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92<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the  
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Istanbul, Turkey, 24-25 March 2022

**Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for December 2021-February 2022**

**Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period December 2021-February 2022**

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## I. Introduction

1. This report covers the activities and outputs carried out between December 2021 and February 2022. The Reports by the Secretariat on Specific Issues and on Financial and Administrative Issues are prepared as separate documents, namely UNEP/MED BUR.92/5 and UNEP/MED BUR.92/4 respectively.
2. The Secretariat will be working in the next months to consider possible ways to report to the Bureau on progress achieved in order to better streamline reporting and focus on priorities. This may also include adjusting the format of the document previously issued as “Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP XX Decisions”, considering ways to inform on the implementation of the Antalya Ministerial Declaration in close conjunction with PoW and making better use of the Planning and Priorities Tables the Secretariat develops with ECP that are as per practice submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meetings.

## II. Main Activities/Outputs per Programme of Work (PoW) theme linked to specific outcome

### **Programme 1. Towards a pollution and litter free Mediterranean Sea and Coast embracing circular economy**

#### **Outcome 1.1. Strategies and Action Plans addressing marine litter and plastics developed and implemented through comprehensive, coherent and collaborative approaches**

3. SCP/RAC and MED POL are coordinating for the organisation of the Marine Litter Best Practices Meeting to be organised back-to-back with the MARLICE international forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy (16-20 May 2022, Sevilla, Spain).
4. SCP/RAC started the preparation of a policy brief, including recommendations to move forward towards Good Environmental Status (GES) for the IMAP EO10 on Marine Litter in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This policy brief is part of the capitalisation process of the Plastic Busters MPAs project, based on the results of various activities implemented in the context of this project.
5. A regional training on understanding better microplastics and identifying how to address the issues is under preparation by SCP/RAC, in collaboration with MIO-ECSDE, and will take place through several online sessions to be organised in April and June 2022.
6. Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) were concluded and signed with nine countries under the Marine Litter MED II Project and the Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Ministry for Ecological Transition (MiTE).
7. Several processes are under preparation by SCP/RAC to provide technical assistance to Southern Mediterranean countries on regulatory instruments to reduce and prevent the use of single use plastic (SUPs) items (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Tunisia), following the SUPs technical guidelines prepared by the Center. Those processes are supported by the EU-funded WES and Marine Litter Med II projects.
8. REMPEC provided technical support to MED POL on the EU-funded Marine Litter MED II Project activities related to the enhanced management of marine litter originating from sea-based sources in ports and marinas, and liaison was made with Morocco.

#### **Outcome 1.2. A holistic and efficient response to land and sea-based pollution, as a part of overall Ecosystem Approach policy for the Mediterranean, (chemicals, contaminants, eutrophication, noise, oil and emerging pollution) for a sustainable Mediterranean coastal and marine ecosystem is implemented**

9. Work is ongoing (a) to support preparations of the draft regional plans on agriculture, aquaculture and storm water management , (b) to support preparations of the pre-treatment standards of industrial effluents for industries discharging into urban wastewater collection systems, (c) to prepare the desalination standards, (d) to follow up on Pollutant Release and Transfer Register / National Baseline Budget (PRTR/NBB) Guidelines implementation by the countries and for assessing pollution trends at national, sub-regional and regional levels (with a focus on aquaculture). Concepts for SSFAs for piloting these guidelines with countries are also under preparation. Work has been initiated to update the guidelines on dumping of uncontaminated inert materials updated in synergy with the IMO London Protocol are under preparation.
10. A tender for removal of Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) contaminated equipment is initiated. The contract is being finalized for removal of 785 tons of PCB from Algeria and Lebanon (MedProgramme Child Project 1.1, Phase 1). Legal agreements with Algeria and Lebanon are in place to facilitate the implementation of this contract.
11. Inventory and sampling of new persistent organic pollutants (POPs) (PFAs, HBCD, SCCPs) is under preparation in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. Policy roadmaps to update the national legislation to the current commitments under the Stockholm Convention are being drafted.
12. Technical brief for the development of a Master module on plastics and their additives in a circular economy is

under preparation. The course will be introduced in Universities of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Master on environmental change management in the Mediterranean). The activity is funded through an agreement with the Basel-Rotterdam-Stockholm Conventions Secretariat (INPLASTICS project).

13. REMPEC signed a letter of agreement (LoA) with Cedre, France (advice and expertise in accidental water pollution), for the finalisation of the “Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide”, in accordance with the recommendations of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points. REMPEC also initiated contacts with partner institutions and IMO to coordinate the preparation of the national workshops on the assessment of management capabilities to respond to oil pollution in Central and Eastern Mediterranean coastal states and the implementation of resulting improvement plans.

14. REMPEC initiated the preparation for the development of modalities of possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, including in terms of governance and financing. REMPEC also liaised with the Secretariat of the RAMOGE Agreement (Agreement related to the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of an Area of the Mediterranean Sea) to better coordinate and plan joint activities, including the possible use of the draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report developed by the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) during the 2022 OSCAR-MED operation, as well as the participation of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to forthcoming OSCAR-MED operations.

15. Plan Bleu/RAC established preliminary contacts with the *Institut Méditerranéen de l’Eau* (IME – Mediterranean Water Institute) to synergize activities for the establishment of a State of Play of Desalination under the WESR Med observatory, as well as with the *Agence Française de Développement* to collaborate on a decision support tool for sustainable desalination investments.

16. MED POL participated in the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International PRTR Coordinating Group (ICG-15), on 26 January 2022, and shared ongoing efforts on updating the LBS annexes and development of estimation techniques and methodologies for NBB/PRTR for diffuse sources and aquaculture.

### **Outcome 1.3. Systemic approaches for Circular Economy, eco-innovation as well as Sustainable Consumption and Production incorporated into key sectors of activity which are main sources of pollution**

17. Regarding the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Action Plan in Turkey, the study on the construction and demolition value chain and its related policy roadmap is under revision by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change. Next steps are under discussion towards the organisation of a national workshop.

18. The Switchers Support Programme continues its development, in line with the progress achieved during the last biennium: A newsletter on sustainable business development “ACT Network” is under preparation; New members are using the Switchers toolbox providing sustainable business development tools to entrepreneurs, business support organizations and experts, and continuous improvement is ensured; The open-innovation methodology is being finalised before the development of the digital platform that will serve to manage open innovation communities; A Switchers Products platform will host products of and services to the Switchers Community Members; A policy brief of the Sustainable Finance Observatory is being drafted and will be disseminated, and the Observatory Structure is being designed.

### **Outcome 1.4. One Health approach developed and implemented, linking human and ecosystems health with pollution reduction and prevention, taking into account lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic**

19. The joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA), set out in the Annex to Decision IG.25/14, was submitted on 4 February 2022, by France on behalf of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the Member States of the European Union, to the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 78) (London, UK, 6-10 June 2022).

20. Considering the above, needs of Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon and Libya are being assessed, and the work plans and timetables related to their ratification and effective implementation of Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), as well as their implementation of the Med SOx ECA, are being developed in consultation with the respective countries.

21. A draft regional fund-raising strategy to support Mediterranean coastal states in relation to the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, as well as the implementation of the Med SOx ECA and linked

compliance measures, were shared with the IMO Secretariat and the MAP Coordinating Unit prior to onward transmission to the Contracting Parties, which have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI. REMPEC also initiated contact with relevant stakeholders to provide technical support, through technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, including financial support and resource mobilisation activities, to address Contracting Parties' needs.

