EP

United Nations
Environment
Programme

UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.175/8 Rev.1
10 April 2001

ENGLISH

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

First Meeting of the Advisory Committee
of the project for the preparation of a Strategic
Action Plan for the conservation
of biological diversity (SAP BIO)
in the Mediterranean Region

Tunis, 22-23 February 2001

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE PROJECT FOR THE PREPARATION OF A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (SAP BIO) IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

UNEP
RAC/SPA - Tunis, 2001

CONTENTS

Introduction

Under a GEF PDF-B grant, a Strategic Action Programme to address pollution from land-based activities in the Mediterranean Region (SAP MED) was developed within MAP. As a follow-up, a project proposal on "Determination of priority actions for further elaboration and implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Mediterranean Sea" was submitted to GEF by the MAP Co-ordinating Unit in association with RACs (SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC, CP/RAC); FAO, WHO, METAP, FFEM, IUCN and WWF. The project, approved by the GEF Council in April 2000, includes the Preparation of a Strategic Action Plan for biodiversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO), with RAC/SPA as the lead agency.

To promote co-ordination and avoid duplication, it was agreed that in the elaboration of the SAP BIO, due account will be taken of what already has been developed at the national and regional level. Furthermore, an Advisory Committee will be established at the outset of the project and will include representatives from international and regional bodies with technical and scientific expertise in Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity issues. The Advisory Committee will have the role of technical adviser in the process of elaborating the SAP BIO.

The present Meeting is the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee. It was convened by RAC/SPA on 22 and 23 February 2001. It took place at the Belvédère Hotel, Tunis.

Participants

The following organisations nominated representatives to act as Committee Members:
- WWF-International, Mediterranean Programme,
- IUCN-Mediterranean Programme,
- The MedWet Initiative, under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, 1971),
- FAO,
- Council of Europe (Secretariat of the Bern Convention),
- ALECSO (Arab League),
- Interim Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS).

COPE MED and ADRIA MED confirmed their interest in being represented on the Advisory Committee. However, due to previous commitments; their representatives were unable to attend the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee.

In addition, the Co-ordinating Unit of the MAP was represented.

RAC/SPA acted as the secretariat of the Meeting.

The complete list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Agenda item 1 - Opening of the Meeting

The Meeting was opened at 9.45 a.m. on Thursday, 22 February 2000 by Mr. Mohamed Adel Hentati, Director of RAC/SPA, who welcomed the participants.

Agenda item 2 - Adoption of the Agenda and organization of work

The Provisional Agenda prepared by RAC/SPA, appearing in document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.175/1 and annotated in document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.175/2, was proposed for adoption by the Meeting. The Meeting also reviewed and adopted the proposed timetable appearing at the end of document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.175/2.

The agenda of the Meeting appears in Annex II to this report.

Agenda item 3 - Presentation of SAP BIO project

As an introduction to the work of the Meeting, RAC/SPA summarised the process, which had led to the adoption of the SAP BIO Project and briefed the participants on the aims of the project, the expected outputs, the institutional arrangements, etc. The representative of FAO was invited to inform the Meeting about the progress of the activities being carried out within the framework of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concluded between RAC/SPA and the Fisheries Department of the FAO concerning the elaboration of technical documents and guidelines aimed at facilitating the national processes for the elaboration of SAP BIO. He stated that the work on the outputs provided for by the MOU had reached an advanced stage.

Agenda item 4 - Presentation of activities of relevance for the project, implemented by member organisations

The participants gave short presentations on the activities and projects relevant to the SAP BIO Project implemented by their respective organisations. A summary of each presentation is provided in Annex III to this report.

Agenda item 5 - Establishment of the Advisory Committee

The meeting elected a Chairman (Mr. Francis Parakatil), a Vice-Chairman (Mr. Pere Oliver) and a Rapporteur (Mr. Chedly Rais).
The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee of the SAP BIO Project were then reviewed and finalised (Annex IV to this report).

Agenda item 6 - Discussion on project objectives and outputs

Under this agenda item, the Advisory Committee members exchanged their views about the objectives of the project and its expected outputs. To this end, a detailed roundtable discussion, based on documents presented, was held. The Members stressed that the SAP BIO should enjoy a broad consensus among the users/stakeholders. While recognising the importance of the impact of fishing on biodiversity, the Members recommended that the SAP BIO not focus on this issue. The full text of the recommendations issued by the Meeting under this Agenda item appears in Annex V (Sections 1 and 4) to this report.

Agenda item 7 - The Network of National Correspondents and the co-ordination mechanisms

RAC/SPA introduced document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.175/5 "Draft Terms of Reference for the National Correspondents and for the Network of National Correspondents". The Advisory Committee reviewed the document and proposed recommendations concerning the profile and role of National Correspondents. The detailed recommendations issued by the Meeting under this Agenda item appear in Section 3 of Annex V to this report.

Agenda item 8 - General outline for preparation of SAP BIO document

RAC/SPA introduced document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.175/6 "Draft General Outline for the Preparation of the SAP BIO Document". The Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed general outline and recommended giving first priority in elaborating the SAP BIO to marine biodiversity, wetlands and fishing, without however neglecting the other issues of importance for coastal zones. The recommendations issued by the Meeting under this Agenda item appear in Section 4 of the Annex V to this report.

Agenda item 9 - Guidelines for the preparation of National Reports

RAC/SPA introduced document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG.175/7 "Draft Guidelines for the Preparation of National Reports". The Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed guidelines and stressed the need for the national processes to be harmonised in order to ensure that national reports were comparable. The members invited RAC/SPA to undertake close and regular monitoring of the national processes with a view to making the national reports balanced as regards their content, extent and scope.

Agenda item 10 - Conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting

The Rapporteur summarized the conclusions of the Meeting and introduced the draft recommendations of the Advisory Committee as prepared by the Rapporteur. The Members reviewed and finalized the recommendations of the Meeting, which appear in Annex V to this report. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee, the final report of the Meeting should be finalized, after the Meeting, by the Rapporteur, the Chairperson and the Director of RAC/SPA.

Agenda item 11 - Closure of the meeting

After the customary exchange of courtesies, the Meeting was closed by the Chairman on Friday, 23 February 2001 at 2.00 p.m.

ANNEX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS
MEMBRES DU COMITE CONSULTATIF

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ANNEX II: AGENDA OF THE MEETING

AGENDA

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Agenda item 2.	Adoption of the Agenda and Organisation of work
Agenda item 3.	Presentation of the SAP BIO project
Agenda item 4.	Presentation of activities that are relevant to the project, implemented by member organisations
Agenda item 5.	Establishment of the Advisory Committee
Agenda item 6.	Discussion on project objectives and outputs
Agenda item 7.	The Network of National Correspondents and the co-ordination mechanisms
Agenda item 8.	General Outline for Preparation of SAP BIO Document
Agenda item 9.	Draft Guidelines for the Preparation of the National Reports
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Agenda item 10.	Conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting
Agenda item 11.	Closure of the meeting

ANNEX III :

PRESENTATION OF ACTIVITIES OF RELEVANCE FOR THE PROJECT, IMPLEMENTED BY MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS OF THE BLACK SEA, THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND THE CONTIGUOUS ATLANTIC AREA

ACCOBAMS

A cooperative tool for the conservation of the biodiversity in Mediterranean and Black Sea

November 24th 1996, twenty-two countries and the European Community have negotiated in Monaco on the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetacean of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area, under the auspices of the Bonn Convention on the migratory same day by eleven representative States[1], while three joined later[2]. It has so far been ratified by six countries[3] and Malta has just concluded its ratification procedure. So ACCOBAMS will be force this spring.

Born from a process launched in 1989 in the frame of the Bern Convention, this Agreement is one of the tools for the conservation of biodiversity in Mediterranean and Black sea. It was intended as a complimentary perspective with other tools available in the region, in particular the Barcelona and Bucharest Conventions.

Due to the particular migratory characteristic of these species, the Bonn Convention was the *ad hoc* frame to link all those intergovernmental tools.

The inscription of the most sensitive Mediterranean species, and particularly the cetaceans, in Bern Convention appendices, further strengthened this harmonisation of the various intergovernmental tools.

