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ANNEX IV

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2022 action plan part I in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood

Action Document for Bolstering Mediterranean biodiversity and MCPAs for nature (SEMPA Project)

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plan/measure in the sense of Article 23(2) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS Basic Act	Bolstering Mediterranean biodiversity and MCPAs for nature (SEMPA Project) 2022 action plan part I in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood OPSYS business reference: ACT-61276 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1016405 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in the Southern Neighbourhood countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel ⁽¹⁾ , Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine ⁽²⁾ , Syria ⁽³⁾ and Tunisia.
4. Programming document	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027) ⁴

⁽¹⁾ See Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards on http://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.205.01.0009.01.ENG.

⁽²⁾ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

⁽³⁾ Co-operation with the Government of Syria suspended since 2011.

⁴ C(2021) 9399 Commission Implementing Decision for the adoption of an Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) in favour of the Southern Neighbourhood for the period 2021-2027

5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Priority Area 4: Green Transition (main) Priority Area 2: Strengthen resilience, build prosperity and seize the digital transition (secondary)			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	41010 Environmental Policy and administrative management 41020 Biosphere Protection 41030 Biodiversity 31310 Fishing policy and administrative management 43082 Environmental research			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<u>Main SDG:</u> SDG 14: Life below water SDG 15: Life on land <u>Other significant SDGs:</u> SDG13: Climate Action SDG 5: Gender			
8 a) DAC code(s) ⁵	DAC code 1– Biodiversity 60 % DAC-code 2 – Urban development and management 20 % DAC-code 3 – Environmental Policy and administrative management 20 %			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel @	41116 - UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme through a Contribution Agreement			
9. Targets⁶	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development ⁷ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance ⁸			
10. Markers ⁹ (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation /good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

⁵ DAC sectors (codes and descriptions) are indicated in the first and fourth columns of the tab ‘purpose codes’ in the following document: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/dacandcrscodelists.htm>

⁶ Actual contribution to targets will be confirmed ex-post based on a standardised methodology.

⁷ For the Neighbourhood, activities related to education shall be marked as part of the “Social Inclusion and Human Development” target, in line with the NDICI-GE programming guidelines.

⁸ Thematic target for geographic programmes (at least 15%) in delegated act.

⁹ For guidance, see <https://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/> (go to “Data collection and resources for reporters”, select Addendum 2, annexes 18 (policy) and 19 (Rio) of the reporting directive).

If an action is marked in the DAC form as contributing to one of the general policy objectives or to RIO principles as a principal objective or a significant objective, then this should be reflected in the logframe matrix (in the results chain and/or indicators).

	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers¹⁰	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @ Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity @ Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				

¹⁰ These markers have a different scope/rationale than the DAC codes. They are drawn from the level of budget allocation and emphasis given to the action in terms main objective(s) selected. This section should be in line with the definition of objectives, results, activities in description of the action.

12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: 14.020110 Total estimated cost: EUR 4 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 4 000 000
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)	Project Modality Indirect management with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

1.2. Summary of the Action

The Mediterranean basin is considered a biodiversity hotspot, with an outstanding flora diversity of 15,000 to 25,000 species, 60% of which are unique to the region. However, coastal development, tourism, overexploitation, pollution, climate change, and other drivers are leading to unprecedented rates of species extinction and long term ecosystem imbalances. These, in turn, have direct consequences on food security, livelihoods and human health.

In view of these challenges, there is an urgent and critical need to support Southern Neighbourhood countries in their efforts to protect their natural assets.

The overall objective of the programme is to **protect the biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea** and support the achievement of its **good environmental status**.

The specific objectives of the two programme components are: a) Support the implementation of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region¹¹ and b) Continue support on Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) implementation with a particular focus on biodiversity & NIS¹², Hydrography & coast and interlinkages with climate change, expanding the scope of the support to SEIS¹³ implementation and its related indicators to biodiversity and climate change.

The programme will also have a particular focus on:

- Sustainability: ensuring that actions become progressively self-sustained;
- Awareness raising: working to promote long-term behavioural changes in local populations toward biodiversity conservation;
- Gender mainstreaming: promote gender equality and gender related aspects, especially in the designation and management processes of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs).

The proposed programme is aimed at contributing to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the commitments made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) including the Paris Agreement and at following COPs, as well as proposed Global Biodiversity Framework to be agreed at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 15, the EU Strategy for Adaptation, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

It is also aligned with commitments adopted at regional level, such as the 2030 Strategy of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean that defines aims and concrete actions against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; towards sustainable and resilient aquaculture while promoting technical cooperation, knowledge sharing and efficient partnerships.