22. The promotional video on the Med SOx ECA was updated following the adoption of the related decision.

23. Contacts were made by Plan Bleu/RAC with *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (IRD – Research Institute for Sustainable development) in view of organizing a joint workshop on the One Health approach in the Western Mediterranean.

## **Programme 2. Towards Healthy Mediterranean Ecosystems and Enhanced Biodiversity**

### **Outcome 2.1. Ecosystem resilience improved through restoration of those with best regeneration potential**

24. The kick-off meeting of the Waterlands project took place on 13-14 January 2022. Plan Bleu/RAC is one of the main partners in charge of capitalization activities. Furthermore, in collaboration with Interreg Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community (MBPC)'s projects, work is on-going by Plan Bleu/RAC for the elaboration of a policy paper on transformative challenges for the conservation, restoration, and wise use of biodiversity in the Mediterranean.

25. In the context of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), which is led by UNEP and FAO, the UNEP Regional Office of Europe (ROE) as initiated, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal and WCMC, as well as relevant secretariats of regional seas conventions and action plans, including UNEP/MAP, the preparation of a project gathering the five pan-European Regional Seas: Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Baltic Sea, and North-East Atlantic basin. This project has the potential to be selected among UNEP Flagship Projects in the context of the UN Decade. The long-term objective of the project is to protect, preserve and restore the ecological integrity and biological diversity of the pan-European regional seas through the improved management of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) and the establishment of effective MPAs within EBSAs.

26. The Mediterranean/MAP contribution to the above-mentioned project is under preparation. Plan Bleu/RAC proposed activities related to socio-economic assessment/analysis of the benefits from restoration actions, knowledge management and capacity building, including through participatory approaches in governance fora at the regional level but also at the level of pilot cases. The activities proposed by SPA/RAC aim at replicating restoration activities in priority areas (e.g., existing or forthcoming MPAs) in three phases, namely (i) a comprehensive desktop review of past projects towards an inventory of restoration techniques, scientists' and managers' networks, and lessons learned from past experiences; (ii) in-depth capacity building and training at the site level (on-the-job training), including monitoring and evaluation, and local workshops; (iii) restoration activities in 5 pilot sites, incl. awareness raising and a strong communication component along the way (results available in relevant platforms, regional stakeholder workshop). PAP/RAC is expected to join the consortium, which will be also expanded to key partners. The Secretariat will inform the MAP Focal Points in due course, when the project's logical framework will be enough mature to engage dialogue in view of identifying relevant pilot sites and of obtaining support from interested Contracting Parties.

### **Outcome 2.2. Comprehensive, coherent Mediterranean network of well-managed MPAs and OECMs in place, expanded, effective and sustainable**

27. The 2020 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean was co-organized by SPA/RAC, MedPAN, WWF Mediterranean and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, from 28 November to 1 December 2021 in Monaco (Musée Océanographique de Monaco et in Novotel) and online. It brought together 224 in person participants from 26 Mediterranean countries and beyond. The participation encompassed the wider MPA community, predominantly management bodies or national or local public authorities in charge of MPAs (29%), universities, research institutes and experts (18%), NGOs (18%), international or regional intergovernmental institutions (10%) and networks (10%). In addition, 466 participants attended online (out of 517 registered). The post-2020 roadmap for Mediterranean MPAs, part of the MPA forum collaborative process, integrated the feedback from the MPA Forum sessions.

28. A scoping questionnaire on Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) is being developed and will be circulated to the Contracting Parties. The questionnaire aims at assessing the understanding of the OECM concept, tracking the progress on OECMs at country level and documenting national experiences and challenges.

29. Preliminary contacts have been established with the GFCM Secretariat in order to initiate discussions on the OECM topic under both Secretariats respective mandates and assess possible synergies and cooperation modalities in this emerging priority.

30. A training on “Mastering management effectiveness and financial sustainability of Marine Protected Areas” was organized from 7 to 10 February 2022 online and gather 24 participants from 6 Mediterranean countries. This training course was preceded by a pre-training organized on 2 and 3 February 2022, online, for Mentors from the 6 participated countries to build their capacity in communication, training coaching.
31. SPA/RAC is convening the Third meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) on 1 March 2022, by teleconference. The meeting will provide guidance on (i) the development of the evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and OECMs in the Mediterranean, (ii) the implementing of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy, and (iii) the implementing of the OECM strategic pillar. It will eventually agree on the Programme of Work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023.
32. The assessment-diagnosis phases of the elaboration of the management plans of the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve in Lebanon and Shash area in the Gulf of Sirte in Libya have been launched and will be presented and evaluated by June 2022. The elaboration of the management plan for the Kuriat Islands Future MCPA (Tunisia) has been initiated since the end of March 2021. The deliverable of the first phase was endorsed by the Tunisian national authorities in October 2021. The second phase, the elaboration of the new management plan itself is ongoing and planned to be completed in March 2022. For Foça Special Environment Protection Area (Turkey), the processes of the elaboration of the management plan have been initiated since May 2021. The assessment-diagnostic report was elaborated and endorsed by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation and its General Directorate of Natural Assets in September 2011. The elaboration of the new management plan is being completed in February 2022. For Al Hoceima National Park (Morocco) and despite the Covid situation, local workshops and field technical consultations took place. The deliverable of the first phase is expected for the end of March 2022. The elaboration of a new management plan is planned to be completed in May 2022.
33. In the framework of the GEF-funded MedProgramme, the inception meeting of the Child Project 3.1. "Management support and expansion of marine protected areas in the state of Libya" has been organized by the Ministry of Environment of Libya and UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, IUCN and WWF on 16 February 2022. The meeting served to discuss in detail with the national and local stakeholders the planned activities and to set up a roadmap of their implementation with a clear timeframe.
34. The newly developed online SPAMI Evaluation System is in its last testing stage, before its online sharing within the SPAMI Collaborative Platform. Access authorizations will be then provided to the system prospective users including SPA/BD Focal Points and SPAMI managers. SPA/RAC launches a call for sub-grants to involve local civil society organisations (CSO) in the management and sustainable development in & around SPAMIs, through the implementation of on-field activities in Tyre Coast SPAMI (Lebanon) and Kneiss island SPAMI (Tunisia).
35. SPA/RAC starts activities to scale-up good practices and enable networking among SPAMI managers, particularly through a dedicated twinning programme. Twinning between Tyre Coast SPAMI (Lebanon) and Medes Islands SPAMI (Spain) and between Kneiss Islands Tunisia and Parc Marin de La Côte Bleue SPAMI (France) are being prepared.

### **Outcome 2.3. Mediterranean endangered and threatened species and key habitats in favourable status of conservation**

36. SPA/RAC launched the organization of symposia on marine key habitats (marine vegetation, coralligenous and calcareous bio-concretions and dark habitats) and Non-Indigenous Species in the Mediterranean, which will be held during the period of 19-23 September 2022 in Genova, Italy. The symposia will be organised thanks to the support of the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, ISPRA and in collaboration with Department of Earth Sciences, Environment and Life Sciences of the university of Genova. The first announcement will be disseminated before end of February 2022. The symposia are also organized with the financial support of the MAVA funded project NTZ/MPA project. A dedicated website is set up to manage abstracts and manuscripts.
37. On 31 January 2022, the bycatch data collection programme, started in November 2020 by SPA/RAC in collaboration with Tunisian partners, has been successfully completed. The data analysis will start by the end of February 2022 upon the GFCM send the report template to all MedBycatch partners. In parallel, bycatch mitigation trials are ongoing in Tunisia targeting mainly sea turtles and cartilaginous fishes (Trawlers, longline and gillnets).
38. On 4 February 2002 in Tabarka (Tunisia), within the framework of the MAVA MedByatch, NTZ/MPA and Marine Turtles projects and following a first session held in November 2021, UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC organized a second field training session, intended for Bycatch observers and Marine Protected Areas Guards in Tunisia, related to onboard fires fighting, survival at sea and safety on board. The training was carried out by the Agricultural Extension and Training Agency (AVFA).

