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26 June 2023  
English

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

Tangier, Morocco, 11-13 July 2023

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

**Report of the Third Steering Committee of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project**

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UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2023



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

Videoconference, 7 June 2022

### **Report of the Meeting**

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UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2022

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## Introduction

1. The Third Steering Committee meeting 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 via videoconference on 7 June 2022, 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.
3. The Project Steering Committee reviewed: the progress achieved, revised workplan and budget, updated communication and visibility plan, and potential synergies with other projects and initiatives.

## Participation

4. The IMAP-MPA Project Steering Committee Meeting was attended by representatives of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, the European Commission DG NEAR, DG ENV and the EU Delegation to Egypt, UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit including SPA/RAC and MED POL, as well as UfM Secretariat and regional thematic experts/consultants.
5. The full list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present report.
6. The meeting was attended by 20 women (51% of participants) and 19 men (49% of participants).

### **Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda**

7. The Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project was opened on Tuesday, 7 June 2022 at 10:00 (Eastern European Time), by the UNEP/MAP Officer in Charge and the European Commission DG NEAR Programme Manager in charge of the Project.
8. Mr Ilias Mavroeidis, UNEP/MAP Officer in Charge, welcomed the participants and emphasised the importance of the IMAP-MPA Project. He thanked the European Commission for the continuous support and contribution provided on issues related to Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) implementation and strengthening MPA sustainability in the Mediterranean. He stressed the expectations for an instrumental role of the IMAP-MPA Project in the integrated implementation, at country/pilot level, of IMAP coupled with enhanced MPA management, as well as creating the first experience on the integrated implementation of IMAP and delivering to the extent possible integrated assessments. Mr Mavroeidis also emphasised the Secretariat’s efforts in overcoming the problems and delays attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic. He stressed the importance of all beneficiary countries involvement and commitment regarding the IMAP implementation, MPA management strengthening and Gender mainstreaming into project activities.

9. Mr. Frédéric Fourtune, Programme Manager at the EC DG NEAR, thanked the UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC for organising and hosting the meeting, and welcomed the broad participation. He stressed on the importance of MPAs in biodiversity conservation and highlighted that the EU has put forward the European Green Deal and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 with the objective of reversing biodiversity loss. Mr. Fourtune recalled that the environmental ambition of the Green Deal will not be achieved by the European Union acting alone and that achieving the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea and coast remains of paramount importance for the EU and its neighbours. He explained that in the context of its Neighbourhood South regional cooperation, the IMAP-MPA project constitutes an important instrument in reaching this objective and has already achieved some tangible results. He mentioned the approval of the Regional Strategy on Marine Protected Areas by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention COP22 and its complementarity with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and other international obligations. Mr Fourtune also welcomed the project's contribution to the organisation of the 3rd MPA Forum and in the collection of data regarding the IMAP Indicators. He finally appreciated the work carried out so far by the project regarding the mainstreaming of the gender aspects into the project activities and the involvement of Civil Society Organisations in the project activities. He followed his introduction by mentioning the impact of the COVID19 on the project implementation and willingness of the DG NEAR to support the 6 months no cost extension of the project presented to the Project Steering Committee, and recalled that the European Commission is closely monitoring the implementation at national level which might be impacted by national situations, in order to allow smooth project implementation. He concluded his intervention by reminding that the European Commission is considering as crucial the synergies with other activities, as well as sustainability of the project results.

10. The Project Steering Committee reviewed and adopted the provisional agenda. The meeting Agenda appears as **Annex II** to the present report.

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

**Agenda item 2: Introduction of Members of the Steering Committee**

12. The IMAP-MPA Project Manager, Mr. Philippe Théou, presented the Terms of References (ToRs) and relevant mandate of the Steering Committee Meeting included in the project document. He invited all participants for a *tour de table* which allowed all participants to briefly introduce themselves and the organizations which they represent.