Finally, the measures are also in line with and feed into the implementation of the recently agreed UNEP/MAP - EEA Joint Work Plan 2022-2030. The work plan includes, among its major products,

¹¹ [21ig25_27_2511_eng.pdf \(unep.org\)](#)

¹² Nautical Information System

¹³ Shared Environmental Information System

support for 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.

The actions contribute directly to the achievement of the objectives outlined in the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighborhood (2021-2027)¹⁴, under Priority Area 4: Green Transition, and more specifically, to the sub-objectives 4.1 (Climate Action) and 4.3 (Biodiversity).. It contributes to several SDGs: SDG5: Gender equality, SDG13: Climate Action, SDG 14: Life below water and SDG 15: Life on land.

¹⁴ Commission Implementing Decision on adopting a Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Regional South C(2021) 9399

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

The Mediterranean Sea basin is a recognised marine biodiversity hotspot and a vital resource of economic activities for countries in the region. Though the Mediterranean sea only covers 0.7% of the world's ocean area it is one of the major reservoirs of marine and coastal biodiversity, with 7.5% of the world's marine fauna and 18% of its marine flora, and about a third of species being endemic to the region (according to the findings of the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC)). The regions' biodiversity is not only vital for the environment and ecosystem's health, but also critically important to human health, economies and livelihoods.

Approximately 60% of flora and around one third of fauna is endemic, or unique to the region. This precious ecosystem is under threat from habitat loss and degradation, over-fishing, pollution from sewage waters and marine litter including plastics, climate change, eutrophication, and the establishment of alien species. The Mediterranean region is warming up 20 per cent faster than the global average. This further exacerbates risks arising from severe draughts, extreme weather events, rising sea-levels, sea water acidification, forest fires – all affecting the lives and security of 480 million in 22 countries of the Mediterranean region.

With the fast demographic growth in the countries on the southern and eastern shores of Mediterranean Sea, fast growing economic activities and increasing demand for more sea resources, the question of sea health and its usage is becoming an imperative for securing sustainable economic growth. The later has not kept pace with the region's rapidly growing population, leading to high rates of unemployment, especially amongst the youth (28%), as well as widening inequalities.

Urbanisation, coastal development, tourism, transport, overexploitation of land and sea resources, pollution, climate change, and other drivers are exerting increasing pressure on the region's environment, leading to unprecedented rates of species extinction and long term ecosystem imbalances. The Mediterranean sea is heavily polluted by multiple substances including plastic, emerging contaminants, heavy metals, faecal bacteria and viruses, all expected to increase in the future. Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_x) have recently increased sharply, primarily due to shipping activity. Both marine and land ecosystems are heavily impacted by unsustainable practices. Half of wetland areas have been lost or degraded, with this trend expected to continue and coastal erosion is a growing concern. Key productive sectors, like fishing, agriculture, forest management, commercial and pleasure activities have been impacted, threatening the regions' natural and cultural heritage as well as economic prospects and have possibly also lead to increased migration.

The marine ecosystem serves primarily through food provision services and recreational. Food provision is benefitting people residing in the coastal areas engaged in small-scale fishing for subsistence and income. The recreational value is derived from a high-level water quality and clarity and provides value both for people's own leisure activities as well as for coastal and maritime tourism.

Unsustainable use of natural resources, environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change have further exacerbated existing challenges, jeopardising access to water, food and energy, accelerating desertification and loss of biodiversity and threatening lives and livelihoods.

The above challenges call for urgent assistance from the international community. Climate action and biodiversity restoration are key priorities of the Commission, being at the core of the European Green Deal. The EU is a global leader in these areas, and has committed to devoting a substantial part of its Official Development Assistance to tackling these issues in third countries.

Gender inequalities are also very significant, with women's participation in the labour market being one of the lowest in the world, as estimated by ILO (20% in 2018). Southern Neighbourhood economies have limited trade and economic integration amongst each other, and remain insufficiently competitive on the global market. The COVID-19 pandemic has further reinforced these trends and further increased people's economic and social vulnerability.

Adherence to and respect of fundamental values of **democracy, human rights and rule of law** remain an issue in the region, and tackling these is central to the EU's renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, figuring as the first pillar in the New Agenda for the Mediterranean adopted in 2021.

The interdependency in the region between economic, environmental, and social aspects calls for actions that target those activities that unchecked are a threat to the good environmental status of the marine ecosystems of the Mediterranean Sea. As mentioned, the environmental status of the region is under increasing pressure from human activities, which leads to habitat loss, water pollution from chemicals and pharmaceuticals and plastic waste including micro plastics, as well as to disturbance of sensitive species, such as cetaceans, from underwater noise. Unaddressed, these pressures on an already threatened environmental status will lead to further deterioration of the marine ecosystem, among others by causing increased eutrophication, depletion of the fish stock, species extinction, and coral reef death.

