organizations in the management of MCPAs, and recommended strengthening this involvement for integrated and inclusive management.

85. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Meeting was declared closed at 11:30 on Thursday, 13 July 2023 by the IMAP-MAP Project Manager.

Annex I

List of Participants

List of participants**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES
REPRESENTANT.E.S DES PARTIES CONTRACTANTES**

EGYPT / EGYPTE	<p>Mr. Mostafa Fouda Minister Advisor on Biodiversity Ministry of Environment</p> <p>Ms. Maha Moawed Abdelrahem Abdelrahman Director of Marine Pollution Control and Ports Affair Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)</p> <p>Mr. Mohamed Abass Elsayed Tahoon Director of the Department of Lakes Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)</p> <p>Mr. Mohamed Said Abdelwarith Attea Environmental Researcher Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)</p>
ISRAEL / ISRAEL	<p>Mr. Ran Amir Director Marine Environment Protection Division Ministry of Environmental Protection</p> <p>Mr. Simon Nemtsov Wildlife Ecologist and Head of International Relations Israel Nature and Parks Authority</p>
MOROCCO / MAROC	<p>Ms. Nassira Rheyati Head of the International Cooperation Division Directorate of Partnership, Communication and Cooperation Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Mr. Mohammad El Bouch Director of the National Laboratory for Pollution Studies and Monitoring (LNEP) Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Ms. Naoual Zoubair Head of Coastal Unit Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p>

	<p>Mr. Reda Benhima Head of Unit / Biodiversity Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Mr. Mohamed Kabriti Responsible for Micropollutant Analysis Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Mr. Abdeslam Abid Head of Water and Waste Pollution Analysis Unit National Laboratory for Pollution Studies and Monitoring (LNEP) Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Mr. Mohamed Chaoui Expert 'Pollution and Marine Litter'</p> <p>Mr. Houcine Kasmi Engineer Multilateral Cooperation Unit Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Ms. Amina Cherki El Idrissi Chef de Service Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Ms. Bouchra Oujidi Head of Marchica Observatory / Antenne Nador-Driouch Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Ms. Salima Demnati Regional Director (Oriental) Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Mr. Ali Skalli Professor University of Mohammed I / Nador</p> <p>Mr. Hocine Nibani President AGIR</p> <p>Mr. Samir Benbrahim Head of Department National Institute of Fisheries Research (Institut National de Recherche Halieutique - INRH)</p>
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	<p>Ms. Rhimou El Hamoumi President of Research Group for the Protection of Birds (Groupe de recherche pour la Protection des Oiseaux - GREPOM)</p> <p>Ms. Samia Bachiri Engineer National Park of Al Hoceima</p> <p>Mr. Mostapha Terhzaz Head of Observation Division Department of Sustainable Development Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Mr. Lahsen Chafiq Head of Laboratory National Institute of Fisheries Research (Institut National de Recherche Halieutique - INRH)</p> <p>Mr. Mohamed Amrani Head of Unit Regional Direction of Environment Tangier, Tetouan, Al Hoceima Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Ms. Elihali Kaoutar Engineer Regional Direction of Environment Tangier, Tetouan, Al Hoceima Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development</p> <p>Mr. Mustapha Benomar Researcher National Institute of Fisheries Research (Institut National de Recherche Halieutique - INRH)</p> <p>Ms. Asma Damghi Project Manager AGIR</p>
TUNISIA / TUNISIE	<p>Mr. Ahmed Ben Hmida Engineer Coastal Protection and Planning Agency / Agence de Protection et d'Aménagement du Littoral (APAL)</p>

DONOR / BAILLEUR DE FOND

<p>EUROPEAN COMMISSION / COMMISSION EUROPEENNE</p>	<p>Mr. Jean-Christophe Filori Chef de Cooperation EU Delegation to Morocco</p>
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IMAP-MPA REGIONAL EXPERTS / *EXPERT.E.S REGIONAUX/ALES*

<p>REGIONAL EXPERTS / <i>EXPERTS REGIONAUX</i></p>	<p>Mr. Chedli Rais IMAP-MPA Team Leader of Regional Consultants</p> <p>Ms. Carine Pionetti IMAP-MPA Gender Expert</p> <p>Mr. Tomaso Fortibuoni IMAP-MPA Regional Consultant</p> <p>Mr. Elias Ntemian IMAP-MPA Final Evaluator</p> <p>Mr. Abdelhafid Chalabi Regional Expert on Biodiversity Consultant SPA/RAC</p> <p>Mr. Hoccin Bazairi Professor University of Mohammed V / Rabat Regional Expert SPA/RAC</p>
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SECRETARIAT / *SECRETARIAT*