39. On 7 February 2022, a virtual training course on the identification and handling of vulnerable species of sharks, rays and batoid incidentally caught during fishing operations, with focus on the species listed in Annex II and III of the #BarcelonaConvention SPA/BD Protocol, was co-organized by FAO/GFCM and the Regional Coordination Group Mediterranean and Black Sea in collaboration with UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, for the benefit of scientific observers and experts from Mediterranean and Black Sea countries as well as relevant partner organizations. More than 350 participants attended the training.

40. Within the framework of the MAVA marine turtles project, SPA/RAC, as lead of this project, elaborates a study on Marine turtle's partnership post MAVA in the Mediterranean that will be discussed during an ad hoc expert meeting to be held back-to-back to the steering committee of the project (Denizli, Turkey 15-18 March 2022).

41. In the framework of the QuietSEA project, funded by DG Environment of the European Commission, SPA/RAC work has been initiated for the drafting of Deliverable 2 "Options for EU threshold values for D11C1 for impulsive noise" of the MSFD.

42. In November 2021, SPA/RAC launched a call for tenders for the elaboration of the Mediterranean distribution Maps of Posidonia Meadows, coralligenous assemblages and marine caves habitats. The objective is to elaborate distribution Maps of Posidonia Meadows, coralligenous assemblages and marine caves habitats from available online data, national data and SPA/RAC data as foreseen in NTZ/MPA project and in SPA/RAC Programme of work 2022-2023 (activity 3.1.1). The distribution maps are planned to be ready by June 2022.

#### **Outcome 2.4. Non-indigenous species introductions minimized and introduction pathways under control**

43. The second Mediterranean Symposium on the Non-Indigenous Species is planned to be organized back-to-back with the Mediterranean Symposia on marine key habitats and NIS which will be held during the period of 19-23 September 2022 in Genova, Italy.

44. REMPEC secured the necessary funding from the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) to support the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention, following the adoption of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), as set out in the Annex to Decision IG.25/17. REMPEC also initiated the preparations for the development of a resource mobilisation strategy (and possibly a project proposal) to implement the said Strategy, as well as the work to support the development of harmonised procedures for exemptions under Regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention, including regional protocols (to the extent that they relate to exemptions) for port surveys and risk assessment.

45. SPA/RAC collaborated with the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation Since February 2020 in the organisation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, held in Monaco from 28 November to 1 December 2021. The Forum brought together in Monaco 224 participants from 26 Mediterranean countries and beyond, and registered the attendance of 466 participants attended online. The objective of this Forum was to feed and enhance the draft post-2020 MPA Roadmap content through the outcomes of the different working sessions organised throughout the Forum.

#### **Programme 3. Towards a Climate Resilient Mediterranean**

##### **Outcome 3.1. Legal, policy and institutional framework strengthened at the regional and national level to efficiently address climate change related challenges (flooding, erosion, land degradation, pollution, disasters etc.)**

46. The Resilience Information Platform for Adriatic Cities and Towns, prepared within the EU Interreg Croatia-Italy project AdriAdapt (<https://adriadapt.eu>), was fully populated with a set of adaptation options ranging from societal, green (nature-based) and grey (engineering) options; adaptation guidelines and handbooks including the Integrated Adaptation Planning tool; examples of good practices; awareness raising material; and many other useful information. The tools and information contained in the platform can be easily used by all Mediterranean countries.

##### **Outcome 3.2. Nature-based, technical solutions promoting prevention or reduction of the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and increase resilience to climatic variability and change**

47. Plan Bleu/RAC and SPA/RAC are working with partners involved in the IUCN Congress's Mediterranean Pavilion, to synthesize and publish the knowledge displayed during the events which have been taking place on this pavilion, with a strong focus on nature-based solutions.

48. A meeting with donors (Italy), UNEP/MAP and REMPEC was organised in Rome, Italy, in February 2022, to

discuss the concept note on the GHG Med Project submitted in 2021.

### **Outcome 3.3. Better understanding and knowledge of climate change and its impacts on environment and development**

49. MedECC Secretariat laid the ground for the elaboration of the three thematic reports. The designation of lead authors is underway, and an authors' meeting is foreseen in May 2022.

50. Plan Bleu/RAC is a partner in the successful consortium which applied to the European Environment Agency's call for the European Topic Center on Climate Adaptation.

51. Sea'ties Ocean and Climate Platform is an initiative that analyzes cities' responses to sea-level rise and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and concrete returns on experience globally, to highlight good practices and overcome common challenges. Preliminary discussions were held to evaluate potential synergy and cooperation between this initiative and the MedProgramme/SCCF project entitled to enhance regional climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas. UNEP/MAP through the MedProgramme will contribute to the Mediterranean regional workshop that will be held in March or April 2022 to facilitate the knowledge exchange and share experience on the coastal adaptation of coastal cities.

### **Outcome 3.4. Mitigation of Climate Change progressed through Circular Economy, increased resource efficiency and carbon neutrality business strategies**

#### **Programme 4. Towards the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources including circular and blue economy**

#### **Outcome 4.1. Sustainability of coastal and marine resources achieved through the synergetic implementation of planning and management approaches, including the adequate consideration of Land-Sea Interactions (LSI)**

52. On 3 December 2021, PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC held the first workshop for the preparation of the coastal management plan for Boka-Kotorska Bay; this joint Scoping and Climagine workshop, held in Tivat, Montenegro, was organized in the framework of the MedProgramme's Child Project 2.1. The workshop was attended by representatives of national and local governments, relevant institutions, NGO's and private entities. The workshop concluded with priority topics that the plan will cover, and agreement on subsequent actions towards sustainable development and environmental protection of the Bay.

53. PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC organised online meetings with national and local stakeholders concerning the preparation of a coastal management plan for the Region Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima in Morocco. The Inception Report was drafted and the Inception /Climagine 1 Workshop is planned in Tangier, on 16 March 2022.

54. Work is ongoing by Plan Bleu/RAC to implement two activities aimed at identifying parameters and indicators to be monitored to reach good environmental status on the Mediterranean coastal zone and at drafting a regional conceptual framework for coastal observation. A meeting is expected in June 2022.

55. In the framework of the SCCF Project, Plan Bleu/RAC has been leading the production of two gender-sensitive climate risk assessments in two coastal hotspots. Work is ongoing for downscaling results to these areas and to finalise the reports by the end of June 2022.

56. Good progress has been made with regards to Coastal Area Management Plans (CAMPs): a legal study in support of the ratification of the ICZM Protocol by Bosnia and Herzegovina was drafted and will be submitted to the CAMP's Steering Committee for consideration and approval; and the process of selection of National Project Coordinators for CAMP Otranto (between Albania and Italy) and CAMP Israel have been finalised and contracts are about to be signed, this allowing to fully start the activities.

#### **Outcome 4.2. Sustainable Blue and Green Economy tools and approaches in the context of Sustainable Development and MSSD implementation**

57. An advanced draft of the guiding document to foster Circular Economy within the Blue Economy was prepared, co-produced between the SwitchMed initiative (SCP/RAC) and the Interreg Med Blue Growth Community (Plan Bleu/RAC and Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions/CPMR). A joint conference to share the main findings/recommendations and foster implementation is scheduled on 10-11 May 2022 in Barcelona, Spain.