These growing concerns are reflected in the **political declarations and initiatives** of the major stakeholders such as the EU, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the leading development banks and many countries in the Mediterranean region:

- The Joint Communication for a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a **New Agenda for the Mediterranean**¹⁵ and the accompanying **Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)**¹⁶ propose the following key policy areas: 1) **Human development, good governance and the rule of law**; 2) **Strengthen resilience, building prosperity and seize the digital transition**; 3) Peace and security; 4) Migration and mobility; 5) **Green transition: climate resilience, energy and environment**.

The October 2021 **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change**¹⁷ (Cairo) as well as the other relevant UfM ministerial declarations, in particular the joint **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy**¹⁸ issued on 2 February 2021. The Declaration outlines the Ministers' concerns about the critical status of the marine environment in the Mediterranean, the uneven levels of economic development and access to finance as well as the lack of capacity, in particular in the UfM non EU countries. The Ministers welcomed the increasing interest of the European and International Institutions in the Blue Economy and called to prioritize it notably for preservation of the marine ecosystems, innovation, circular economy, waste management and reduction, sustainable food value chains from the sea, sustainable maritime transport including energy efficiency in ports, sustainable coastal and maritime tourism and adaptation to climate change;

The UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation adopted on 27 June 2022. The Ministerial acknowledged the Research and Innovation (R&I) Roadmaps on climate change, renewable energies and health, as the basis for future cooperation and committing to mobilising resources for their implementation, while recognising the need to level the playing field and collaborate on the basis of fundamental R&I values and principles. Countries committed to promoting cross-cutting and enabling actions that facilitate the implementation of the Roadmaps, and in particular the knowledge triangle comprising research, continuity of education, innovation, which includes the following key stakeholders: researchers, students, entrepreneurs, NGO officers, and policy-makers. Promote innovation as a tool for building knowledge, skills, vocational training, careers and economic inclusion of Mediterranean graduates and researchers.

- The recent Council of the European Union Conclusions on a **sustainable Blue Economy**¹⁹ (BE) published on 26 May 2021 outlined the commitment for BE as an integral part of the EU Green Deal.
- The United Nation 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs), the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement;

¹⁵ JOIN (2021) 2 final of 09.02.2021

¹⁶ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_staff_working_document_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

¹⁷ [UfM-ministerial-declaration-ENV-CA_final-1.pdf \(ufmsecretariat.org\)](https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-ministerial-declaration-ENV-CA_final-1.pdf)

¹⁸ [Declaration-UfM-Blue-Economy-EN-1.pdf \(ufmsecretariat.org\)](https://ufmsecretariat.org/Declaration-UfM-Blue-Economy-EN-1.pdf)

¹⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0240&from=EN>

- The convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the ongoing process for the development of an ambitious but attainable post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted by the parties to CBD at COP15;
- Specifically for the Mediterranean region, on 9 February 2021, the Commission outlined a Joint Communication for a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a **New Agenda for the Mediterranean**²⁰, strengthening its cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood. The Green transition, climate resilience, energy transition and environment are at the heart of this agenda which encourage resource efficiency, including water and waste management as well as terrestrial and marine biodiversity protection.
- The joint work of the EU and UfM is further supported by the UfM “**2030 Greener Med Agenda**²¹” whose thematic axes are focused on i) the transition towards a green, circular and socially inclusive economy based on SCP²² practices and Nature based Solutions (NbS), ii) the prevention & reduction of pollution on land, sea and air and iii) the preservation, restoration and management of natural resources in the MED region within an integrated ecosystem approach.
- Furthermore, the adoption by all contracting parties in November 2021 of the joint 2030 Strategy at the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) has launched a regional and sub-regional dynamic towards for conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Seas. The strategy clearly defines aims and concrete actions that fall under five targets: i) productive fisheries in healthy seas; ii) actions against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; iii) sustainable and resilient aquaculture; iv) decent employment and engaged fishers; v) technical cooperation, knowledge sharing and efficient partnerships in sub-regional dimensions.
- Last but not least, the Convention for the protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the **Barcelona Convention**²³), its protocols and decisions, including the Strategy for Sustainable Development.

The EU Adaptation Strategy, adopted in 2021, also calls for stepping up international action on adaptation. Furthermore, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss in the Southern Neighbourhood is of particular importance to the EU, considering our proximity and interdependence with this region, and is in line with the priorities expressed in the New Agenda for the Mediterranean.

The programme will be complementary with other ongoing and planned bilateral and regional interventions, notably the EU for Climate Action in the Southern Neighbourhood (Clima MED), still ongoing, and the “Climate for Cities” projects, starting in early 2022. Complementarities will be also sought with the various environment and biodiversity related project implemented bilaterally by the EU Delegations in the Mediterranean region.