### **Agenda item 3: IMAP-MPA Project: Progress; Annual Workplan and Budget**

#### Progress:

13. The IMAP-MPA Project Manager, introduced the Agenda Item by mentioning the document UNEP/MED WG.524/2 “Progress Report” shared with all participants one month before the meeting for the English version, and fifteen days before the meeting for the French version, as per UNEP/MPA rules.

14. The SPA/RAC IMAP Assistant, Ms. Asma Yahyaoui, recalled the main outputs of the project with regards to the IMAP component at the regional level as follows: (i) elaboration of monitoring and assessment elements for the IMAP agreed common indicators, and at the national and sub-regional levels (ii) in depth identification at country level of the capacities required to enable IMAP implementation and to facilitate the provision of reliable and quality assured data for the 2023 MED QSR; (iii) capacity building and exchange of best practices at the national, sub-regional and regional level through specific training sessions and meetings; and (iii) integrated/joint monitoring in MPAs and high-pressure areas carried out in identified pilot sites for agreed common indicators.

15. The IMAP-MPA Project Manager and SPA/RAC IMAP Assistant, presented the progress with regards the IMAP-related component of the Project which aims at contributing towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Mediterranean through the implementation of the IMAP and the delivery of reliable data for IMAP indicators on three clusters: (i) Pollution & Marine Litter; (ii) Biodiversity & Non-indigenous species (NIS); and (iii) Coast & Hydrography by the seven eligible Contracting Parties. The presentation focused on the following activities:

- a) Organization of the project’s national kick-off meeting in Lebanon (July 2021) and regular coordination meetings with the countries;
- b) Outputs produced by Regional Experts/Consultants on Pollution, Marine Litter, Biodiversity & Non-indigenous Species, Coast & Hydrography; and
- c) Preparation of Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) with the beneficiary countries and the signature status of these legal agreements.

16. 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 the progress made so far, as follows:

- At regional level: Ms. Asma Kheriji (SPA/RAC MPA Assistant) informed the meeting that the project (i) supported the organisation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Mediterranean MPA Forum (Monaco and online), and (ii) supports the development and implementation of a regional capacity-building programme for improving Mediterranean MPA management and ensuring their sustainability, covering key aspects related to MPA effective management and sustainable financing (completed), and socio-economic sustainability of MPAs (on-going), with specific post-training implementation activities to be put in place. In addition, Mr Limam informed the meeting that the project contributed to the elaboration of an active and transformative Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean which was adopted by the Barcelona Convention in December 2021.
- At national level: Mr. Limam presented the progress made since the last project Steering Committee Meeting where, (i) experts to develop the National Strategy on MPA in Egypt have been hired; (ii) three (3) complementary ecological and three (3) socio-economic assessments have been prepared, respectively at Rachgoun Island future MPA in Algeria, Tyre Coast Nature Reserve in Lebanon and Shash area future MPA in the Gulf of Sirte in Libya, paving the way and leading to the launching of the management plans elaboration and the provision

of support for their effective implementation; and (iii) support to the implementation of the management in Jbel Moussa (Morocco) and Kerkennah Archipelago (Tunisia) is being provided in particular with regards to the elaboration of integrated socioeconomic programmes and communication and awareness plans at both sites.

17. Mr. Théou presented the results produced by the project with regard to Gender Mainstreaming, including the questionnaire sent to all stakeholders to the project in order to create a baseline on the topic, the comprehensive desk-review prepared (UNEP/MED WG.524/Inf.9), the gender entry points identified, and the potential list of gender stakeholders prepared. All these documents supported the creation of the IMAP-MPA Gender Action Plan (UNEP/MED WG.524/Inf.10), which was presented to the Project Steering Committee.

#### Annual Workplan and Budget:

18. 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”.