58. As part of the implementation of Decision IG.25/18 on a set of regional measures to support green and circular businesses, a Regional Policy Hub is under preparation (SwitchMed). The hub will be hosted within the Switchers Platform and will support knowledge transfer through webinars, events, dissemination of technical content on circular economy, etc.

59. Plan Bleu/RAC continued its activities towards guidelines for sustainable tourism, with a focus on sustainable



cruise and leisure boating. Those guidelines have been presented during a side-event of the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and they have been discussed by French institutions working on the “*Document Stratégique de Façade*” for the French Mediterranean coast.

60. Findings regarding Blue Economy in the Mediterranean were disseminated during the *Forum des Mondes Méditerranéens* (Marseille, France, 7-8 February 2022). In addition, Plan Bleu/RAC and SCP/RAC are coordinating for the organization of the Med Forum on the blue economy (Barcelona, Spain, 10-11 May 2022).

61. Contacts are on-going with the French Development Agency (AFD) and with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS) in the context of the WestMed initiative for the implementation of the Roadmap for Sustainable Aquaculture.

62. Preliminary contacts were set with “Hautes Etudes Commerciales” (HEC), a major post-grade school in France, to initiate a study on the benefits of digitalization in the context of the blue economy.

#### **Outcome 4.3. Innovative environmental management and economic instruments implemented for the protection and efficient use of coastal and marine resources**

63. Benefiting from the support of the MAVA Foundation, PAP/RAC signed contracts with two local entrepreneurs in the Buna wetland area, Albania, to support innovative business models, as a follow-up of the wetland management plan prepared in the previous phase of this MAVA-supported initiative.

64. A preliminary report on the assessment of environmentally harmful subsidies in the Mediterranean is under elaboration by Plan Bleu/RAC. It is expected to be published during the first semester of 2022.

65. In collaboration with UNEP/MAP and in the context of the MedProgramme Child Project 2.1 that addresses the management of coastal aquifers, UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) developed the elements required for the characterization and assessment of priority coastal aquifers, in view of the development of the aquifer management plans (in five priority aquifers).

66. In collaboration with UNEP/MAP and in the context of the MedProgramme Child Project 2.2 dedicated to the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus, GWP-Med has completed its stakeholder analysis and consultation workshop for the project activities in Albania. Nexus activities in Albania are steered by the Thematic Group on Water Resources (TGWR) and is advancing on the development of the nexus assessment and nexus strategy for that country. In addition, nexus related activities in Morocco are implemented in synergy with Child Project 2.1 (in cooperation with PAP/RAC and Plan Bleu/RAC); they will be integrated with and contribute to the development of the ICZM plan for the Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region. GWP-Med will initiate similar activities in Lebanon in 2022. The knowledge Nexus Atlas is expected to be launched within first half of 2022.

#### **Outcome 4.4. Measures defined within the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan applied at regional level and by each Contracting Party within their jurisdiction to ensure the safety of offshore activities and reduce their potential impact on the marine environment and its ecosystem**

67. Terms of reference for the three Intersessional Correspondence Groups to prepare i) a draft decision on common criteria, rules and procedures for the removal of installations and the related financial aspects, ii) an Offshore monitoring programme, and iii) a draft decision on amendments to the Annexes to the Offshore Protocol, were prepared in consultation with Members of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG).

### **Programme 5: Governance**

#### **Outcome 5.1. Effective Implementation and Enforcement by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, MAP Policies, including Ecosystem Approach related COP decisions, the MSSD and Programmes of Measures achieved at regional and national levels**

68. INFO/RAC started the conceptual analysis of operational annexes to the MAP Data Policy related to different MAP data flows (BCRS, IMAP, NBB, etc.) to start the implementation at regional and, as appropriate, at national levels.

69. Plan Bleu/RAC is preparing an assessment of legal cases referring to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as a preliminary study to inform the work on legal indicators.

70. Integration of the development of the Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean in the Agenda of the DG ECHO Correspondence/Consultation Group on the new CECIS marine pollution system which held its first meeting on 31 January 2022.

71. A project proposal involving SPA/RAC and other 38 Partners has been submitted to the EU HORIZON 2020 Call: HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-01: Observing and mapping biodiversity and ecosystems, with particular focus on coastal and marine ecosystems. The project would deliver a functional framework that blends existing and

new monitoring systems to provide evidence-based, low-cost, and user-friendly systems, to map, observe, and monitor terrestrial, coastal and marine biodiversity. The framework will be integrated into existing networks of observation and forecasting across the Mediterranean Sea (MSB), Black Sea (BSB) and Red Sea (RSB) basins, and replicable to other EU sea basins. A major novelty will be a system deployed on a glider, capable to collect e-DNA samples from the water column along its track to facilitate species identification and diversity assessment, thus expanding the capacities of existing ODYSSEA and newly established Observatories, transforming them into genomic/biodiversity mapping and modelling entities. The funding size would be 13M €, with a 0,5M € share for SPA/RAC.

72. Following the launch of the MedProgramme and its seven Child Projects (CP) executed by UNEP/MAP, the Secretariat has focused efforts on the establishment of the legal instruments with executing partners to move ahead with the implementation of activities on the ground. In the present reporting period, 11 of the 14 legal instruments foreseen have been established; the remaining are under development. The first Project Steering Committee meetings were organized for five of the MedProgramme's CPs to take stock of progress achieved and to obtain approval from the Project Steering Committees on the annual budgets, budget revisions, and annual workplans for 2021-2022.

73. In relation to the MedProgramme implementation, its eight Child Projects (CP) are expected to support implementation of national activities and to deliver a set of complementary results embracing the categories of priority issues for the Mediterranean Sea which are translated into three components of the program: i) Reduction of Land-Based Pollution in Priority Coastal Hotspots and measuring progress to impacts; ii) Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience in the Coastal Zone; and iii) Protecting Marine Biodiversity. More specifically:

- **Reduction of Land-Based Pollution:** the MedProgramme will reduce pollution in the Mediterranean basin by (a) management and disposal of 2000 tons of POPs and 50 tons of mercury waste, leading to the direct contribution to countries' commitments under the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions, and (b) by improvement of wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure in three Mediterranean countries (Egypt, Lebanon, and Tunisia), through mobilization of hard loans. Also, the development of regional standards on the management of wastewater, sludge, desalination, and the reduction of pollution from aquaculture will contribute to the Regional Plans adopted in the framework of the LBS Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.

- **Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience in the Coastal Zone:** the MedProgramme will promote (a) climate-resilient communities by integrating climate change adaptation measures in two local ICZM plans (Morocco and Montenegro) and through regional training for technical experts and policymakers on climate change adaptation solutions for coastal areas, and (b) sustainable use of coastal and marine resources by supporting the region's ongoing efforts for the implementation of the ICZM Protocol as well as application of the novel water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus approach (the "nexus approach") to balance the competing demands for natural resources. The Partners are coordinating together to enhance synergies and interlinkage among the 3 child projects related to Mediterranean Coastal Zones to prepare a consolidated and integrated Coastal zone management plan at the national level.