2.2. Problem Analysis

The EU recognises that global climate and environmental challenges are significant threat multipliers and a source of instability (as clearly stated in the Council Conclusions on Climate Diplomacy, 2018). The EU is committed to working with its partner countries in the Southern Neighbourhood to build environmental resilience and to protect biodiversity in the view of preventing these challenges from becoming sources of conflict, food insecurity, population displacement and forced migration. The EU is also committed to supporting its partner countries in their low carbon transition, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and of the European Green Deal, especially at this point in a time while countries are slowly engaging in economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

²⁰ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

²¹ https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/220304-Presentacio%CC%81n_Final_Light.pdf

²² Sustainable Consumption and Production

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/international-cooperation/regional-sea-conventions/barcelona-convention/index_en.htm

The interventions focus on biodiversity, a key EU priority, but is also supporting climate change adaptations and gender mainstreaming and will support in particular the identifications and implementation of financially viable, inclusive and sustainable projects that preserve the environment and biodiversity. These projects may include eco-tourism development.

The proposed intervention includes the following three components:

COMPONENT 1: Marine & Coastal Protected Areas & Biodiversity conservation

Short problem analysis

There are currently 1,087 MPAs in the Mediterranean Sea covering 209 303 km² (8.33%), including only 0.04% of strictly protected areas (no-go, no-take and no-fishing areas). There are no OECMs²⁴ reported for the Mediterranean to date, however combining areas that could be potential OECMs (i.e. 1 Particularly Sensitive Sea Area and 8 Fisheries Restricted Areas) the total MCPA and potential OECM coverage currently stands at 9.3% of the Mediterranean Sea.

Although good progress has been made, with some countries exceeding, meeting, or very close to the 10% by 2020 (Aichi target 11), the region as a whole fell short. There is a large disparity in MCPA coverage between countries, with the majority of MCPAs occurring in the western Mediterranean Sea and 97.33 % occurring in the northern part of the Mediterranean. In addition to unbalanced geographical representation, there is also uneven distribution of MPAs according to sea depth, with less than 4% of depths greater than 1000 m covered by MPAs. As the region now faces new targets, not only is coverage expected to increase, but it is essential that coverage is more equitably represented across Contracting Parties and the different ecosystems.

In addition to coverage, previous and current targets (Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework) for protected areas stipulate those systems of protected areas (PAs) and OECMs must be effectively managed. Several surveys have been conducted over the years to assess management effectiveness and to identify barriers and limiting factors for the establishment and management of MCPAs, however a few MCPAs and systems of MCPAs complete regular evaluations of management effectiveness. The surveys and country assessments revealed several cross-cutting barriers to the effective management of MCPAs). Ensuring political will and financial support for the establishment and management of MCPAs and OECMs are amongst the most crucial elements to overcome the remaining barriers to meet 2030 targets for MCPAs and OECMs in the region.

COMPONENT 2: Monitoring on Biodiversity, NIS²⁵, Hydrography, Coast degradation and Climate change

Short problem analysis

The Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) promotes conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in an equitable way. Since 2008, the EcAp act as an overarching principle of the UNEP/MAP work in synergy with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), with the ultimate objective of achieving the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and coast.

In 2016, in the frame of the EcAp Roadmap, the **Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme** of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) was adopted by the UNEP/MAP contracting parties. The IMAP sets out all the required elements that are necessary for the establishment of a primary, region-wide Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme. This system, for the first time,

²⁴ Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures

²⁵ None indigenous species

and based on region-wide common indicators, covers an integrated monitoring and assessment of three clusters: (i) biodiversity and fisheries; (ii) pollution and marine litter; and (iii) coast and hydrography.

EU funded projects (EcAp-MED II and ENI SEIS II) have contributed to the development of a ‘Shared Environmental Information System’ (SEIS) for IMAP²⁶ and H2020 indicators. These are fully complementary and establish a close link between state and impact indicators (IMAP indicators) with drivers and pressures (H2020 indicators). This supports the regular production and sharing of quality assessed environmental data, indicators and information. As such, both sets of common indicators allow for an integrated assessment of GES. Data collection and upload in IMAP and SEIS information systems facilitate the preparation of integrated assessment reports based on DPSIR²⁷ approach.

The IMAP-MAP project, as well as the EcAp MED III and ML MED II projects, all funded by the EU, are focusing on the national implementation of IMAP, and on the delivery of reliable data for IMAP indicators for the MED QSR 23 for three clusters: pollution and litter, biodiversity and NIS, and hydrography. These projects support the development and implementation of integrated monitoring programmes at the sub-regional level which address the 3 IMAP clusters, including in areas which are known to be under human activity pressure.

Based on the results of these projects and in line with the strategic orientations and the EEA²⁸ and UNEP/MAP areas of work, a Joint Work Plan with key products, links to UNEP/MAP and EEA strategic priorities, timeline and resources needed, was developed and recently approved. One of the priorities of this action plan is to build strengthened knowledge base support, based on the generation of science-based knowledge on the status of the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment and key pressures, with a integration of the climate change aspects.