19. Following the presentations, several participants to the Meeting took the floor:

- Egypt thanked the IMAP-MPA Project team for their presentations and kindly asked the Secretariat to share the PowerPoint presentations along the Meeting Report. The excellent gender balance regarding participants to the meeting was also underlined. Some clarifications were requested regarding the 2020 MPA Forum and the MPA Roadmap, which were provided by Ms. Asma Kheriji on behalf of the IMAP-MPA Project team.
- The UfM Secretariat asked whether the IMPA-MPA has been in contact with INTERREG or MPA-Engage projects. Mr. Limam confirmed that SPA/RAC is involved in MPA-Engage project and that synergies and lessons learnt as well as best practices from MPA-Engage are and will be used during the last stage of the IMAP-MPA implementation.
- The DG NEAR considered the request for an extension positively and agreed with the presented workplan.
- Libya positively noted the savings associated to having online meetings and that the money saved was transferred to project activities.

20. The progress report, revised workplan and budget were approved by the Project Steering Committee emphasizing the need to accelerate some of the activities to ensure the project activities are implemented in a smooth manner.

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

#### **Agenda Item 4: Updated Project Communication Plan**

22. The Secretariat presented an updated version of the project communication and visibility plan (UNEP/MED WG.524/4) including specific information on its objectives and target groups, the regular communication activities, and the required resources.

23. The newly produced short video regarding the three EU-funded projects implementation by the UNEP/MAP was presented to the Project Steering Committee:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBL4Q4hrwvo>

24. Several participants took the floor after the presentation:

- Egypt mentioned the up-coming meetings regarding the Post-2020 Strategy of the CBD as well as the UN Ocean Conference to be held in Lisbon (Portugal). Mr. Théou informed the Steering Committee that the UNEP/MAP will be represented at the Conference in Portugal, while Mr. Limam confirmed that SPA/RAC will participate in CBD Forum on Conservation and Sustainable Use and will highlight the IMAP-MPA project results.
- SPA/RAC confirmed that in addition to communication material produced by the project itself, there has been wide coverage of national activities by national and local media, especially in Algeria for the Rachgoun Island future MPA
- Mr. Fourtune asked the Secretariat to add the link of the presented video in the Meeting Report.

25. The updated communication plan was approved by the Project Steering Committee.

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

#### **Agenda Item 5: Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives**

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

28. Following the presentation, several participants took the floor:

- Egypt welcomed the efforts of the IMAP-MPA project team to ensure synergies with EU funded projects and other initiatives and requested more details about how these synergies and cooperation was implemented.
- The IMAP-MPA Project Manager highlighted the constant communication with the project managers, the share of information and the effort made by the Secretariat to avoid any duplication of effort. It was recalled that the IMAP-MPA project is part of UNEP/MAP Program of Work which ensures clear communication between the actors involved.
- Mr. Limam highlighted the good synergy and complementarity between the IMAP-MPA activities and other projects executed by SPA/RAC, such as the MEDProgramme Child Project 3.1 in Libya, the MAVA funded turtles project in Lebanon and Libya, and the MAVA funded MPAs/no-take zone project in Algeria and Morocco.
- The IMAP-MPA Regional Expert for Biodiversity and NIS, Mr Abdelhafidh Chalabi, recalled to the Project Steering Committee the crucial importance of engaging local stakeholders and the role of citizen-science in MPA management. Mr. Théou highlighted that this precise point was one of the reasons supporting the request of a no-cost extension of 6-months, so as to involve all the local stakeholders and to have sustainability of the project's outcomes.

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

#### **Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business**

30. Following a request from Libya, the Project Steering Committee agreed to use this Agenda Item to allow all beneficiary countries to present the on-going activities implemented in their countries.

31. Lebanon informed the Project Steering Committee about the on-going work related to the Tyre MPA management plan. Consultants were selected in 2021 and a stakeholders meeting was organised in Tyre on 3 March 2022, with the participation of SPA/RAC. Regarding the IMAP component, the SSFA is expected to be signed soon and work to start on the IMAP component to monitor CIs in three sites. Lebanon thanked SPA/RAC and CU for their assistance.