- **Protecting Marine Biodiversity:** the MedProgramme will protect marine biodiversity in Libya by expanding the area of seascapes under protection by at least 2,500 hectares and through the establishment of an on-site MPA management unit and management plan in at least one MPA in that country. The sustainability of these interventions will be reinforced by engaging and capacitating Libyan stakeholders on the management of marine protected areas. Together, these actions constitute a measurable contribution to Aichi Target 11 which calls for the global conservation of 10 percent of coastal and marine areas through "...effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures..."

74. The fully-fledged project document of the GFCM-MAP GEF7 FishEBM MED was submitted to the GEF Secretariat for revision and endorsement. This project will complement the MedProgramme for the fishery component. The successful model that is being applied by the MedProgramme to conserving the marine environment can be replicated under the FishEBM project through the collaboration between GFCM and MAP to ensure that favourable conditions are created towards integrating fisheries into existing National Action Plans and in view of mobilizing investments, either public, private or by public-private partnerships.

75. After the endorsement of the IW: LEARN project, the Secretariat participated in the online Inception Workshop of the project held in December 2021. This workshop was an opportunity to review the project document and to discuss its work plan for 2022. It was also an opportunity to highlight potential synergy among the project and the MedProgramme. The cooperation with the project will continue by participating in one GEF International Water Conference, to showcase results of the MedProgramme among a wide set of stakeholders, and evaluating the potential to organize IW: LEARN twinning with other GEF projects and programs to exchange knowledge, best practices and

innovative approaches on the thematic priority areas of the MedProgramme.

76. GEF 8 is open for project proposals, and the Secretariat is considering to participate and take part in the preparation and execution of the relevant child projects related to the following Integrated Programs: (a) Food Systems Integrated Program; (b) Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program; (c) Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program; and (d) Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains Integrated Program.

**Outcome 5.2. Systemic strengthening and effective functioning and delivery of MAP decision-making and advisory bodies ensured, and efficiency enhanced with new digital approaches**

77. The Project Document and Legal Instruments for the operationalisation of the MAP Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget 2022-2023 have been prepared and submitted to UNEP Headquarters for signature, expected to be signed by all sides by end of February 2022. To support planning and monitoring of the PoW 2022-2023 implementation, an updated Planning and Priorities Tool was prepared by the Secretariat and completed in consultation with MAP Components.

78. The Bilateral Cooperation Agreement signed with the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition (MiTE) on 2 November 2021, has been integrated into the COP 22 Decision on the MAP PoW and Budget 2022-2023 linked with specific PoW activities, as well as in the Project Document and Legal Instruments prepared for its operationalisation. A first discussion with MiTE representatives on the planning of implementation of the new Cooperation Agreement was held in the margins of the 46<sup>th</sup> ECP Meeting (Rome, Italy, 16-17 February 2022) where next steps were also agreed. Draft activity fiches have been prepared and will be finalised within March 2022, and the first meeting of the Steering Committee is planned to be held in the second quarter of 2022.

**Outcome 5.3. Policy coherence and complementarity ensured among relevant work at global, regional and national levels and among MAP-Barcelona Convention system's policy and regulatory instruments**

79. Of the SDGs' 93 environment-related targets, 26 SDG indicators are monitored by UNEP, which is the custodian agency having the mandate to collect and report data for these indicators to the UN Statistical Division for the Secretary General Progress Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Most of those indicators are of interest for the MAP-Barcelona Convention system, while not all of them have been included in the UNEP/MAP monitoring system. In addition, in parallel to the UNEP Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025, UNEP has prepared a draft Regional Seas Core Indicator Set. Data for those 22 indicators will be based on country submissions to the UNEP Regional Seas Programme through relevant secretariats of UNEP-administrated Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. UNEP is developing a data reporting system, building on the Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS), which is part of the World Environment Situation Room (WESR) to collect information from the Regional Seas on those indicators.

80. In the context of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), which is led by UNEP and FAO, the UNEP Regional Office of Europe (ROE) has initiated, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal and WCMC, as well as relevant Secretariats of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, including UNEP/MAP, the preparation of a project gathering the five pan-European Regional Seas: Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Baltic Sea, and North-East Atlantic basin. This project has the potential to be selected among UNEP Flagship Projects in the context of the UN Decade. The long-term objective of the project is to protect, preserve and restore the ecological integrity and biological diversity of the pan-European regional seas through the improved management of EBSAs and the establishment of effective MPAs within EBSAs. The Mediterranean/MAP contribution to that project is under preparation, with the involvement of the Coordinating Unit and several MAP Components. The Secretariat will inform the MAP Focal Points in due course, when the project's logical framework will be mature enough to engage dialogue in view of identifying relevant pilot sites and of obtaining support from interested Contracting Parties.

81. The UNECE 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" will be held in October 2022, in Nicosia, Cyprus, and one of the two themes to be addressed by this important conference is very relevant for the work of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, i.e. Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism. The Secretariat has been invited by UNECE and the UNEP office in Geneva to provide constructive feedback on the Draft thematic document for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference: Applying principles of circular economy to sustainable tourism. The Secretariat is working on this opportunity to highlight important, key policy messages in line with the MAP mandate and policies, to value initiatives and projects in which MAP components are involved, and to point out project outcomes and publications. Plan Bleu/RAC has already suggested 'possible actions for sustainable tourism', and that contribution was much appreciated and reflected in relevant documents (work in progress). The work of the MAP system on Tourism and sustainability in our region can be duly mobilized, valued and recognized through that background paper, as relevant. Furthermore, the Secretariat is also planning to participate in

this important conference, highlighting the work of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system. The Contracting Parties are also encouraged to do so through their delegations participating in the meeting and its preparatory process.

**Outcome 5.4. Enhanced partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement, including with the private sector and science policy interface**

82. The Coordinator will participate at the 16<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), which will take place in Dubai, UAE, from 9 to 10 March. During the Assembly a ceremony for the signature of the MoU between the two organizations, endorsed by COP 22, will take place.

83. The Secretariat will continue working with the Secretariat of the Union of the Mediterranean (UfMS) for the implementation and possible update of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between the two Organizations, which was signed in 2013. Recently, UfM renewed its contribution to MedECC through channeling funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for a technical assistance to the MedECC Secretariat.

84. UNEP/MAP will participate at the MARLICE 2022 Conference (18-20 May 2022, Seville, Spain). All Directors of the European Regional Seas and the European Union will participate to the open session “Connecting Seas” to discuss the way forward after the outcomes of UNEA 5.2 and Global Treaty on Plastics, including the role of the Regional Seas in supporting the implementation of the envisaged actions framed and planned in the framework of the Global Treaty on Plastics.

85. Work was initiated by REMPEC to support consultation with i) civil society and the private sector to contribute to the preparation of the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022) by sharing information on ongoing/planned activities and projects relevant to the strategy, and ii) countries, to prepare National Action Plans for the implementation of the Strategy.

86. The preparation for a dedicated website on the Strategy, including monitoring/reporting tools for Contracting Parties and stakeholders, was initiated by REMPEC. The promotional video on the Strategy was officially launched by REMPEC at the One Ocean Summit (Brest, France, 9 February 2022), and was published on REMPEC website, along with the Strategy publication in English and French.

87. The UNEP/MAP – EEA Joint Work Plan (JWP) 2022-2030, concluded at the end of 2021, is expected to contribute to the MAP-Barcelona Convention system responses to the challenges and priorities expressed by the Contracting Parties, including through the Antalya Ministerial Declaration. The JWP is aligned with the strategic outlook of both institutions as outlined in the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027 and the EEA- Eionet Strategy 2021-2030. These strategies have injected into the joint workplan important elements pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG framework, the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, and the Basel Rotterdam Stockholm Conventions, as well as the EU Green Deal. The JWP will be soon published, and its implementation is expected to be operationalized through the establishment of yearly work plans around its four strategic priorities: i) building strengthened knowledge base; ii) responding to political priorities; iii) supporting digital transformation; iv) ensuring coordinated networking, communication and stakeholder interaction.