COMPONENT 3: Horizontal issues and project Management

Short problem analysis

Environmental monitoring and MPAs management can be fragile processes if not designed and delivered with appropriate stakeholder participation and inclusion of all relevant local and national actors.

In the Mediterranean, it is particularly important to recognize the role that men and women play in garnering coastal livelihoods, take stock of their differentiated access to these resources and, as a result, understand how they are affected differently by changes to these existing structures.

Since gender inequality and social exclusion increase the negative effects of environmental degradation and climate change on vulnerable population subgroups, top-down conservation attempts can adversely affect resource-dependent people, who reside at the periphery of human settlements. Gender-mainstreamed in integrated monitoring and MPA policies, which include both genders and different social groups in planning and execution, can simultaneously maximize resource protection (through compliance and low resistance) and provide an opportunity for empowerment (through alternative livelihood options and devolved authority).

Both women and men are key stakeholders in many activities that occur within and adjacent to coastal and marine areas and MPAs. Thus, every effort will be made by the project coordination team in order to advance gender equality in the project and in the region, in line with regional and international conventions and intergovernmental commitments towards gender equality, such the Barcelona Convention COP 22 Ministerial Declaration.

²⁶ Integrated Monitoring and Assessment programme

²⁷ Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response

²⁸ European Environmental Agency

The project management unit will also make sure that all potential synergies with relevant projects and stakeholders in the region will be identified and properly integrated during the life cycle of the project. Coordination between the implementing partners and continuous communication with the donor will also be core tasks associated to the project management unit.

Key stakeholders

Local communities

Biodiversity conservation and monitoring is strongly associated with past and current use of the habitats and ecosystems. Local communities are well positioned to understand the diversity and complexity of local ecosystems as well as the needs and priorities at local level, including potential specific needs from women, children and vulnerable groups such as minorities. Local communities, including vulnerable groups, will participate in the identification and designation of marine and coastal protected areas and will also play a key role in the management of these protected areas. They will contribute to projects' implementation (through participation to workshops and potential conservation actions) as well as their monitoring and subsequent management. The participation of local communities will also contribute to the ownership and sustainability of the investments derived from the actions.

Local authorities

Biodiversity conservation and monitoring often falls within the scope of the mandate and responsibilities of local authorities. Although their mandates vary from country to country, local authorities have historically been responsible for land use planning, environmental and construction regulation, natural resource management and investments in infrastructure including irrigation and drainage and protection from natural hazards. These activities are fully included within protected areas management processes, such as the elaboration or update of management plans. Despite the clear relevance of the local level to meaningful management of protected areas, evidence shows that most local governments in low and transitional economies often face difficulties to contribute effectively to biodiversity conservation due to a lack of technical and financial resources. Local authorities will play a key role in the programme. They will benefit from grants, capacity building and technical assistance.

Central governments

Central government institutions in charge of biodiversity conservation have the responsibility to enforce national and international regulations and commitments regarding biodiversity preservation. They are therefore central to the action. Other key institutions include ministries of defence and planning and ministries in charge of sectors particularly connected to biodiversity aspects (e.g. agriculture, water, infrastructure, transport, energy, etc.). They will also receive support through the project.

The private sector

Private sector will benefit and contribute to the actions. Within the component I on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, they will benefit proper management of the areas and activities to be implemented at local level, including awareness raising events and products.

Civil society (CSOs)

CSOs and NGOs active in environmental and climate action will be engaged in the action through inclusive workshop, meeting and potential conservation actions, including, where appropriate, women and/or gender-specific CSOs. They will play a key role in awareness raising within local communities and support the participation of vulnerable and minority groups in the project development and implementation.

UNEP/MAP

The **Secretariat of the UNEP/MAP** will play a central role in the implementation of the project, based on the successful collaboration with beneficiary countries and recognized expertise. Through the UNEP/MAP, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are determined to meet the challenges of protecting the marine and coastal environment, whilst at the same time boosting the regional and national plans to achieve sustainable development.

SPA/RAC

The **Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC)** aims to contribute to the protection and sustainable management of marine and coastal areas of particular natural and cultural value, including

threatened species and ecosystems. Its core mission is to assist the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties in order to meet their obligations under the SPA/BD Protocol which concerns Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean. In this context, the main activities of SPA/RAC include the establishment and management of marine and coastal protected areas, conducting scientific and technical research, preparing educational material, creating and updating databases, elaborating guidelines and studies, implementing training programmes, exchanging information, and cooperating with regional and international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The mission, scope of action and SPA/RAC's longstanding experience of in leading and implementing multi-partner international projects in the Mediterranean, places it in an ideal position to commit as an active key partner in this project.