32. Algeria thanked the IMAP-MPA team for the quality of the documents produced and thanked the project for its excellent support regarding the classification of the Rachgoun island as a new MPA in Algeria. The work realised in the frame of the project is a good example and could be used for another MPA, namely the massif de Collo currently under identification. Algeria highlighted the synergies with the EcAp MED III project for the IMAP Component and informed the PSC that selected indicators are currently being identified. Algeria mentioned that the country waiting a document in French from INFO-RAC regarding the use of data collected in the frame of the IMAP.

33. Egypt recalled the late official approval by relevant authorities for the project implementation. Following the receipt of the approval, the process related to the national strategy for MPA has been launched, with consultants currently working on the inception work and the preparation of a first workshop. The content of the SSFA to be signed in the frame of the IMAP component is clear, but still some discussions are on-going regarding the budget breakdown and designation of national organisation.

34. The IMAP-MPA project manager thanked Algeria, Lebanon and Egypt for their collaboration and reiterated the availability of the IMAP-MPA team to support the countries regarding the signature of the SSFA, which is urgently needed in order to collect needed information for the 2023 MED QSR. He also underlined that he will follow-up with Algeria and INFO/RAC regarding the document in French on the use of data collected.

35. Israel underlined the difficulties faced by the national team in submitting data, particularly the format of the Excel sheets used by INFO-RAC, as certain habitats are not present in Israel's waters, or some NIS are not applicable. Israel has completed training on data management and has raised the issues with INFO/RAC. The completion of Excel sheets represents a huge amount of extra work.

36. Mr. Mehdi Aissi, SPA/RAC IMAP officer, responded describing the different steps and endorsement for the Common indicators and the process for developing and agreeing the Data Dictionaries (DDs) and Data Standards (DSs). He clarified that countries could send modifications to add types of habitats that countries want to assess and explained the process for developing baselines starting with meetings with national experts. The 2023 MED QSR will be the first occasion to test the assessment process and will be followed by assessment on how to improve the situation for the next cycle, which will be discussed within CORMONs meetings. Ms. Yahyaoui clarified that the DDs and DSs of species are not currently available on the IMAP Info System as they are still under discussions and that will be considered by the next CORMON biodiversity meeting in autumn 2022.

37. Due to internet connection issue, Libya asked Mr Aissi to inform the PSC that the legal agreement for the IMAP component was signed, CIs selected and that the monitoring programmes will be implemented during the summer season. The list of national experts has been agreed and data availability discussed before a meeting to be organized in mid-June to further discuss trainings, implementation timeline, training for using the IMAP Info System.

38. Morocco informed the PSC that IMAP related activities started in 2021 with the establishment of a national Steering Committee and follow-up committee for the activities. The country thanked the CU and SPA/RAC for their support regarding the launching of consultancies, from which three experts were selected with good backgrounds on pollution on litter, biodiversity and on hydrography. The national team is currently finalising the inventory of pilot sites with a few criteria used to choose the sites. The national Steering Committee is following the three EU-funded projects and synergies amongst the various projects are very useful. The data collection and integration into the IMAP Info System, is ongoing. A meeting will be organised in July with the CU to take stock of actions carried out on all projects.

39. Tunisia mentioned the recent signature by the ANPE of the SSFA regarding the Pollution cluster and the preparation of next phases. National experts were contacted in order to start the

implementation of the activities. Activities related to Biodiversity and Hydrography are under APAL responsibility.

**Agenda Item 7: Conclusions and Recommendations**

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

**Agenda Item 8: Closure of the Meeting**

41. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Meeting was declared closed at 16:15 Athens Time on Tuesday, 7 June 2022 by the Officer in Charge.