88. An important part of the planned work under the UNEP/MAP – EEA JWP is related to the generation of data and information including indicators development/population, national capacity building activities, as well as the development of tools, methods and approaches to measure sustainability achievement and effectiveness of responses and the preparation of sustainability gap report, addressing achievement of SDGs and targets and Barcelona Convention and Protocols objectives. This component aims at complementing the work on monitoring and assessment of the status of marine and coastal environment undertaken under IMAP implementation, towards holistic assessments covering the entire spectrum of DSPIR. The parallel and inter-related implementation of the SEIS and the IMAP is key to support the collaboration at regional scale between national and regional stakeholders, and strengthen the focus on environmental aspects in the Mediterranean region through a wide range of complementary indicators, if needed.

89. In view to enhancing synergies with the IPCC, the Coordinator has met in October 2021 with Mr. Abdellah Mokssit and Ms. Ermira Fida, respectively Executive and Deputy Executive Secretary of IPCC. The discussions addressed two main issues: strengthening of bilateral collaboration and support to the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), which is supported by UNEP/MAP since 2015, as well as on IPCC contribution to COP 22 and beyond. Following this, IPCC contributed with a virtual keynote intervention to the high-level ministerial discussion of COP 22, presenting the main findings of the Climate Change 2021 report “The Physical Science Basis” and the forthcoming Cross-Chapter Paper on the Mediterranean region of the Working Group II contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report. This was the first step in strengthening bilateral collaboration; further collaborative work is under consideration.

90. Collaboration with BRS Conventions is ongoing. To this aim, the Coordinator met with the Executive Secretary of these Conventions, Mr. Rolph Payet in October 2021 and agreed to have the next bilateral meeting between both Secretariats in Athens around the end of October/November 2022 or even in July 2022 after BSR Conventions' COP (6-7 June 2022). The intention of this bilateral meeting would be to review the implementation of the MoU and see the needs for concrete joint activities, including in the Global Plastic Partnership, in implementing the GEF MedProgramme that has a strong component on PCB disposal and related capacity building as well as on POPs prevention, etc.

91. SCP/RAC as regional center of the Stockholm Convention will join the face-to-face segment of the BRS COP (Geneva, Switzerland, 6-17 June 2022). Advocacy and communication actions will be planned in coordination with MEDPOL in order to give visibility to relevant actions developed in the Mediterranean (in particular under the MedProgramme) and to the need to strengthen prevention strategies. Participation of UNEP/MAP (through MEDPOL and SCP/RAC) in the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership will be also highlighted.

92. MEDPOL was mandated to lead one of the subgroups of the Plastic Waste Partnerships under the Basel Convention. PWP Subgroup 2 Activity: "Collect information on best practices and lessons learned to set up and increase capacity for environmentally sound recycling plastic waste, e.g. through innovative approaches in cooperation with various stakeholders". MEDPOL is currently working closely with the Basel Secretariat on finalizing the report entitled "Compilation of information on best practices and lessons learned to set up and increase capacity for environmentally sound recycling of plastic waste".

93. Regarding the collaboration with UNECE, the Coordinator met in October 2021 with Monika Linn, UNECE Principal Adviser to the Executive Secretary and Chief of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit, and with Mr. Marko Keiner, Director of Environmental Division at UNECE. Bilateral discussions were held around the role UNEP/MAP can play for the follow-up of SDG 14 implementation in the UNECE area. Discussions were also held about how to consider other relevant SDGs in the assessment of SDG 14, e.g., gender, etc., and on how to continue bi- and multi-lateral opportunities of cooperation with UN Regional Economic Commissions (ECE, ECA and ESCWA). It was also discussed how to continue working together and benefit from the experiences of the Aarhus Convention PRTR Protocol and ESPOO and Water Conventions as well as EPR processes, and how to continue collaboration and capitalize the work for the MSSD flagship initiative on the Aarhus Convention as well as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The possibility for back-to-back sessions of Compliance Committee meetings was also considered.

94. The Secretariat continued to identify, promote and strengthen synergies with other Secretariats and Parties on spatial-based protection and management measures for marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean Area. After the successful involvement of respective governing bodies/Parties in the initiative promoted in the biennium 2020-21, SPA/RAC participated in an initiative on a functional whales' corridor area in the north-western Mediterranean. It contributed with a session on area-based management tools to the technical workshop organised by France for the "Project proposal of a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)" (Paris, France, 18 – 19 October 2021). SPA/RAC also participated to its "Working Group on Associated Protective Measures" and to the workshop by the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition, in collaboration with the Pelagos Agreement and the ACCOBAMS Agreement: "A PSSA for the North-Western Mediterranean" (Roma, Italy, 17 December 2021). Furthermore, SPA/RAC supported, in December 2021, the request by Montenegro to provide technical support focused on the application of Decision Support Tools for the South Adriatic Ionian Strait (SAIS) EBSA initiative. The support will inform discussions around the framework on the potential means of governance of the SAIS-EBSA along 2022. Preliminary contacts have been established with the GFCM Secretariat in order to initiate discussions on the OECM topic under both Secretariats respective mandates and assess possible synergies and cooperation modalities in this emerging priority.

#### **Outcome 5.5. Coordinated approaches implemented to strengthen public institution capacities for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols**

95. PAP/RAC organized a virtual training on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) for representatives of administrations and public institutions involved and/or interested in MSP throughout the Mediterranean basin, nominated by PAP/RAC Focal Points. The training consisted of two online workshops and a set of lectures on the MedOpen platform. It started on 17 November 2021 with the opening seminar, which brought together more than sixty participants. This first workshop focused on MSP and blue economy. The participants had four weeks to study the MedOpen courses and take the tests demonstrating the acquisition of their skills. The final workshop was organized on 16-17 December 2021 on the themes of governance, ecosystem approach, climate change, and land-sea interactions.

96. Based on the actions included in the Post-2020 SAPBIO and in the Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and

OECMs, coherent projects to be implemented at the Mediterranean regional, sub-regional or multinational levels will be identified. They will be developed through a Fundraising Strategy for the Post-2020 SAPBIO including Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs for the period 2022-2030 and beyond, for which a tender was launched, to be concluded in February 2022.

### **Programme 6: Towards Monitoring, Assessment, Knowledge and Vision of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast for Informed Decision-Making**

#### **Outcome 6.1. Inclusive and participatory foresight activities conducted at regional and national and local levels, with associated capacity-building**

97. The preparation of the transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) is in progress: the first working chapters of the TDA are under preparation, mainly chapters 3 to 9 on Baseline socio-economy (chapter 3), Transboundary issues (chapter 4), Gender (chapter 5), Stakeholders (chapter 6), Governance (chapter 7), Scenario analysis (chapter 8) and Links to SDGs (chapter 9).

98. A videoconference is organized by Plan Bleu/RAC on 2 March 2022 to hold a consultation of youth representatives in the framework of the MED 2050 Foresight study. The synthesis report of MED 2050 Module 1 is under finalization and due by March 2022. Preparation of the initial workshop of MED 2050 Module 3 is under way and scheduled for May 2022.