PAP/RAC

The **Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC)** aims to support Mediterranean countries on their path towards sustainable coastal development. PAP/RAC supports the countries realized through several lines of activities, including on-the-ground coastal area management programmes, capacity building support (training, workshops, consultations), awareness raising and technical support to development of methodologies, policy and legal documents.- PAP/RAC will ensure that additional support is provided for the development of the IMAP toward the integration of climate change and hydrography related indicators and indicators related to pressures and drivers, and support the national implementation of IMAP and the delivery of reliable data for IMAP indicators on coast and hydrography.

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

The UfM is one of the main forum for regional policy dialogue on environment and biodiversity in the Southern Neighbourhood. It can play a role in creating further dialogue and events around the key aspects of the programme and promote project outcomes.

General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (**GFCM**) is a regional fisheries management organization. With 22 member countries & the EU, its main objective is to ensure the conservation and the sustainable use of living marine resources as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea. It is one of the main forum for regional policy dialogue between civil society and decision-makers on issues related to marine biodiversity, ecosystem health and the use of marine living resources. In 2021, a package of binding decisions was adopted to increase the regional protection of sensitive species (e.g. seabirds, cetaceans, sharks, turtles) as well as the adoption of strengthened fisheries restricted areas.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** (Impact) of this action is to protect the biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea and support the achievement of its good environmental status.

This will be achieved through a connected, ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored network of MPAs (Component I) as well as through the setting up of mechanisms which ensure reliable, regionally agreed assessment of biodiversity and hydrography aspects (Component II).

The component I aims at supporting the implementation 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 (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean (MCPA-OECM Strategy).

The component II aims at continuing support on IMAP implementation with a particular focus on biodiversity & NIS, Hydrography & coast and interlinkages with climate change, expanding the scope of the support to SEIS implementation and its related indicators to biodiversity and climate change. This would allow to monitor project implementation progress as well as to assess progress for the implementation of main aspects of the EU Green Deal related to the scope of the Barcelona Convention and its related commitment and targets.

The **Specific Objectives** (Outcomes) of this action are :

Component I

1. Improved on-site MCPA management and identified mechanisms that ensure MCPA sustainability.
2. Enhanced collaboration at regional scale for management and communication on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas.

Component II

3. IMAP biodiversity, NIS and Hydrography clusters and its interlinkages with climate change further developed and implemented to generate evidence-based assessment of policy implementation including on the relative aspects of EU green Deal.

Component III

4. Horizontal issues and effective project coordination

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

1.1 Support on the identification and designation of new MCPA, elaboration of MCPA management plans and provision of support for their effective implementation;

1.2 Improvement of existing MCPA management through capacity building and initiation of management plan implementation;

2.1 Organization of the 2024 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (fourth edition);

3.1 Support the development of the IMAP toward the integration of climate change, biodiversity and hydrography related indicators and indicators related to pressures and drivers, in synergy with H2020 indicators;

3.2 Integrated monitoring carried out in identified pilot sites for biodiversity, NIS and hydrography common indicators;

3.3) Capacity building and exchange of best practices at the national, sub-regional and regional level through specific training sessions and meetings, as well as support to the relevant research & innovation actions;

4.1) Project management, coordination and gender aspects.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Component 1

The development 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 (MCPAs) were strongly supported by the IMAP-MPA project. Both strategies are in line with other international objectives (CBD Post-2020 global biodiversity framework, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030). The strategies aim high, with for example the objective of at least 30% of the Mediterranean Sea protected by 2030.

Activities related to Output 1.1:

Support on the identification and designation of new MCPA, elaboration of MCPA management plans and provision of support for their effective implementation.

The continuation of the ongoing work on the characterisation of marine sites suitable to become protected areas and the identification of related actions needed to promote their creation. MPCA coverage in the Mediterranean currently stands at 8.3%, there is clear need therefore to establish new MCPAs and to expand existing networks if the region is to advance towards meeting this ambitious post-2020 target. It is further essential that this increase in coverage coincides with a more balanced representation across countries, sub-regions and depths and includes areas beyond national jurisdiction. In addition, and in keeping with regional and sub-regional targets, there is a need to enhance the protection measures of MCPAs and to consider identifying or establishing MCPAs or core zones within MCPAs with enhanced protection measures, for example, no-entry, no-take and no-fishing zones. Identifying important areas for protection, documenting and sharing knowledge between Contracting Parties and enhanced transboundary co-operation, will be essential actions under this pillar if outputs and outcomes are to be achieved.

Concrete and inclusive actions are expected to be developed under this output, including complementary ecological study, complementary socio-economic/fisheries studies, management plans and business plans.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

Improvement of existing MCPA management through capacity building and initiation of management plan implementation.