**Annex I**

**List of Participants**

## List of participants

### REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES *REPRESENTANT.E.S DES PARTIES CONTRACTANTES*

<b>ALGERIA / ALGERIE</b>	<p><b>Ms. Souad Boustila</b> Ministry of the Environment</p> <p><b>Mr. Raouf Hadj Aissa</b> Director of Prevention, Conservation and Valorization of the ecosystem's biodiversity Algerian Ministry of Environment</p> <p><b>Ms. Yasmine Fadli</b> Ministry of the Environment</p>
<b>EGYPT / EGYPTE</b>	<p><b>Mr. Mostafa Fouda</b> Minister Advisor on Biodiversity Ministry of Environment</p>
<b>ISRAEL / ISRAEL</b>	<p><b>Mr. Dror Zurel</b> Marine Monitoring and Research Coordinator Marine and Coastal Protection Division Ministry of Environmental Protection</p> <p><b>Mr. Simon Nemtsov</b> Wildlife Ecologist and Head of International Relations Israel Nature and Parks Authority</p>
<b>LEBANON / LIBAN</b>	<p><b>Ms. Lara Samaha</b> Head, Department of Ecosystems Ministry of Environment</p>
<b>LIBYA / LIBYE</b>	<p><b>Mr. Ali Elkekli</b> Environment General Authority Director, Technical Cooperation &amp; Consultation Department</p> <p><b>Mr. Abdulmaula Hamza</b> Marine Conservation Expert Ministry of Environment of Libya</p>

<b>MOROCCO / MAROC</b>	<p><b>Mr. Mohammad Elbouch</b> Director of the National Laboratory for Pollution Studies and Monitoring Environment Department Ministry of Energy, Mines and Environment</p> <p><b>Ms. Naoual Zoubair</b> Head of Coastal Service Environment Department Ministry of Energy, Mines and Environment</p>
<b>TUNISIA / TUNISIE</b>	<p><b>Mr. Yassine Marzougui</b> MED POL National Focal Point</p> <p><b>Ms. Samia Boufares</b> Management Director of APAL Coastal Ecosystems</p>

**DONOR**

<b>EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPEENNE</b>	<p><b>Mr. Frédéric FORTUNE</b> Programme manager, Environment, Water &amp; Biodiversity European Commission DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) NEAR B2 – Regional Cooperation Neighbourhood South, Economic Investment Plan</p> <p><b>Mr. Stefano Dotto</b> Team Leader - EU policies / Regional programs Neighborhood South / Energy, environment, climate change, transport and relations with regional organizations</p> <p><b>Ms. Alice BELIN</b> Marine Policy Officer DG ENV, European Commission</p>
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**OBSERVERS**

<p><b>UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UfM) SECRETARIAT t / UNION POUR LA MEDITERRANNEE (UpM) SECRETARIAT</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Cristina Cardanete</b> Environment and Blue Economy Water and Environment Division Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean</p> <p><b>Ms Nina Retzlaff</b> Senior Consultant GlobalCAD The Centre of Partnership for Development</p>
<p><b>DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO EGYPT / DELEGATION DE L'UNION EUROPEENNE EN EGYPT</b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Sylvie FONTAINE</b> Programme Officer for Environment and Climate Action Economy Reform Section Delegation of the European Union to Egypt</p>

**IMAP-MPA REGIONAL EXPERTS**

<p><b>REGIONAL EXPERTS / EXPERTS REGIONAUX</b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Francois Galgani</b> Regional Expert on Marine Litter</p> <p><b>Mr. Enrico Barbone</b> Regional Expert on Eutrophication</p> <p><b>Ms. Maria Del Carmen Casado Martinez</b> Regional Expert on Contaminants</p> <p><b>Ms. Marialena Vyzaki</b> Regional Expert on Gender</p> <p><b>Mr. Abdelhafidh Chalabi</b> Regional Expert on Biodiversity</p>
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## SECRETARIAT/SECRETARIAT