On a sub-regional level, the signature on November 25th 1999 by France, the principality of Monaco and Italy of an agreement establishing a sanctuary for marine mammals could be considered as a first combined implementation of ACCOBAMS.

the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetacean of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area

The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetacean of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area has been negotiated and adopted accordingly to the paragraph 4 of the article IV of the Bonn Convention on conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS).

Bearing in mind that by-catch is one of the main threats faced by Cetaceans in the area, the agreement allows the accession also by non-riparian countries whose fishing fleets do however operate in the Agreement area.

“The Agreement area”, referred in article I, “is constituted by all maritime waters of the black sea and the Mediterranean and their gulfs and seas, and internal waters connected to or interconnecting these maritime waters, and of the Atlantic area contiguous to the Mediterranean Sea west of the Straits of Gibraltar “with the possibility for Parties to emit a reservation on a specifically delimited part of their internal waters, during the signature or the ratification.

1 Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Monaco, Portugal, Tunisia

2 Bulgaria, Morocco, Romania

3 Croatia, Bulgaria, Monaco, Morocco, Romania, Spain

The taxonomic fiels of the Agreement covers all Cetaceans present in the zone.

Concerning the coordination of measures taken by Parties in order to reach and to maintain a favourable conservation status for the Cetaceans (article II, paragraph 1), the Agreement aims are in particular:

- The coordination of measures taken by the Parties at a “global” level on the whole the zone of the Agreement, while the Agreement will work through already existing intergovernmental bodies.
- Article II, paragraph 3 states that Parties apply in the limits of their sovereignty and/or jurisdiction conservation, research and management measures prescribed in Annex 2 of the Agreement (Conservation Plan). In addition to the usually expected measures concerning conservation of marine species, this Plan adopts a limitation to 2,5 Km of the length of drifting nets, measure already in force within the European Union.

In accordance with the approach currently adopted by a number of instruments touching the protection of the environment, Parties shall apply the precautionary principle when they implement these different measures (article II, paragraph 4).

To implement its objectives, the Agreement sets us:

- A Meeting of Parties (article III);
- A Secretariat of the Agreement (article IV);
- Two sub-regional coordination Units (article V). For purposes of implementing the cooperative process of the Agreement, (article III, paragraph 7 c), statues that coordination Units will be designated, in each sub-region, among existing institutions. For this purpose institutional structures of the Barcelona (for the Mediterranean) and of the Bucharest (for the Black Sea) Conventions are anticipated;
- A Scientific Committee (article VII), involving experts qualified in Cetaceans conservation science, established as a consultative body of the Meeting of the Parties. As for coordination Units, functions of this Committee will be entrusted to already existing organisation acting in the zone of the Agreement, with a balanced geographical representation. The international Commission for Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean is called to play this role.

This Agreement relies on a minimal coordination device.

Article XI, paragraph 1, states “The provisions of this Agreement shall not affect the right of any Party to maintain or adopt more stringent measures for conservation of Cetaceans and their habitats, nor the rights or obligations of any Party deriving from any existing treaty, convention or agreement, to which it is a Party, except where the exercise of those rights and obligations would threaten the conservation of the Cetaceans”.

The effective protection of pelagic marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean cannot be dissociated from the absence of exclusive economic zones in this region. In this situation, the applicability of coordinated measures is precarious with respect to external states’ flagship. The present Agreement is sensible to this problem. For that purpose, the Agreement enhances the concept of “Range state” defined as “any state that exercises sovereignty and/ or jurisdiction over any part of the range of a Cetacean population covered by this Agreement, or a state, flag vessel of which are engaged in activities in

the Agreement area which may affect the conservation of Cetaceans" (article I, paragraph 3, g).

But this mechanism is not sufficient to solve problems arising from those states' fishing activities. Therefore, the efficiency of envisaged conservation measures implies their respect by the totality of fishing ships operating in the zone of the Agreement.

In this spirit, article XIII allows Agreement signature or accession by any Range State, "whether or not areas under its jurisdiction lie within the Agreement area, or regional economic integration at least one member of which is a Range State".

In addition to the participation of third states to the zone, Mediterranean and Black sea biodiversity conservation relies on integrated management practices involving a real "network" of agreements and international bodies.

In relation with the Strategic Action Plan for Mediterranean Biodiversity (SAP-BIO)

It is obvious that all ACCOBAMS conservation Plan address the same threats to biodiversity that most of the others components of the SAP BIO.

ACCOBAMS covers all the issues pertinent for the conservation of all Mediterranean Cetaceans, except for international trade of CITES competence. ACCOBAMS could be considered as the juridical upgrading of MAP/Cetaceans Action Plan by the riparian countries. So stated it becomes patent that links are already effective.

Moreover, the specific history of its negotiation, involving an interconvention process, and its implementation in sub regions through already existing institutions, fully implement the recommendation of UNEP about the consistencies and synergies between conventions relevant for biodiversity and marine Mammals conservation.

Relations are already built with Mediterranean Action Plan whose RAC/SPA is called to act as Mediterranean sub regional coordinating Unit but linkage are to be built with fisheries bodies. On this aspect, we keep the hope that GFCM sub technical committee on ecosystem and environment will bring an interesting forum.

As expressed many times in Mediterranean Biodiversity, a link between conservation and use of live marine resources is totally lacking in our region. This was so clearly express by some countries (like my secretariat Host country) when establishing the MED SAP on the implementation of the Land Base Sources Protocol, that the SAP BIO was created. ACCOBAMS faces this problem and it is clear that the SAP BIO will help in this direction.

ACCOBAMS emphasizes also the Cooperation as much as coordination of efforts between non-governmental (such as IUCN, ECS) or intergovernmental pertinent bodies, taking into account their own specificity.

Keeping in mind that ACCOBAMS is not yet force and that its first concern will be the implementation of the Agreement in the region, all initiatives able to establish cooperation, coordination, synergies, share experience and capacity building in the matter will be welcome.

On a wider scale, in line with the Marine Mammals Action Plans of UNEP, ACCOBAMS is involved in some common effort undertook to ensure a coherent position in different regions when marine Mammals subjects are on the agenda of global conventions or organisms like CBD, CITES, CMS, IRWC, IUCN, COFI/FAO.

The FAO-Adriamed Project and its activities of interest to the SAP BIO Project

Fabio Massa and Piero Mannini

Document prepared for distribution at the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the project for the preparation of a Strategic Action Plan for the conservation of biological diversity (SAP BIO) in the Mediterranean Region
(Tunis, 22-23 February 2001)

Abstract

The establishment of collaboration with the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) is part of the implementation strategy of the FAO-Adriamed Project. This paper provides general information on the Adriamed Project in order to identify possible areas of cooperation with the SAP BIO Project. The overall aims and objectives of the Project concerning collaboration among the participating countries are indicated as well as aspects relating to fisheries research and the process of strengthening scientific cooperation. A brief introduction to the Adriatic Sea environment is given together with a short overview of Adriatic Sea capture fisheries. Some Adriamed regional scientific programmes and activities are pointed out as of likely relevance to the SAP BIO. Finally, the initial steps for cooperation between Adriamed and the SAP BIO Projects are identified and proposed.

The FAO-Adriamed Project

The FAO Regional Project "Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea" was born to promote cooperative fishery research and management between the participating countries (Albania, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia). The coastal states are aware of the need to pursue fishery exploitation at safe, economically productive levels coherent with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries adopted by FAO in 1995.

The Project focuses on two main aspects. The first is the development and sharing of a common pool of knowledge to encourage and sustain the process of international collaboration between the coastal countries on issues related to fishery management planning and implementation. The second is to strengthen technical coordination among the national fishery research institutes and administrations, as well as between them and the resource users.

Adriamed activities include *inter alia*: the identification and implementation of a coordinated programme of research and scientific activities; the organization of international and regional meetings and training sessions; the establishment of a computerized communication network and of a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) service. Adriamed also facilitates studies as required to resolve technical issues of relevance to improved fishery management in the Adriatic, as raised by the GFCM or by the countries participating in the project.