99. The MedProgramme will contribute to building the evidence base for a shared vision of the Mediterranean through assessments, monitoring activities, and information systems to promote sharing of knowledge assets among the countries sharing the Sea. The Annual Stocktaking Meeting that is proposed to be held in June 2022 will provide a forum for peer-to-peer learning among the Programme portfolio; to raise regional and global attention on the progress made towards impact in the Mediterranean region, and to enable adaptive management at the programme level.

#### **Outcome 6.2. Science-based IMAP, foresight and other assessments and assessment tools for strengthened science-policy interface and decision making**

100. Good progress has been made regarding the IMAP cluster on Coast and Hydrography. The preparation of country reports on Common Indicator (CI) 15 was completed in Tunisia, Israel and Libya, while in Algeria work is in progress. According to the guidance factsheet for the CI 16 (coastline), the first set of monitoring data and related narrative reports were drafted for Algeria and Tunisia, following inputs by PAP/RAC. The assessment criteria and the guiding document for the application of assessment criteria for CI 16 was finalized after the CORMON meeting (25 November 2021) and translated to French.

101. The EU-funded projects EcAp Med III, IMAP-MPA and Marine Litter Med II are progressing well. The three projects were presented at COP 22 thanks to a close collaboration between the Coordinating Unit, SPA/RAC and INFO/RAC. The conclusion of legal agreements with the remaining beneficiary countries is ongoing, allowing the start of the activities' implementation and data collection. Under EcAp MED III, the Secretariat signed legal agreements with agencies in Israel and Morocco, and SPA/RAC with Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Under IMAP-MPA, legal agreements were signed with Israel, Morocco and Tunisia.

102. The IMAP-MPA project, in line with the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and in close collaboration with UNEP/MAP partners and stakeholders, supported the preparation of the "Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)" and the "Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean" adopted at COP 22. In the frame of the MPA component, the 2020 Forum of MPAs in the Mediterranean (28 November-1 December 2021) was successfully organized in Monaco and online, with more than 220 participants from 26 countries joining the event. Also, the first training workshop on the effective management of MPAs was organised online (7-8 February 2022), and it was preceded by an online Mentor workshop (2-3 February 2022).

103. Meetings of the IMAP Task Force continue to be held monthly, addressing key issues of implementation of the EcAp Roadmap, the organization of CORMONs and implementation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) Roadmap. A template for the MED QSR has been further developed, based on the outline and annotated contents agreed by the 8<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group meeting (9 September 2021), which will be presented to the CORMONs meetings. INFO/RAC started the work on the collection and analysis of monitoring data available for the purposes of cartographic representation of 2023 MED QSR. Plan Bleu/RAC prepared a set of five "Pressure – Response" cartographic illustrations, as a contribution to 2023 MED QSR.

104. MAP Components and especially INFO/RAC have been supporting Contracting Parties in data submission to the IMAP Info System. However, the level of data reporting is behind collectively agreed commitment for the delivery

of the assessment products for preparation of 2023 MED QSR. Considering the primary importance of reporting monitoring data in line with several decisions of COP 19, 20, 21 and the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap milestones, the 8<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group called upon Contracting Parties to respond to the data call and to prioritise their data submission and/or completion of the IMAP Information System validation process as a matter of urgency.

105. SSFAs with 10 countries are in progress to operationalize national monitoring programmes on marine litter, with the aim of generating data and building national technical/capacity for local authorities. Concept notes to draft the QSR chapters on eutrophication, contaminants and marine litter are under development with regards to assessment criteria and thresholds, as well as scales of assessment and integrated assessment of IMAP methodology. Preparations are underway for holding the CORMON Meeting from 11-13 May 2022 in Athens, Greece.

106. Plan Bleu/RAC has started work in the framework of the EU-funded MSFD support-project ABIOMMED to elaborate methodological guidance on ex-post socio-economic analysis of measures aiming at achieving GES in the Mediterranean. In this framework, a socio-economic analysis of one regional biodiversity measure will be conducted. Results are expected by mid-2023.

107. SCP/RAC collaborated with Plan Bleu/RAC to make available to the public the set of SCP indicators in MapX, the cartographic component of the UNEP World Environment Situation Room – Mediterranean (Med WESR). In 2021, SCP/RAC published 30 SCP factsheets, with updated data on the progress made towards sustainable development by Mediterranean countries, as part of the SCP Regional Action Plan implementation.

108. The elaboration of the assessment programme on Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) is ongoing within the EU funded IMAP-MPA and EcAp-MEDIII projects. Draft regional baseline on NIS will be discussed by the CORMON meeting (28-29 March 2022) to be used for the purpose of the 2023 MED QSR.

109. The development of the monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for the IMAP common indicators related to sea birds are discussed by the Online Working Group (OWG) and will be presented for consideration of the CORMON meeting on biodiversity and fisheries (videoconference, 28-29 March 2022). The monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for the IMAP common indicators related to benthic habitats are being developed in close collaboration with the OWG on benthic habitats. This work will be presented in the CORMON meeting on biodiversity and fisheries on autumn 2022.

110. Progress is made in the implementation of the second phase IMAP within the EU funded EcAp-MED III project. Call of external expertise to undertake a desk review analysis on available data sources, best practices and methodologies in the Mediterranean for the monitoring and assessment of seafloor damage is launched. This deliverable will be discussed by the CORMON (autumn 2022) and will be used for the development of the common indicators of the Ecological Objective 6 on sea floor integrity, to be developed within the ABIOMMED Project.

**Outcome 6.3. IMAP implementation and Environment and Development Observation provide updated and quality assured data in support of decision-making by Contracting Parties and assessment of GES.**

111. An agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is under preparation, aiming to strengthen national capacities to apply harmonized and standardized monitoring and assessment practices related to pollution and marine litter in line with IMAP. Concepts are under preparation for developing Guidelines for monitoring microplastics deriving from wastewater treatment plants and riverine inputs of marine litter (under Marine Litter MED II project). Concepts are also developed to expand and improve the monitoring and forecasting capacities in the marine environment through integrating networks of observing and forecasting systems (oceanographic observatories) across the Mediterranean Sea.

112. INFO/RAC has started the annual upgrade and vulnerability analysis of InfoMAP and the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) and its functionalities in view of evaluating needs for further improvement. The terms of reference for the MAP Data Management Task Force have been developed and the kick-off meeting held.

113. The IMAP Info System of Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for indicators 3, 4, 5, 18 and 20 have progressed by INFO/RAC in close cooperation with the competent MAP Components. Development of new Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for IMAP Common Indicators 19 and 7-11 has started. Ongoing support to Contracting Parties for IMAP reporting has been provided by INFO/RAC Help Desk and further Assistance/Training Meetings have been planned.

114. REMPEC initiated discussion with INFO/RAC on the linkage between MEDGIS-MAR and Info-MAP Data management system.

115. New maps have been developed under the Mediterranean Observatory on the Environment and Development, which in February 2022 holds 78 MAP-specific maps, over one hundred other Mediterranean-specific maps, and



several hundred global maps with content relevant for MAP activities.

### **Programme 7: For informed and consistent advocacy, awareness, education and communication**

#### **Outcome 7.1. Stakeholders and policy makers properly informed about the state of the Mediterranean Sea and coast and aware of the environmental priority issues**

116. The fourth edition of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award and the second edition of the WeMed Mediterranean Sustainability Award are under preparation. The second edition of the WeMed Award will recognize and increase outreach about outstanding achievements of green and circular economy businesses and the supporting systems (focus on the textile sector).