Global Biodiversity targets for MCPAs recognize that increasing their coverage is not sufficient on its own and once established, MCPAs must be effectively managed. Identifying desired conservation outcomes, developing frameworks for their management, and ensuring management effectiveness is routinely evaluated are critical steps for ensuring adaptive and effective management of MCPAs. Plans alone however will not safeguard the biodiversity and socio-economic values of MCPAs, such plans need to be implemented effectively. To do so, it is critical that sufficient and sustainable funds are available to MCPA managers across the region and that institutions and their staff have the relevant capacity for management plan implementation. Increasing funds will also be necessary to support all actions under this strategy including the establishment of MCPAs. As part of management plan implementation and assessing conservation

outcomes, strengthening surveillance and enforcement of MCPA rules and regulations, fostering good co-operation with relevant law enforcement agencies, and monitoring ecosystem health, threats and socio-economic indicators will be essential to achieve this outcome.

The implementation of MCPA management plans in pilot areas/countries, includes:

- a. concrete actions related to tourism and fisheries management, by supporting specific engagement of local and national stakeholders;
- b. the assessment of management effectiveness and socio-economic benefits of MCPAs, including sex-disaggregated data and specific gender equality and women empowerment indicators;
- c. Dissemination and effective use of the IMET Tool²⁹ developed by the JRCas well as capacity-building activities both at MPA and national level, for the use of the tool and for the analysis of data resulting from the assessments. Integration/interoperability of IMAP and MAPAMED with the IMET database and with other protected area information systems and OECMs³⁰ should also be sought.
- d. the development of a sound governance for them based on participatory, inclusive and adaptive decision-making, including financial and institutional sustainability.

Technical assistance, exchange programmes and training activities (including mentor training and on-job training associated to field activities) as well as the setting up of an online capacity building platform/resource centre for remote tutoring and information sharing should also be targeted. In order to avoid duplication or dispersal of efforts, the use of existent platforms like the SPA/RAC “SPAMI Collaborative Platform” (<http://spami.medchm.net/en>) should be promoted. Exchange and coordination activities – or even joint training – with other African regional marine protected area networks (e.g. WIOMSA, RAMPAO) will also be encouraged and supported in the framework of the project;

Activities related to Output 2.1:

Organization of the 2024 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (fourth edition).

Communication efforts on improving the perception of stakeholders and Governments on the benefits of MCPAs, on securing stakeholder and government commitment to the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity and of the Barcelona Convention and on reducing user conflicts at the national and local level. To move away from business-as-usual, it is necessary to ensure that across all stakeholder groups, including the wider society, MCPAs and potential OECMs are valued and appreciated for their functional and supportive role in helping to achieve other non-biodiversity related national agendas and their role as nature-based solutions. Enhancing political support is particularly crucial as without political will, the Region cannot meet the relevant post 2020 targets. Key to increasing political support will be advancing their recognition of the value and importance of MPAs and OECMs in achieving national and international commitments, particularly as they related to Sustainable Development Goals and Nationally Determined Contributions, as well as their contribution to the national economy. The development and implementation of effective and targeted communication and awareness strategies will be essential for mobilizing action in government and non-government stakeholders.

²⁹ The JRC has developed a tool for assessing protected areas management effectiveness called IMET (Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool), which is particularly suited to marine protected areas. IMET not only collects data and assesses management effectiveness, but also provides a link to planning and monitoring, supporting both the formulation (or updating) and implementation of protected areas management plans. IMET also allows easy comparison of variation in protected areas management effectiveness over time, as well as analyses of protected areas networks at a landscape or country/regional level.

³⁰ Other effective area-based conservation measures.

Component 2

This component is in line with and feed into the implementation of the recently agreed UNEP/MAP - EEA Joint Work Plan 2022-2030. The work plan includes, among its major products, support for 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 work will be done taking into consideration the previous Work Plans and building up on the outcomes of SEIS II Project.

Activities related to Output 3.1:

Support the development of the IMAP toward the integration of climate change, biodiversity and hydrography related indicators and indicators related to pressures and drivers, in synergy with H2020 indicators

Under this output, it is proposed to develop indicators on pressures and drivers at national and sub-regional levels, addressing biodiversity and hydrography and support interlinkages with climate change in line with SEIS principles, with a view to complementing the work on monitoring and assessment of the status of marine and coastal environment undertaken under IMAP implementation and NAP/H2020 Indicators, towards holistic assessments covering the entire spectrum of DSPiR.

Activities related to Output 3.2:

Integrated monitoring carried out in identified pilot sites for biodiversity, NIS and hydrography common indicators

Support capacities of the Mediterranean countries to improve data gathering to populate indicators on biodiversity and hydrography and climate change / Carry out integrated monitoring in identified pilot sites for biodiversity, NIS and hydrography common indicators.