The Adriatic Sea

The Adriatic Sea comprises the largest shelf area of the Mediterranean. In the Northern and Central Adriatic the bottom depth is no more than about 75 and 100 m respectively, with the exception of the Pomo/Jabuka pit (200-260 m) in the central basin.

The eastern and western coasts are very different. The former is high, rocky, articulated with many islands. The western coast is flat and alluvional with raised terraces in some areas. The Adriatic Sea may be seen as characterised by northern, central and southern basins with decreasing depth from the south toward the north. Along the longitudinal axis of the Adriatic geomorphological and ecological changes can be observed, resulting in the remarkable differences of the northern and southern ends.

The northern basin is the shallowest area with an average depth of 30-40 m, the oceanography and ecology of this area are strongly influenced by the basin morphology, meteorology and riverine inflow. This is the most productive area of the Adriatic and one of the highest of the whole Mediterranean.

The Adriatic Sea is characterised by environmental conditions, which differ substantially from north to south. In the northernmost part, the riverine inflow (*e.g.* the Po river) plays a determinant role and, in general, strong frontal systems in winter and marked vertical stratification in summer occur. The thermocline of the southern basin is influenced by the Ionian Sea water masses; through the Channel of Otranto relatively fresh and cold water leaves the Adriatic and warmer, saltier water enters from the Ionian Sea. In both lower and central basins, the deep-sea water circulation is influenced by the bottom morphology.

The Adriatic Sea capture fisheries

Commercial capture fisheries of the Adriatic Sea are based on the exploitation of demersal and small pelagic resources mostly shared by the fishing fleets of coastal states. The most important commercial species whose stocks are shared were jointly identified and agreed upon by regional experts within the Adriamed Working Groups on shared demersal and small pelagic resources of the Adriatic Sea (the relevant documents are available from www.faoadriamed.org/html/av_documents.html).

Although an in-depth analysis of Adriatic capture fisheries is complex and out of the scope of this note, some observation on fishery production during the last quarter century can be made. The performance of demersal and pelagic fishery showed different patterns. The combination of environmental and socio-economic factors is thought to have had strong impact on pelagic fishery.

The drastic drop of anchovy landing in 1987 is believed to be due to very low recruitment levels in the two preceding years. However, the role played by fishing mortality or environmentally-induced changes (or both) is not clear. Economic and market factors may be thought to be behind the current low levels of pelagic landing in the East Adriatic, particularly in Albania. The kind of foreign market demand,

increased operational costs and international competition make fishing for small pelagics poorly profitable at the moment.

Unlike pelagic fishery, landing of demersal resources has been sustained throughout the period considered. The reasons for this continuity of resources in spite of high levels of fishery exploitation, mainly concentrated on juveniles is still matter of research. Seemingly, Eastern Adriatic demersal fishery production has not faced the crisis of the pelagic fishery sector. Overall landing trends of the most valuable species such as Mediterranean hake, surmullets and Norway lobster has been stable or even increasing. It is possible that the market demand (mainly from abroad), probably coupled with the availability of resources which have been not too intensively exploited in the past, makes demersal fishery an economically more viable enterprise than small pelagic fishing.

Adriamed activities of possible relevance to SAP BIO

The regional experts collaborating within the Adriamed framework have jointly identified, during the Working Group meetings, a number of research priorities mostly concerning shared demersal and small pelagic fishery resources of the Adriatic Sea. Consequently, research programmes were formulated and proposed and some are under implementation or planned with the Project's assistance. Some of these may be regarded as of some relevance to the SAP BIO objectives and are briefly described below.

<u>The Pomo/Jabuka Pit critical habitat</u>

The Pomo/Jabuka Pit in the Central Adriatic is known as one of the most important critical habitats of the Adriatic Sea. More than forty species are reported to be regularly exploited in this area, twenty-three of which make the bulk of demersal fishery catch. Particularly significant is the high occurrence of species of remarkable commercial importance such as Mediterranean hake, Norway lobster and cephalopods. Moreover, the Pomo/Jabuka Pit serves as an important nursery area for the hake stock of the Central Adriatic.

In order to identify appropriate management options (and if necessary research needs) for this area, *ad hoc* group of scientists with particular knowledge of the Pomo/Jabuka Pit ecology and fishery productivity is being established by the Adriamed Project with the task of critically reviewing and appraising the existing information which historically has been accrued by, for the most part, Croatian and Italian research.

<u>Genetic structure of stocks</u>

The role of the analysis of the genetic structure of fish and invertebrate populations in providing information on geographic limits of stocks and gene flow among sub-populations is widely recognised. The knowledge of patterns of intraspecific genetic homogeneity/heterogeneity of key fishery resources is an important tool for stock assessment and fishery management. The occurrence of possible sub-populations of the

same species but which have some genetic differences should be considered and the possibility of managing them as separate stocks taken into account.

A research programme on the genetic structure of some shared stocks of fish and invertebrates of the Adriatic is being established within the Project framework. The programme is articulated in a sampling phase covering the whole Adriatic and in DNA marker variation analysis. The molecular genetic analysis will consist of the isolation and optimisation of specific micro-satellite markers and the screening of stock genetic variation.

Support to the protection and enhancement of the sturgeon stock in Albania

The Albanian delegation attending the 25th session of the GFCM, held in Malta, September 2000, raised the issue of the risk of extinction in the national waters of *Acipenser sturio* and requested the support from the Adriamed Project on this matter. The area concerned extends from the Lake Shkodër to the Adriatic Sea including the important habitat of the Drin and Bojana rivers where small-scale fishery is practised and where the species *A. sturio* is present and accidentally caught. Although the capture of the sturgeon has been banned since 1945, unintentional capture is the norm and nowadays once the fish are caught, they are not released or used for restocking.

The Albanian Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Fishery Research Institute of Dürres are concerned about the seemingly evident risk of extinction of the sturgeon local population. Action is planned by the relevant national authorities to rebuild a natural broodstock for fish fry restocking purposes, not only in the catch area but also for other areas in Albania where the sturgeon was previously present; to support fishers and raise awareness among the local fishing community about the programme. The Adriamed Project is considering possible ways to support this effort and participate in preparation of the programme concerning the establishment of a natural brood stock of *A. sturio*.

Adriamed cooperation with SAP BIO Project

Apart from the results of the Adriamed programmes outlined in the previous section, the SAP BIO Project when necessary and convenient could benefit from the scientific network established by Adriamed in the Adriatic region. Currently the following institutes are part of the network: Fishery Research Institute (Dürres, Albania), Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (Split, Croatia), Marine Fishery Research Institute (Ancona, Italy), Laboratory of Marine Biology (Bari, Italy), Laboratory of Marine Biology and Fisheries (Fano, Italy), National Institute of Biology (Ljubljana, Slovenia).

Also, Adriamed will support the establishment of close links between its National Focal Points and SAP BIO National Correspondents so as to ensure the flow of information and the optimisation of activities. Tentatively at this stage, cooperation between the two Projects may be envisaged regarding some of the expected output and activities such as those reported in the document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG 175/3 under section 6 at point (b), (e) and (h).

ALECSO's Activities on Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Issues

ALECSO's commitments to environmental issues in the Arab World commenced well before the convening of the first world conference on Environment held in Stockholm. Its programmes in this area, launched in 1970, have since then been planned and implemented with the view to enhancing sustainability in the Arab states and promoting co-operation among its member states .

As environmental sustainability must be dealt with in an overall perspective, which enables the understanding and analysis of the actual dimensions of environmental systems and its components; the success in any endeavours undertaken in this area relies on the degree of coordination imparted in the different environmental domains. As a result of this, the organization's efforts in this vital and pivotal area have witnessed diversification in its programmes and projects. These programmes and projects have included areas in:

- Water resources, - Renewable energy, - Biotechnologies,
- Biodiversity, - Remote Sensing, - Environmental impact assessment
- Environmental Auditing, - Marine and Coastal environments;
- Environmental education and awareness.