<p><b>UNEP/MAP – United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan</b></p> <p><i>PNUE/PAM – Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement / Plan d'Action pour la Méditerranée</i></p>	<p><b>Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis</b> Programme Management Officer - Governance</p> <p><b>Mr. Philippe Théou</b> IMAP-MPA Project Manager</p> <p><b>Ms. Joanne Foden</b> Programme Management Officer, 2023 MED QSR</p> <p><b>Ms. Jelena Knezevic</b> Monitoring and Assessment Officer</p> <p><b>Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis</b> ML-MED II Project Manager</p> <p><b>Mr. Lucas Cyran Spieser</b> ECAP-MED III Project Manager</p> <p><b>Ms. Olfat Hamdan</b> MedProgramme Management Officer</p> <p><b>Ms. Anara Eginbaeva</b> Finance and Administrative Project Assistant</p> <p><b>Ms. Stellah Lubanga</b> Project Assistant</p>
<p><b>SPA/RAC – Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre</b></p> <p><i>SPA/RAC – Centre d'Activités Régionales pour les Aires Spécialement Protégées</i></p>	<p><b>Mr. Mehdi AISSI</b> Project Officer (IMAP component)</p> <p><b>Mr. Atef LIMAM</b> Project Officer (MPA Component)</p> <p><b>Ms. Souha EL ASMI</b> Programme Officer – Specially Protected Areas (SPAs)</p> <p><b>Ms. Asma KHERIJI</b> Assistant to Project Officer (MPA Component)</p> <p><b>Ms. Asma YAHYAOUI</b> Assistant to Project Officer (IMAP Component)</p> <p><b>Ms. Dorra MAAOUI</b> Communication Assistant</p>

**Annex II**  
**Agenda of the Meeting**



## **Agenda of the Meeting**

**Tuesday 7 June 2022**

- Agenda Item 1:** Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda
- Agenda Item 2:** Introduction of Members of the Steering Committee
- Agenda Item 3:** IMAP-MPA Project: Progress; Annual Workplan and Budget
- Agenda item 4:** Updated Project Communication Plan
- Agenda item 5:** Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives
- Agenda Item 6:** Any Other Business
- Agenda Item 7:** Conclusions and Recommendations
- Agenda Item 8:** Closure of the Meeting

## **Annex III**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Conclusions and Recommendations of the**  
**Third Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project**  
**Videoconference, 7 June 2022**

1. The Third Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project took place via videoconference on 7 June 2022 at the kind invitation of 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 Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, the European Commission DG NEAR and DG ENV and the EU Delegation to Egypt, UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit, SPA/RAC; as well as the UfM Secretariat 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.524/1 to UNEP/MEDWG.524/4), the IMAP-MPA Project Steering Committee Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

**Agenda Item 3: IMAP-MPA Project: Progress; Annual Work Plan and Budget**

- a) The IMAP-MPA PSCM, while recalling 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 creating the first experience on integrated implementation of IMAP and delivering to the extent possible an integrated assessment; acknowledged the progress achieved during the reporting period despite the constraints mainly attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic and national specific difficulties.
- b) The IMAP-MPA PSCM approved the annual workplan and budget as presented by the Secretariat in document UNEP/MED WG.524/3, including the 6 months no-cost extension request and the budget revision.

**Agenda Item 4: Updated Project Communication Plan**

- c) The IMAP-MPA PSCM reviewed and approved the updated Communication and Visibility Plan (UNEP/MED WG.524/4).

**Agenda Item 5: Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives**

- d) The IMAP-MPA PSCM welcomed the information provided by the Secretariat pertinent to the approved EU-funded projects EcAp-MED III and ML MED II, as well as the GEF funded MED Programme.
- e) The IMAP-MPA PSCM pointed out the importance of ensuring full complementarity among those projects and other related project 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 beneficiary countries and the Secretariat to pay necessary attention to ensure a high level of integration and complementarities among these projects at national level, to enable for example the delivery of data sets in line with the 2023 MED QSR.

**Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business**

- f) With the approval of the Participants to the PSCM, all beneficiary countries presented an overview of the implementation of the project at the national level.
- g) Members of the PSCM mentioned difficulties faced regarding the reporting of data into the MAP InfoSystem. The CU, SPA/RAC and INFO/RAC will make sure to follow-up closely this matter and provide all the needed assistance to beneficiary countries.

**Agenda Item 7: Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations**

- a) It was agreed to disseminate the full report of the third IMAP-MPA PSCM to its members in 2 weeks at the latest (i.e., by 21 June 2022), in English and French.