117. Preparations for the celebration of the SPAMI Day are underway. The 2022 edition will be organized by SPA/RAC in collaboration with the Pelagos Agreement Permanent Secretariat, in Monaco in May 2022. The two organizations are working together on logistical and programming aspects. Work has started to develop the SPAMI Day logo, SPAMI Certificates and other specific communication material for the event.

118. The finalization of the “Story MAP” developed by INFO/RAC as a new communication tool to present the MAP System organization and its activities is ongoing. The “Story MAP” will present the MAP-Barcelona Convention system in a different way, allowing a large audience to browse at search of selected information.

119. Initial consultations for the new MAP Knowledge Management Strategy have been started by INFO/RAC in order to pave the way for the design of the first prototype of Knowledge Management platform.

120. SPA/RAC is collaborating with the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) to coordinate the Mediterranean Posidonia Network under the Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea adopted in the framework of the MAP - Barcelona Convention system. It aims to bring together different stakeholders such as authorities, scientists, international environmental organizations, professionals including yachting agents, marinas from the Mediterranean countries concerned with the protection of Posidonia oceanica threatened by various pressures such as anchoring. The objective is to increase each country’s capacity building to better protect Posidonia oceanica and prevent its future degradation.

121. The first in a series of outreach webinars branded “Rendez-vous du Plan Bleu” took place online on 22 February 2022 and focused on Med SOx ECA. 57 participants followed the live presentations, including an overview offered by Guillaume Sainteny, President of Plan Bleu, of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system and existing instruments aimed at tackling pollution in the Mediterranean context. REMPEC provided an in-depth presentation of the Med SOx ECA and the prerequisites for its effective implementation. Plan Bleu/RAC shared insights drawn from a cost-benefit analysis recently carried out by the RAC. The slide deck, factsheet and other resources used during the session are available on the Plan Bleu website.

#### **Outcome 7.2. Citizen and general public awareness and outreach raised through citizen science and digital campaigns**

122. The “Young Person’s Guide to the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention”, produced by the Coordinating Unit’s communication team, was released on 8 February 2021. The Guide offers a simplified introduction to the legal framework that UNEP/MAP and the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have established and gradually upgraded, covering a wide range of themes pertaining to the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment as well as sustainable development. This communication product and outreach tool is aimed at MAP Partners, ocean literacy practitioners, educators and young readers aged 11-17 in the Mediterranean region and beyond: <https://bit.ly/334k92q>.

123. The Coordinating Unit has released a new video presentation of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system marking the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barcelona Convention: <https://bit.ly/3JVMDfv>.

124. To induce synergies in communication activities undertaken under the EU-funded projects, namely EcAp MED, IMAP-MPA and Marine Litter MED, the Coordinating Unit is in the process of finalizing a brochure explaining the rationale and objectives of the entire portfolio.

125. To boost the UNEP/MAP digital presence, the Coordinating Unit has launched a new page on LinkedIn that will be dedicated to publicizing vacancies and calls for consultants (thus offering opportunities to publicize our work on relevant themes). The page will also offer content (messages, links to articles and multimedia), thus mirroring the [twitter account](#) (launched in October 2019), which now has 1,600 followers. The new page will allow Contracting Party representatives and MAP Partners to engage with UNEP/MAP in LinkedIn, a popular platform with practitioners in the field of environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. In line with the MAP Operational Communication Strategy, the UNEP/MAP digital presence will continue to rely on coordinated communication by the MAP Communication Taskforce across social platforms through the consistent use of our



generic hashtags (#BarcelonaConvention and #Act4Med) on all platforms, including Facebook (where the MAP system is present through the accounts of the RACs).

126. COP 22 highlights are now accessible from a dedicated page on the website: <https://bit.ly/BC-COP22>. The meeting received significant coverage, notably by Turkey-based media outlets. Media coverage in the meeting venue was arranged with the COP 22 Host Country in line with the UN media accreditation procedure. The Coordinating Unit issued two press releases (with the MAP Communication Taskforce providing support on translation and dissemination to national media outlets). A media encounter with representatives of Agence France Presse (AFP), BBC Turkey and TRT World was arranged on 10 December 2021 in Antalya. An AFP despatch on Med SOx ECA, quoting the MAP Coordinator, was picked up widely by pan-Mediterranean media, including France 24: <https://bit.ly/3s83ggU>

127. The COP 22 exhibition is also available virtually ([www.info-rac/COP22exhibition](http://www.info-rac/COP22exhibition)) as a webpage showing the COP22 stand including the Giant Panel developed by INFO/RAC on the main outcomes of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system for the last biennium. The web page hosts also the main products displayed during the side events and the videos produced by CU and MAP Components, and in particular the COP22 trailer, the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award promotional video clip, and the IMAP Common Indicators video designed and produced by INFO/RAC

128. The finalization of the MAP Biennial Report developed by INFO/RAC as a new communication tool to present the MAP System outcomes is ongoing. The report developed as downloadable document but also as interactive page will distill the main outcomes achieved by the MAP BC System for a large audience.

129. The Marine Litter MED II project mini website is under design. The brochure for Marine Litter MED II is under preparation. Furthermore, the report on “Evaluation of Regional Plans” is submitted to the publishing board for approval.

130. SCP/RAC is currently working on its new visual identity, in line with the conclusions of COP22; a new website is under preparation. A launching campaign is under development and should take place towards the end of the first quarter of 2022.

131. Plan Bleu/RAC launched a new communication initiative “*Les Rendez-vous du Plan Bleu*”, with a first event on 22 February 2022 focusing on the Med SOx ECA process, in coordination with the Coordinating Unit and REMPEC. This first edition brought together 57 participants, out of 110 registered. Apart from connection problems at the start of the session, we can say that the event was a success: a smooth flow, participants who stayed until the end, an international audience and an interest in the subject demonstrated by the many Questions. The conference was broadcasted on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHtytI8JTG0>.

132. Webpages with infographics, articles on featured topics, newly edited publications and videos are being prepared to present and promote the Post-2020 SAPBIO and the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs.

133. A new film is being produced within the project Experiences and knowledge sharing funded by MAVA. The film aims to share learnings from the bycatch Observers’ Programme, while promoting the role of observers and fishers as part of the solution to the bycatch issue.

134. Several reportages (National GEO, CNN et DW) have been filmed in Tunisia to showcase the solutions being developed on the bycatch issue for a more sustainable fishery. Raising awareness activities were carried out by local NGOs in schools, ports, administrations and fish markets. A film is being produced to share learnings from the bycatch Observers’ Programme and promote the role of observers and fishers as part of the solution to the bycatch issue.

### **Outcome 7.3. Towards a digital transformation: use of digital technologies to improve networking and MAP visibility**

135. SPA/RAC is partner in a Consortium (56 Partners led by INTRASOFT International S.A, Greece) which finally succeeded European Commission funding for the 3 years project “Integrated digital twins for marine and maritime data and information services” (ILIAD), answering to a call for applications in the framework of the EU H2020 work programme “Transparent & Accessible Seas and Oceans: Towards a Digital Twin of the Ocean”. SPA/RAC budget as end users’ partner within the Consortium is 235,000 Euros. It started on 1 February 2022, and it will mainly deal with capacity building, impact towards policy makers, especially with respect to the European Green Deal (EGD) and Digital Strategy commitments, as well as outreach, citizen and multi-stakeholder participation and dissemination.

136. The content of the SPAMI Collaborative Platform is being updated.

137. The Barcelona Convention on-line course developed within the E-learning Platform by INFO/RAC is under

finalization.

138. Internal consultations have been started by INFO/RAC in order to individuate the priorities in the framework of the Digital Transformation Strategy.