In response to the recommendations of both the " Rio Summit " and "the Council of Arab Ministers for the Environment " (CAMRE), the organization had also embarked on the very important task of sponsoring the following field programmes :

1- **The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment Programme**. The more important achievements of this programme include: the adoption of the Convention for the Protection of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden ; the action Plan and the Protocol concerning Regional Cooperation in combating pollution by Oil and other Harmful Substances in cases of emergency . Several workshops are being held by **ALECSO** in the region targeting personal dealing with Red Sea environment.

2- The Organization had also drawn preliminary plans with the view to establishing a **Programme for the Development and Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment in the Arab States overlooking the Mediterranean.** A workshop and an expert meeting were held in Tripoli (1998) dealt with the subject. It was attended by all Arab countries overlooking the Mediterranean.

3- The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment Programme:

The programme was launched by **ALECSO** and became fully operational upon its transfer to Jeddah / Saudi Arabia during the second half of the year 1980 . The Arab States Overlooking the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden include : Saudi Arabia , Somalia Sudan , Djibouti , Jordan , Egypt , Palestine and Yemen . The programmes has since its inception been working in order to implement the following:

One) The convening of a meeting of legal and environmental experts from the States Overlooking the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden with the view to reviewing the draft Regional Convention for the Protection of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden .

Two) The Convention and the Protocol on Regional cooperation for combating pollution and other harmful substances in cases of emergency were adopted by representatives delegating member states governments.

Three) The Action Plan for the Protection of the Environment in the Marine and Coastal Areas of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden was also adopted during the meeting of plenipotentiaries .

Four) The programme had been converted into a full fledge Regional Organization for the Protection of the Environment in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) on 9/1995 with Jeddah as its provisional headquarters.

4- Programme for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment in the Arab States overlooking the Mediterranean:

A feasibility study was prepared by **ALECSO** with the view to establishing this programme and meeting for government experts from the areas was

5- The Promotion of Arab Co-operation in the Area of the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment in the Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf .

Sub – project I: The Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment in the Mediterranean.

The objectives of the Sub-project I:

- Assisting the oil and gas corporations in the Arab Mediterranean states in the incorporation of environmental considerations in their operations.
- Contributing in the planning for the establishment of an Arab Mediterranean Surveillance Centre for the Marine and Coastal Zones Environment . The work of this centre will focus on conducting multidisciplinary surveys with the view to assessing the state of the marine and coastal zones environments which are affected by the pollution from land – based sources.
- Assisting the Arab Mediterranean States in their endeavours pertaining to the planning and integrated management of the marine environment and coastal zones.

Sub- Project II : The Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Zones in the Arabian Gulf :

The objectives of Sub – project II : The Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Zones in The Arabian Gulf

- The protection of the marine and coastal environment in the Gulf area from land-based sources of pollution.

6- Promotion of Arab Cooperation in Biological Diversity Project:

Project objectives :

a) The long term objectives:

The long term objectives of this project is expected to enhance Arab States cooperation in the Area of conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of biological resources ,increase Arab awareness on the importance of ratification of Biodiversity Convention , boost by Arab cooperation in the Area

b) Short term objectives:

- Review and analyses of the current status of biodiversity in each and every Arab States. Assessment of the threat posed to the animal and plant species in these countries through the data made available and the identification of ways and means, which can assist in the acquisition of the missing data.

7 - The use of Remote Sensing Techniques in Coastal Management Programme . (2001-2002)

ALECSO has, in the past, jointly implemented a number of activities with regional and international organizations (UNEP , UNESCO, GEF , ISESCO...) . We look forward to undertake more cooperating activities with these organizations.

Contribution du secteur intergouvernemental du Conseil de l'Europe au plan d'action stratégique pour la conservation de la diversité biologique en région méditerranéenne (PAS/BIO)

Les activités concernant le milieu marin et côtier susceptibles de contribuer au PAS/BIO sont traitées dans les cadres de la Convention relative à la conservation de la vie sauvage et du milieu naturel de l'Europe (Convention de Berne) et de la Stratégie paneuropéenne de la diversité biologique et paysagère.

Ces 2 réalisations majeures du Conseil de l'Europe jouent un rôle important dans la mise en œuvre au niveau régional de la Convention sur la diversité biologique (CBD).

I. La Convention de Berne relative à la conservation de la vie sauvage et du milieu naturel de l'Europe

Adoptée en 1979 et entrée en vigueur en 1982, elle a pour objectifs :

- d'assurer la conservation de la flore et de la faune sauvages et de leurs habitats naturels en accordant une attention particulière aux espèces migratrices ;

- d'assurer une meilleure prise en compte des intérêts de la conservation dans les politiques sectorielles ;

- d'encourager la coopération entre les Etats : 44 Etats d'Europe et d'Afrique dont la Tunisie, ainsi que la Communauté européenne, sont parties à la convention.

Les mécanismes et outils énumérés ci-après ont été mis en place par le Comité permanent responsable de la mise en œuvre de la convention. Destinés à assurer son application et son suivi, ils ont permis de traiter des enjeux de la conservation et du développement durable et d'obtenir des résultats dans différents domaines, notamment dans celui de la conservation des espèces méditerranéennes menacées et de leurs habitats (tortues marines, phoques-moines, protection des sites critiques comme les plages de ponte des tortues, introduction d'espèces non indigènes, contrôle de l'expansion de la *Caulerpa taxifolia*).

· L'examen des dossiers sur cas controversés ;
· Les visites sur les lieux ;

· La constitution de groupes d'experts en vue de développer des lignes directrices pour des stratégies communes et des plans d'action ;

· La réalisation de projets pilotes dans le cadre du Réseau Emeraude qui regroupe les Zones d'intérêt spécial pour la conservation (ZISC) ;

· L'adoption de lignes directrices, de recommandations et de résolutions ;

· La réalisation d'études et de documents techniques ;
· L'organisation de conférences.

II. La Stratégie paneuropéenne de la diversité biologique et paysagère (PEBLS)

Elle a pour objectifs d'enrayer et d'inverser le processus de dégradation de la diversité biologique et paysagère et d'assurer une gestion durable de l'environnement. Elle définit un cadre de coordination de tous les efforts de conservation en Europe. Le secrétariat en est assuré conjointement par le Conseil de l'Europe et le Programme des Nations unies pour l'environnement (PNUE).

Sa mise en œuvre est réalisée au moyen de plans d'action quinquennaux. Parmi les 12 domaines d'action couverts par le 1er plan, certains sont en relation avec les thèmes du PAS/BIO.

a. Domaine d'action n° 1 : constitution du Réseau écologique paneuropéen

Une étude a été réalisée par l'Union européenne de la conservation des côtes (UECC) sur le Réseau écologique européen côtier et marin.

b. Domaine d'action n° 2 : prise en compte de considérations relatives à la diversité biologique et paysagère dans les politiques sectorielles

- Projet de code de pratique sur la prise en compte de la diversité biologique et paysagère dans le secteur des transports réalisé dans le cadre des travaux du groupe de spécialistes « Transport et environnement » ;

- Recommandations du Comité des Ministres relatives à une politique de développement d'un tourisme durable et respectueux de l'environnement dans les zones côtières (Recommandation n° R(97)9) et dans les zones protégées (Recommandation n° R(95)10) élaborées dans le cadre du groupe de spécialistes « Tourisme et environnement ».

c. Domaine d'action n° 5 : Ecosystèmes côtiers et marins

Deux documents ont été initiés par le Groupe de spécialistes sur la protection des côtes :

- Un Code de conduite européen des zones côtières, préparé par l'UECC ;

- Une Loi-modèle sur la gestion durable des zones côtières, préparée par le Centre de recherches interdisciplinaires en droit de l'environnement, de l'aménagement et de l'urbanisme (CRIDEAU) ;

d. Domaine d'action n° 11 :Action en faveur des espèces menacées

Etablissement de plans d'action en faveur des espèces menacées, et de listes dans le cadre des travaux de la Convention de Berne.

III. Diplôme européen des espaces protégés

Le Diplôme européen est accordé pour une durée de 5 ans renouvelable à des espaces naturels ou semi-naturels protégés présentant un intérêt européen exceptionnel pour la conservation de la diversité biologique, géologique et paysagère.

25 % des zones titulaires de ce label de qualité sont des écosystèmes marins et côtiers dont certains sont situés en Méditerranée. Ces sites sont considérés comme des sanctuaires mais également comme des territoires de référence pour promouvoir une utilisation durable des ressources naturelles.