<p>UNEP/MAP – United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan</p> <p><i>PNUE/PAM – Programme des Nations Unies pour l’Environnement / Plan d’Action pour la Méditerranée</i></p>	<p>Mr. Philippe Théou IMAP-MPA Project Manager</p> <p>Ms. Polyxeni Kritsotaki IMAP-MPA Admin & Finance Assistant</p>
<p>SPA/RAC – Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre</p>	<p>Mr. Khalil Attia SPA/RAC Director</p> <p>Mr. Atef Limam MPA Project Officer</p>

<i>SPA/RAC – Centre d’Activités Régionales pour les Aires Spécialement Protégées</i>	<p>Ms. Asma Kheriji SPA Programme Officer</p> <p>Mr. Yassine Ramzi Sghaier IMAP Officer</p> <p>Ms. Samar Kilani IMAP Associate Officer</p> <p>Ms. Dorra Maaoui Communication Assistant</p>
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Annex II
Agenda of the Meeting

Agenda

Day 1

- Agenda Item 1:** Opening of the EU-IMAP-MPA final event
- Agenda Item 2:** Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work for the Best practices workshop on IMAP implementation and MPAs creation and management
- Agenda Item 3:** Best practices workshop on IMAP implementation and MPAs creation and management
- Agenda Item 4:** Closure of the Workshop

Day 2

- Agenda Item 5:** Opening of the 4th IMAP-MPA Steering Committee and Adoption of the Agenda
- Agenda Item 6:** IMAP-MPA Project: Progress achieved since the last meeting of the Steering Committee
- Agenda Item 7:** IMAP-MPA Project: Annual Work Plan and Budget
- Agenda item 8:** Review of the Communication during the project implementation
- Agenda item 9:** Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives
- Agenda Item 10:** Any Other Business
- Agenda Item 11:** Conclusions and Recommendations
- Agenda Item 12:** Closure of the Meeting

Day 3

- Agenda Item 13:** High-level event for the closure of the IMAP-MPA project

Annex III

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations of the

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

Tangier, 12 July 2023

1. The Fourth and final Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project took place in Tangier, Morocco, on 12th July 2023 at the kind invitation of Ministry of Energetic Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco, UNEP/MAP and its Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC).
2. The IMAP-MPA Project Steering Committee Meeting (PSCM) was attended by representatives of Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit, SPA/RAC and regional thematic experts/consultants as observers.
3. The IMAP-MPA PSCM thanked the European Commission for the continuous support and contribution provided on issues related to IMAP implementation and strengthening MPA network effectiveness and sustainability in the Mediterranean.
4. Following the presentation by the Secretariat of the working documents prepared for the needs of the IMAP-MPA PSCM, their review and discussion (i.e., UNEP/MED WG.623/1 to UNEP/MEDWG.623/4), the IMAP-MPA Project Steering Committee Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

Agenda Item 6: IMAP-MPA Project: Progress achieved since the last meeting of the Steering Committee

5. The IMAP-MPA PSCM, while commending the instrumental role of the IMAP-MPA Project in introducing the integrated implementation at country/pilot level of IMAP, coupled with enhanced MPA management, as well as delivering to the extent possible an integrated assessment; acknowledged the progress achieved during the reporting period.

Agenda Item 7: IMAP-MPA Project: Annual Work Plan and Budget

6. Regarding the Annual Work Plan and Budget (UNEP/MEDWG.623/4), one delegation requested the PMU to share additional information regarding budget allocation by country. The IMAP-MPA PSCM approved the proposal from the PMU to include the requested information in the 4th Steering Committee Meeting Report (UNEP/MEDWG.623/5), to be approved by the Steering Committee after the meeting as per UNEP/MAP rules. Based on this agreement, the annual workplan and budget as presented by the Secretariat in document UNEP/MED WG.563/3 was approved.

Agenda item 8: Review of the Communication during the project implementation

7. The IMAP-MPA PSCM reviewed and approved the updated Communication and Visibility Plan (UNEP/MED WG.563/4).

Agenda item 9: Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives

8. The IMAP-MPA PSCM welcomed the information provided by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat pertinent to the approved EU-funded projects EcAp-MED III and ML MED II, as well as the GEF-funded MED Programme.
9. The IMAP-MPA PSCM pointed out the importance of ensuring full complementarity among those projects and other related activities with a view to ensuring and providing enhanced and well-coordinated support to the project's beneficiary countries. To this aim the PSCM requested the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to pay necessary attention to ensure a high level of synergies and complementarities among these projects at national level, especially for future projects.

Agenda Item 10: Any Other Business

10. With the approval of the PSCM, a presentation regarding the Institut National de Recherche Halieutique (INRH - Morocco) was made, to present this national institution mission and relevant programmes. The Moroccan authorities kindly invited all participants to the Steering Committee to visit the regional center of the INRH located in Tangiers after the closure of the IMAP-MPA Final Event on Thursday 13th July.

Agenda Item 11: Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations

11. It was agreed to disseminate the full draft report of the fourth IMAP-MPA PSCM, in French and English, to its members in 2 weeks at the latest (i.e., by 26 July 2023), for formal approval as appropriate by the PSCM.