IV. Les activités de l'Accord du Conseil de l'Europe «EUR-OPA risques » en milieu marin

Ces activités concernant les risques naturels, technologiques et socio-économiques se concentrent sur deux grands volets :

- Mise en place de mécanismes de coopération euro-méditerranéenne et aide à la décision des responsables de la gestion des risques ;

- Activités de formation, de recherche et d'expertise à partir d'un réseau de centres spécialisés.

Advisory Committee of the Project for the preparation of a Strategic Action Plan for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (SAP BIO) in the Mediterranean Sea

FAO ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE PROJECT

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Fisheries Department (FI) is continuously assessing the exploited Mediterranean marine populations in order to advice for their management. FI is also technically backstopping the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). GFCM is a FAO Regional Body, which has between their major commitments the management of fisheries in the Mediterranean. The GFCM also supports, through their Subcommittee on Environment and Marine Ecosystems, studies on the impact of gear on non-target species and the marine ecosystem.

Furthermore FAO-FI through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with RAC/SPA is working to produce technical documents and guidelines aimed at facilitating the national processes for the elaboration of Strategic Action Plans to face the impact of fishing activities on biological diversity. Two of these documents have been already completed:

- Ecosystem effects of fishing in the Mediterranean: An analysis of the major threads of fishing gear and practices to biodiversity and marine habitats.
- Legal analysis of the measures adopted by Mediterranean coastal states to minimize the impact of fishing activities on marine ecosystems and non-target species.

The first one has been structured around a set of self-contained sections dealing with the main threats to marine biodiversity (including both vulnerable species and habitats) arising from fishing gears or practices in use in Mediterranean waters. The issues have been dealt with in two sections, one on fishing impacts on vulnerable species and habitats, and the other on specific aspects related to select fishing gears and practices of special interest in the Mediterranean. General single-species issues related to the over-fishing of commercial species have been deliberately omitted from the analysis, since they are the objects of extensive studies elsewhere and a great deal of attention is paid to them. The report provides a coherent picture of the overall impact of fishing on regional biodiversity.

The second one analyses the measures provided for by national legislation of the Mediterranean coastal States to minimize the impact of fishing activities on marine ecosystems as well as on non-target species and threatened or endangered species. In particular, it examines national laws and regulations with regard to licensing of fishing operations, fishing gear, fishing capacity, marine protected areas, time and area restrictions, incidental catch, data collection and reporting requirements. The study reviews the various arrangements and organizations that have been established to promote regional cooperation in the fields of environment and fisheries in the

Mediterranean (Part 1). It analyses the national fisheries legislation (4) enacted by each of the twenty-two coastal States (5) surrounding the Mediterranean Basin in order to determine whether the issues mentioned above aiming at minimizing the impact of fishing on biological diversity have been adequately addressed in the national legal frameworks (Part 2). Finally, it provides general recommendations designed to improve fisheries legislation with respect to the protection of biological diversity (Part 3).

Three documents more will be prepared shortly, these are:

- Technical characteristics of gears and practices identified in the region
- Guidelines for the elaboration of National Action Plans.
- Report on the introduction in the Mediterranean of marine and brackish water species for aquaculture purposes.

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the three International Plans of Action (IPOAs) on fishing capacity and conservation of sharks and birds adopted by the Committee of Fisheries (COFI) of FAO in 1995 and 1999 have to be also mentioned.

Finally the AC was informed that GFCM is incorporating the concept and rationale of the ecosystem-based management of fisheries emerged in the 1982 UNCLOS and referred more specifically as ecosystem approach in 1992 by the UNCED Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity and carried forward by the 1995 United Nations Stocks Agreement and the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. In this context and in preparation of the second meeting of the SAC-GFCM Subcommittee on Environment and Marine Ecosystems a Working Group will meet the 26 February 2001 to review the forms to gather information on bioenvironmental considerations of the space/time distribution of nurseries and the effect of environmental parameters on the recruitment processes. The ongoing projects related to fisheries and environment will be discussed as well other national and international initiatives.

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[4] For the purpose of this study, fisheries legislation should be construed as including laws (law, act) and regulations (decrees, orders etc.).

[5] This study also includes a review of the European Union fisheries regulations.

IUCN - THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

Formed in 1948, IUCN is a unique global union, an international non-profit organization where governments and non-governmental organizations work together as partners. It is now known as IUCN - The World Conservation Union.

By 2000, the Union brought together 77 states, 112 government agencies, 735 NGOs,35 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. Its mission is to:

"Influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable."

The IUCN Programme for West/Central Asia & North Africa (WESCANA)

The West/Central Asia & North Africa (WESCANA) region is vast, covering 24 countries and stretching across three continents – Africa, Asia and Europe. It extends from Morocco on the Atlantic coast of North Africa, through the Gulf and Middle East to Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east, and northwards into the grasslands of Central Asia. It is rich in biological resources and the daily life of the people depends on their natural resources.

WESCANA covers 7 (*Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia*) of 12 countries of the Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity in the Mediterranean region (SAP-BIO). It is therefore found logic on behalf of the IUCN that WESCANA Programme attends the SAP-BIO coordination meeting.

IUCN has been active in the WESCANA region only since 1993. Today, the Union has 80 members in the region, and activities in virtually all the countries. Members have enthusiastically embraced the IUCN approach of dialogue, partnership and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental bodies. One feature of IUCN is its six specialist Commissions – worldwide networks of experts working in a voluntary capacity, who make IUCN a powerhouse of knowledge for conservation. Commissions cover species survival, protected areas, environmental law, ecosystem management, education and communication, and environmental, economic and social policy. All six are represented in the region by Chairs, Vice-Chairs and/or Task Forces/Steering Committees, and each appoints one or two of their individual members to represent their work in the IUCN Programme for WESCANA.

IUCN is governed by a Council, composed of the Chairs of the six commissions (Chair of CEESP Commission is from WESCANA) and a set of Regional Councillors also elected by the members at their triennial World Conservation Congress. Five Regional Councillors represent the WESCANA region.
The work of the Union is increasingly decentralized, with many of the staff outstationed to various IUCN offices around the world. Most of the Union's work is done through its regional programmes, of which the programme for WESCANA is one.

The Vision of the IUCN Programme for WESCANA

"A secure living in a healthy environment" – this is the phrase that the members chose to encapsulate their vision for the WESCANA programme. They see this as implying a region:

- That understands, respects and improves the environment in its widest sense, including its natural, social, economic and cultural aspects;
- That supports and secures the abundance and diversity of nature, whose benefits are enjoyed by its people and the world at large;
- In which people have secure rights and equitable access to nature to earn a decent living on a sustainable basis, now and through future generations;
- That understands the interdependence of poverty and environment, and recognizes the importance of sustainable use in meeting people's aspirations in a diverse and bountiful environment.

This vision has led to the development of the following objective for the programme:

"To conserve natural resources and biodiversity on the basis of sustainable, equitable and culturally responsible development in the region, using local knowledge, experiences and capacities."

The main Thematic Programmes of WESCANA that relate to SAP-BIO are:

Biodiversity Conservation

Biodiversity conservation is the one of the main programme areas for IUCN's work in the region. Almost all the countries in the region have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and are fulfilling Article 6, under which they are obliged to prepare a national strategy or action plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. IUCN has provided technical support to many countries in developing their national strategy and/or action plan, in particular through exchange of expertise and information.

As part of this process, IUCN has assisted many countries in their policy development on conservation and to ensure that conservation of biodiversity is fully integrated into their other
development plans. Training materials published in various languages have also helped decision-makers and others to take a full part in biodiversity conservation. Network development and information sharing are also important aspects of the programme, for example in almost all the Arab countries of the region and in Central Asia.

The work has a strong focus on arid land biodiversity, in particular in North Africa, where a range of activities have helped members and governments to be aware of the importance and richness of arid land biodiversity in the region and to take necessary measures for conservation.

In future, the main activity will be continued development and increasingly implementation of
These national biodiversity strategies and action plans, for example in Oman, Yemen, Kuwait, Iran and Palestine. This work will include activities to enhance knowledge and understanding of biodiversity, to promote synergy between the various conventions that pertain to biodiversity, and to demonstrate sustainable use of biodiversity in at least two ecosystems of the region.

Marine and Coastal Ecosystems

Conservation of marine life is important since a large part of the WESCANA region is ocean. IUCN provides technical support in planning and implementing coastal zone management plans (in many countries in the region). It developed extensive coastal zone management plans and still assists in the establishment and management of marine protected areas as ways of restoring fish stocks and conserving marine biodiversity (such as in Jordan). It also provides technical support to conserve selected threatened marine species such as dugong and turtles.

Support to SAP-BIO

WESCANA Programme provides technical support through its members to develop and implement the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP). It also provides technical support for biodiversity planning as well as for developing a regional biodiversity strategy and implementation programme in the 17 Arab States in the region. IUCN National Committees comprised of governments and NGOs in all 7 countries are active and can provide technical and institutional support to SAP-BIO. IUCN Commissions, in particular SSC, WCPA and CEM would also provide technical support. WESCANA is also in the process of developing a Biodiversity Programme Thematic Centre in Lebanon. The main objective of the Centre is to expand its technical support to members in WESCANA. The Centre in Lebanon could play an important role in biodiversity matters in WESCANA as a whole and in the Arab region in particular.

Note for the SAP-BIO Advisory Committee meeting
(Tunis, 22-23 February 2001)

What is MedWet?

The MedWet Initiative was established in 1991 by a group of governments and organisations with the mission 'to stop and reverse the loss and degradation of Mediterranean wetlands'. During the first 10 years of its existence, MedWet developed methods and tools concerning the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands and applied them on a considerable number of sites, produced a Mediterranean Wetlands Strategy, and established a wide network of collaboration throughout the region, mobilising more than 20 million euros of resources from the EU, GEF and national and private sources.

In addition, MedWet has been involved in a number of wider issues concerning wetlands, such as socio-economic aspects and the sustainable use of resources[6], water[7] and climate change, as well as the integrated management of the territory with a focus on coastal zones[8].

Today, the MedWet Initiative is an integral part of the Convention on Wetlands (on the basis of Resolution VII.22 of Ramsar COP8, May 1999, San José, Costa Rica). Its work is guided by the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com), which includes among its 38 members 25 governments and the Palestinian Authority, the Barcelona[9], Bern and Ramsar Conventions, UNDP and 7 international NGOs and wetland centres (such as BirdLife, IUCN, WWF, Tour du Valat and others). MedWet is managed by a Co-ordination Team based in Athens, which reports to the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands.

MedWet contribution to SAP-BIO

The active participation of MedWet in the SAP-BIO project, and especially as member of its Advisory Committee, derives from the Memorandum of Understanding between the UNEP/MAP Co-ordination Unit and the Ramsar Bureau, signed in Nairobi in February 2001. Its future contribution to the project depends on the requirements of the RAC-SPA project management team and could cover eventually the following areas:

1. Through the members of MedWet/Com, and of its other networks (which include both governmental and non-governmental entities), MedWet has a presence and valuable contacts in all 12 countries that are involved in the SAP-BIO project. It intends to mobilise these networks in order to assist the National Correspondents in preparing the National Action Plans. In this context, MedWet intends to present the SAP-BIO project at the next plenary session of MedWet/Com and hopes that this can be done by the RAC-SPA representative.

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6 MedWet is a member of the Mediterranean Committee on Sustainable Development (MCSD).
7 MedWet participates as a core member in the Mediterranean Technical Advisory Committee (MEDTAC) of the Global Water Partnership (GWP).
8 For example, the MedWetCoast project concerns both coastal zones and wetlands.
9 Represented by RAC/SPA.

2. Moreover, MedWet would be willing to provide a greater technical and administrative support to National Correspondents in a few countries with major wetlands, and in which it has a very strong presence, such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Turkey,

3. The MedWetCoast GEF project currently in execution concerns Albania, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. Part of its scope is an assessment of coastal and wetland biodiversity, with a focus on a number of specific sites. The results obtained could be of considerable interest to SAP-BIO. A meeting between RAC-SPA and the MedWetCoast Regional Facilitator (Lamia Mansour at Tour du Valat) should be arranged in the near future to discuss closer co-operation.

4. The MedWet Inventory System and Database2000 have been developed and tested throughout the Mediterranean. They are currently being applied by a number of countries and the Ramsar Convention is examining the possibility of their global use. They can provide useful information for SAP-BIO.

5. As both IUCN and WWF are members of MedWet/Com, MedWet intends to take the initiative of inviting the other two organisations members of the Advisory Committee to co-ordinate their activities within the framework of the SAP-BIO project.

6. Finally, MedWet wishes to play an active role in all activities of the SAP-BIO projects that concern coastal wetlands[10], assisting substantially RAC-SPA and the other project executants in this particular area.

Athens, 28 February 2001

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[10] According to the Ramsar Convention definition, wetlands include marine coastal areas down to a depth of 6 meters.

The WWF Mediterranean Programme Office and its work for Coastal and Sea Areas

The Mediterranean region has been identified by WWF as one of the most important marine regions in the world for its outstanding biodiversity features and for this reason its preservation is of paramount importance. Moreover, the region is subjected to a very high level of human pressure and therefore it needs to be protected with extreme urgency.
A brand new tool has been developed by WWF to support its conservation effort: the Mediterranean Marine Gap-Analysis.
The Mediterranean Marine Gap-Analysis aims at providing an overview of marine and coastal features throughout the entire Mediterranean Basin, seeking to identify the most important unprotected coastal marine areas in the region. The so-called "gaps" should be filled through the establishment of new reserves and changes in coastal management practices.

A pan-Mediterranean vision

Never before has such a study been developed on a pan-Mediterranean level, capable of supporting the development of a conservation and management strategy for the most important Mediterranean areas. For the first time, a statistical analysis of the seabed has been applied to marine environment conservation. This has enabled the implementation of an homogeneous method of research across the entire Mediterranean basin, thus overcoming the lack of sound biological data. This new tool gives a clear picture of the Mediterranean Basin as a whole.

An innovative methodology

- highlighting biodiversity

In order to overcome the problem of the lack of homogeneity of the biological data coming from the different areas of the Mediterranean, a new methodology has been developed.
Starting from the scientific consideration that rich biodiversity is most likely to occur where the sea-bed presents high spatial heterogeneity, two different statistical approaches have been used to analyse the "indentation" of the coasts and the "roughness" of the sea-bottom, enabling the visualisation of those areas where chances of finding higher levels of biodiversity are greater within a depth range of 0 to 250 m (about 80% of marine biodiversity can be found within this range).

- Overlapping biological and human parameters

This new information has been added to the existing data on the presence of flag-ship species like the monk seal, marine turtles, several species of whales and dolphins and the sea grass *Posidonia oceanica*. In addition, the main coastal pollution "hot spots" of the Mediterranean, recently identified by UNEP-MAP, have

been included. The human impact on the coast has also been mapped, taking into consideration main harbours and coastal cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants.
Through the overlapping of the above-mentioned layers of data, all the most significant Mediterranean Sea and coastal areas in need of urgent protection have thus been identified.

The 13 emergencies in the Mediterranean Sea

By analysing on the one hand, the areas with a high level of biodiversity, in terms of concentration and continuity, the significant presence of flag-ship species (and their habitat) and a pronounced fish species diversity - and, on the other, the presence of important threats from human pressure, a total of 13 areas have been identified. These 13 areas are in need of urgent protection or improved management.

1 - **Alboran Sea** (Spain, Morocco, Algeria)
2 - **Balearic Islands** (Spain)
3 - **Liguro-Provençal coast** (France, Italy, Monaco)
4 - **Corso-Sardinian coast** (France, Italy)
5 - **Southern Tyrrhenian coast** (Italy)
6 - **Dalmatian coast** (Croatia)
7 - **Eastern Ionian coast and islands** (Albania, Greece)
8 - **Aegean Sea and Anatolya coast** (Greece, Turkey)
9 - **Cilician coast** (Turkey) and Cyprus Island coast
10 - **Cyrenaica** (Libya)
11 - **Gulf of Sirte** (Libya)
12 - **Gulf of Gabes** (Tunisia)
13 - **Algero-Tunisian coast** (Algeria, Tunisia)

Main Results

It is well known that the Mediterranean comes second only to tropical sea areas, in terms of biodiversity; what comes as a surprise is that extensive biodiversity is distributed in lots of different areas throughout the Mediterranean and is not concentrated in one place only, as is the case of the coral reefs in the tropics.
Of the areas identified, those where the coastal impact from industries, ports and cities can be considered low or very low, are to be found in Libya and in the Aegean Sea. While the areas most threatened by human impact are in France, Spain, Morocco, Italy, Greece, Tunisia and Turkey.
Nonetheless, some very important areas for biodiversity still exist close to places where the human pressure along the coast is very high.
Due to the lower human pressure in North Africa, several marine species enjoy more natural habitats there than along the northern Mediterranean coast.
It is evident that the major threat to biodiversity in these 13 areas is the extensive land use by civil, industrial and tourist settlements. This is causing the destruction of some of the most important and unique natural coastal Mediterranean habitats (sand dunes, beaches, lagoons, maquis, etc.).Consequently, there are negative repercussions on the nearby marine areas.
As far as the presence and the concentration of flag-ship species is concerned, two main areas stand out clearly on the map.
The Aegean Sea/Anatolya coast, and the Sardo-Corso-Liguro-Provençal Basin. The latter is the only place in the Mediterranean where several species of cetaceans, including fin whales, gather in summer time to feed. The Aegean Sea/Anatolya coast is the last remaining large marine area to host a significant number of monk seals

and sea turtle nesting beaches. It also houses one the most continuous *Posidonia oceanica* meadows.
It has to be noted however, that, according to recent surveys, the Libyan coast (Cyrenaica and Gulf of Sirte) has been identified as one of the most important areas of the Mediterranean in terms of numbers of loggerhead sea turtle nests.

Some statistical results

5% of the total seabeds comprised between 0 and 250 meters of depth constitute potentially important areas for biodiversity. Half of these areas are facing heavily polluted zones on the coast.
14% of the Mediterranean coast is seriously damaged.
Only 0,78% of the Mediterranean coast is currently protected.

WWF Objective and Strategy

The overall objective of WWF is to ensure the protection and sustainable management of at least 10% of the total surface of the identified areas of exceptional biodiversity over the next 10 years, at a rate of 1% every year.

Protection as a key tool

There are many levels of protection: from simple management to complete banning (tourism diving, fishing, maritime traffic), but also the creation of no-fishing zones, the protection of some species, or protection of the coastlines.
Today, less than one percent of the Mediterranean coast is protected and in most cases these areas are only protected "on paper": lacking management plans, effective monitoring, adequate structures and even essential legal tools. This is the reason why an efficient and strategic protection of the Mediterranean Sea, at least in the 13 key areas.
By having, success with this approach a substantial part of the biodiversity of the Mediterranean marine ecoregion will thereby be preserved. The creation of a network of well-managed Marine Protected Areas will then be an excellent tool for disseminating positive experiences around the region.

WWF Actions

As for the 13 selected most relevant areas, WWF has on-going projects or is planning conservation activities in 10 of them. Within these larger designated areas some projects have been initiated on smaller, more manageable sites where the chances of success, in terms of protection, are greater. These sites have been designed as initiatives to be repeated in other locations.
The guiding principle for choosing these smaller sites within the larger areas is again the higher level of biodiversity and biological importance, and the higher level of threats. So, the richer a coastal marine site is in biodiversity and natural features, the more it is threatened by human pressure, and the higher up it is on the WWF list of priority action.

The following sites have been selected for direct intervention by WWF:

Alboran Sea	1 - **Al Hoceima** (Morocco) → protection and sustainable management 2 - **Chafarinas Isalnds** (Spain) → inclusion in NATURA 2000

Balearic Islands	3 – **North-eastern Mallorca** (Spain) → protection and sust. management
Liguro-Provençal coast & Corso-Sardinian coast	4 - **Whale Sanctuary** (Italy, France, Monaco) → manag. plan in place
Corso-Sardinian coast	5 - **Gulf of Orosei** (Italy) → protection of marine areas
Southern Tyrrhenian coast	6 - **Coast of Cilento** (Italy) → extended protection to marine areas 7 - **Western Sicily** (Italy) → protection of marine areas
Dalmatian coast	8 - **Pelagic Islands** (Croatia) → creation of Pelagic islands MPA
Eastern Ionian coast and islands	9 - **Zakyntos** (Greece) → implementation of management plan
Aegean Sea & Anatolya	10 - **Foça/Karaburun** (Turkey) → protect monk seal areas 11 - **Kastellorizo island** (Greece) → creation of no-fishing zones 12 - **Cirali coast** (Turkey) → Management & sustainable tourism
Cilician coast & Cyprus	13 - **Bozyazi** (Turkey) → extended protection to monk seal areas 14 - **Akyatan/Yumurtalik** (Turkey) → protect turtle habitats
Algero-Tunisian coast	15- **Cap Serrat, Cap Negro** (Tunisia) → sustainable management

WWF's strategy in the selected areas will include policy, advocacy and communications work as well as, in some cases, field actions with strong involvement of local communities, strengthening local environmental groups.
Besides the fieldwork, WWF is continuing its effort, at a pan-Mediterranean level, to address the main threats from human activities affecting the entire basin, such as fisheries, pollution and tourism.

ANNEX IV: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE SAP BIO PROJECT

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE SAP BIO PROJECT

I. The role, tasks and the institutional framework of the Committee:

To promote coordination and avoid duplication, the project envisaged that in the process of elaboration of the SAP BIO, due account has to be taken of what already had been developed at the national and regional levels. Therefore, the establishment of a Project Advisory Committee has been envisaged to (i) ensure co-ordination with the relevant organisations and (ii) provide RAC/SPA with technical and scientific advice in the process of elaboration of the SAP and of the respective national documents.

The Project Advisory Committee is one of the institutional bodies envisaged by the project, to act at the regional level.

The Committee will be established at the outset of the project and will include representatives of international and regional bodies with technical and scientific expertise in marine and coastal Mediterranean biodiversity issues (member organizations).

Member organizations are represented in the Committee by nominated representatives, to act as Committee members.

In particular, the Committee will provide for:

(a) technical and scientific advice concerning the entire process of project implementation, and in particular related to: (i) General Outline for the preparation of SAP BIO, (ii) Guidelines for the preparation of National Reports, (iii) the process of preparation of National Reports and priority NAPs, and (iv) draft SAP BIO document.
(b) inventory of relevant activities already realised in the region. For that aim, each member organisation will provide RAC/SPA with the list of activities and outputs in connection with the SAP BIO project. RAC/SPA will contact other organisations in order to complete the inventory, which will be published before the First Meeting of National Correspondents.
(c) flow and exchange of relevant information on activities implemented, on-going or planned by the member organizations, - within the Committee membership and with RAC/SPA;
(d) information to member organizations on activities and documents prepared or in preparation by the project;
(e) harmonization, as appropriate, of activities and results of member organizations concerning issues of relevance for the project, with those of the project itself;
(f) evaluation of and recommendations concerning the institutional arrangements envisaged, and in particular related to the role and functions of: (i) the National SAP BIO Correspondents and the respective Network , (ii) the individual National SAP BIO Correspondents, (iii) other national arrangements envisaged, and (iv) mechanisms of coordination of project activities;

It is understood that member organizations, besides their participation in the activities directly related to the Advisory Committee itself, will be involved in some national and/or regional activities, to be agreed on a case by case basis with RAC/SPA.

Furthermore, each member organization will be invited to send representative (preferably the respective Committee member) to attend as observer the Meetings of the National Correspondents.

II. Membership

The following organizations will constitute the membership of the Project Advisory Committee:

- WWF- International Mediterranean Programme,
- IUCN-Mediterranean Programme,
- MedWet Initiative, under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, 1971),
- FAO,
- Council of Europe (Secretariat of the Bern Convention),
- ALECSO (Arab League)
- Agreement of the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), represented by its interim Secretariat, and, tentatively,
- COPE MED
- ADRIA MED

The European Topic Centre / Nature Conservation (ETC/NC) and the European Union for the Conservation of Coasts could be represented, provided they confirm their interest.

In addition, the MAP MED Unit will be represented, as well as RAC/SPA in its role of SAP BIO Project Implementing Institution.

Finally, other members might be included, if advised so by the First Committee meeting and agreed with RAC/SPA.

Each member organisation is invited to keep for the Project duration, the same representative in the Advisory Committee and to ensure continuity, through appropriate transfer of files, in case of change,.

III. Internal arrangements

At each meeting:

(i) the Committee will elect a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson,
(ii) the RAC/SPA Scientific Director will act as the Committee Rapporteur,
(iii) the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson, the RAC/SPA Director and the Rapporteur will act as the Committee Secretariat. They shall remain in office until their successor are elected at the next meeting.
(iv) RAC/SPA will provide for the needed technical and logistical support,
(v) travel and accommodation expenses of the Committee members, will be covered by RAC/SPA.

Committee members will be regularly informed by RAC/SPA on the progress of project related activities.

If needed and agreed, the Committee will be supplied with specific technical and/or scientific information, to be provided by RAC/SPA directly or by contribution of reputed international consultants.

The outputs of the Committee (meeting reports, recommendations, proposals, etc.) will be prepared by the Rapporteur and cleared by the Committee Secretariat. However, when possible, documents shall be circulated to the members, by Email, for comments.

IV. Activities, timetable

According to the SAP BIO Project document, the following activities of the Committee are envisaged:

Activity:	**Place, venue, dates:**
1) First Committee Meeting	Tunis, February 22-23, 2001
2) Second Committee Meeting	Tunis, April 2002
3) Third Committee meeting	Tunis, January 2003
4) Activities between Meetings:	
- information to members, through Half-yearly Progress Reports prepared by RAC/SPA	Half-yearly
- ad hoc information, prepared by RAC/SPA	as appropriate
- information by Committee members to RAC/SPA, to be also distributed by RAC/SPA to all Committee members	as appropriate

Other meetings of the Advisory Committee could be convened when necessary provided financial resources (external to the Project) will be available.

V. Expected outputs

a) Outputs of the First Meeting:

- Adoption of the Committee Terms of Reference
- Establishment of the Committee
- The Meeting Report including recommendations concerning (i)the role and tasks of individual National Correspondents and of the respective Network, (ii) mechanisms of coordination, (iii) the General outline for the preparation of SAP BIO and (iv) the Guidelines for the preparation of National Reports
- Other outputs, if decided so by the Committee Meeting (f. ex. recommendations concerning: assistance to be provided to countries; applying of the participatory approach; additional issues of concern to be included in activities at the regional and/or national levels...).

b) Intermediate outputs:

- Response to progress reports, prepared by RAC/SPA disseminated to Committee members
- Ad hoc reports and information, if any, prepared by RAC/SPA
- Relevant information prepared by Committee members or member organizations,
- Other outputs, if decided so by the First Committee Meeting.

c) Outputs of the Second Meeting:

- Response to information by RAC/SPA on the progress of preparation of National Reports and priority NAPs
- Discussion on and adoption of Guidelines for the preparation of SAP BIO priority National Action Plans (NAPs)
- Discussion on and adoption of the Detailed outline for the preparation of SAP BIO document
- Recommendations related to the finalization of National Reports and SAP BIO priority NAPs.
- The Meeting Report, and
- Other outputs, if decided so by the Committee Meeting

d) Outputs of the Third Meeting:

- Response to information by RAC/SPA on the progress of preparation of the SAP BIO document
- Recommendations related to the preparation of the final version of draft SAP BIO document
- The Meeting Report, and, other outputs, if decided so by the Committee Meeting.

ANNEX V: RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of main recommendations

1. Recommendations concerning approaches

- Ensure that the idea of user/actor consensus is applied when carrying on the national SAP BIO processes.

- Ensure that the SAP BIO is balanced as regards taking into account the marine domain and the coastal land domain. To this end, collaboration with other organisations could be exploited.

- Ensure that the SAP BIO is not restricted to the impact of fishing on biodiversity while stressing that fishing is indeed important.

- The SAP BIO should include other national strategies as well as that concerning fishing.

2. Recommendations concerning the Advisory Committee

- The Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from the following organisations:

    - WWF-International, Mediterranean Programme
    - IUCN-Mediterranean Programme
    - MedWet Initiative under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, 1971)
    - FAO
    - Council of Europe (Secretariat of the Bern Convention)
    - ALECSO (Arab League)
    - Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and the Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), represented by its Interim Secretariat
    - COPE MED
    - ADRIA MED
    - RAC/SPA
    - UNEP (MEDU)

    The European Topic Centre/Nature Conservation (ETC/NC) and the European Union for the Conservation of the Coasts could also be represented if they confirm their interest in the subject.

- Each member organisation is requested to keep, as far as possible, the same representative on the Advisory Committee and make sure, if she/he is changed, that continuity is preserved via a suitable transfer of the files.

- It is important to make right from the start of the project an inventory to keep track of what has already been done in the region. To this end, each member

of the Advisory Committee will provide the RAC/SPA with a list of its organisation's activities and products that have some link with the SAP BIO objective. RAC/SPA will also contact other organisations with a view to rounding off the inventory, which will be published before the first meeting of the National Correspondents.

- As well as the three meetings planned by the project, other meetings of the Advisory Committee could be organised, if necessary, using outside funding.

- The documents, which are to be submitted for the approval of the Advisory Committee, must be sent sufficiently in advance of the meetings, and it is important that members provide their comments in writing before each meeting.

3. Recommendations concerning the National Correspondents

- For the meeting of the National Correspondents, it is important to prepare a document describing the project which is more explicit and clearer than the extract from the document of the project presented in document UNEP(DEC)/MED WG./175/Inf.3.

- The National Correspondents must have a good knowledge of the aspects related to marine and coastal biodiversity and also be able to deal with problems concerning fishing and socio-economic aspects.

- The National Correspondents must necessarily be supported by resource persons, to be identified at national level, including by NGOs and national focal points of the member organisations.

- To this end, member organisations are requested to circulate information about the SAP BIO to their focal points in the Mediterranean countries, asking them to contact the SAP BIO National Correspondent.

- The terms of reference for the National Correspondents must provide suggestions for forming national steering committees for the project: NGOs, IGO focal points, etc.

- It is important involve the European Union into the project. Participation of a EU representative at the various meetings is welcomed here.

- Stress the need to maintain contact between National Correspondents between their meetings. For this, it is vital that RAC/SPA make sure the National Correspondents' network is very active.

4. Recommendations concerning SAP BIO content

- Along with the products elaborated as part of the project, SAP BIO should solicit other inputs, particularly existing strategies and results obtained in the context of other networks and/or organisations.

- While covering various issues, it is recommended that in SAP BIO there should be a focus on marine biodiversity, wetlands and fishing.

- It is important to focus on the causes of the erosion of biodiversity, while keeping separate those problems, which are of national import and those, which are of regional scope.

- When elaborating the SAP BIO, it is recommended to make a link with the SAP MED and bear this in mind at the level of approaches and measures.

- As SAP BIO must not only be a diagnosis of the situation, section 6 'Defining approaches and measures' should constitute an important part of it. Actions suggested must be harmonised with other current or planned programmes.

- Aspects concerning emigration and poverty and their relationship with conservation of biodiversity should be especially borne in mind by the SAP BIO.

5. National reports

- Given that the National Reports should be comparable, it is necessary to (i) set out in detail guidelines for drafting them, and (ii) make sure, via a regular monitoring of the national processes, that the various parts of the national reports are homogeneous from the point of view of both content and scale.

6. Miscellaneous recommendations

- Each member must provide the Rapporteur within one week with two pages on his/her organisation's activities related to SAP BIO, to be included in the report on the meeting. The first draft of this report will be sent to members within a fortnight.

- Make a timetable for the support required of members to permit them to get organised so that they can make a good contribution to the project.