The establishment of joint monitoring programmes and their implementation started within the IMAP-MPA project and will be strengthened within this project based on lessons learnt and countries' needs.

Activities related to Output 3.3:

Capacity building and exchange of best practices at the national, sub-regional and regional level through specific training sessions and meetings.

Strengthen the sub-regional expert networks identified within the IMAP-MPA project and further support the exchange of best practices on a regional level, through best-practices exchange meeting, as well as during targeted exchange programmes between interested countries (i.e., South-South but also North-South exchanges).

Component 3

Activities related to Output 4.1:

This output aims to strengthening operational coherence, harnessing synergies and ensuring coordination among the Project's activities in order to maximize their operational efficiencies and Execution.

The project management unit will also focus on Gender aspects to be mainstreamed within the Project and to be eventually integrated in its results framework, corresponding actions, indicators, timelines, responsible parties, and budget allocations, to address the gender issues identified.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening (relevant for budget support and strategic-level interventions): N/A (the whole action is environment/biodiversity related – main objective).

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening

The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening

The CRA screening concluded that this action is at no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. Gender mainstreaming in this action will imply the overall promotion of gender equality and gender related aspects, especially in the designation and management processes of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs).

Human Rights

The Action will be implemented in respect of a Rights-Based approach, notably a human rights approach, at all levels and stages of its design and implementation, e.g. avoid any unintentional human rights harm, imbalance or negative impact.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that this action and its component are not considered relevant for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Democracy

The overall Action will take into consideration the specific needs of vulnerable groups by aiming to improve, through its actions, the rights and/or the quality of life of vulnerable groups.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The overall Action will take into consideration the specific needs of vulnerable groups by aiming to improve, through its actions, the rights and/or the quality of life of vulnerable groups.

Disaster Risk Reduction

By its nature (Protected Areas Management and support on IMAP) the project includes Disaster Risk Reduction related activities, therefore DRR constitute a significant objective of the action.

3.4. Risks and Lessons Learned

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
Financial and administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late disbursement of funds related to the project activities implementation Long procedure leading to the signature of project agreements and related addenda 	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send any report and request of payment in time to avoid late payment. Previous exchange of report with the EU task manager to avoid suspension of the report due to quality problems. Review activities implementation calendar Prioritize activities
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political instability Change in priorities: countries turning away from environmental protection to immediate or short-term priorities Lack of commitment from countries Turnover of governmental staff 	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for national authorities support through alternative channels (MAP Focal Points, Ministers, Diplomatic channels, MAP or SPA/RAC partners at country level) Visit the country and meet governmental officials in order to re-establish the contact and smoothen the communication and collaboration flow Redirect activities to more stable and committed countries
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security problems and hazards in some countries/areas Inability to implement field activities in some countries/areas due to security hazards 	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redirect activities to safer countries/areas
Natural / Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bad weather conditions during field activities 	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find alternative activities to be executed until good weather conditions are re-established (snorkelling, near-shore prospection,

				coastal/terrestrial study, sample analyses, laboratory work, data processing, training of local partners, meetings/interviews with local stakeholders, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan a complementary field survey
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health situation at regional and national scale, not allowing proper project activities implementation 	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with regional and national relevant authorities to explore alternative options for the implementation of the activities Adapt the workplan of the project implementation

Lessons Learned:

Lessons learned from previous EU-funded projects such as MedMPA Network, EcAp-MED II, Marine Litter MED, SEIS-MED II and on-going projects IMAP-MPA, EcAp MED III and Marine Litter MED II will allow to replicate positive results and best practices within the frame of this proposed project. These lessons learned include for example the strengthening of stakeholder's involvement at regional, national and local scales, including during online activities, due to limitations linked to the COVID 19, the improvement of women representation and participation in activities related to MPAs and environmental monitoring or collaboration and share of information with regional and national actors involved in environmental related activities.

3.5. Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that

If new MCPA are identified and designated following public and inclusive processes at local and national level,

If MCPA management plans are elaborated based on climate change adaptation and gender-sensitive approaches

If existing MCPA management is improved through capacity building involving MCPA staff but also key stakeholders

If public awareness is raised about how MCPA can support sustainable development at the local and national scale, while supporting biodiversity conservation

If regional cooperation is consolidated thanks to equitable, regular and technical exchanges between national, sub-regional and regional stakeholders

If climate change, biodiversity and hydrography related indicators and indicators related to pressures and drivers are developed in a collegial and scientific way

If national capacities toward integrated monitoring programs implementation are supported in the frame of an approved regional strategy

If the proper management and coordination approaches are promoted during the implementation of the project

If gender is mainstreamed through the activities and there is a focus on youth and vulnerable groups

Then on-site MCPA management at national and regional scales will be improved and sustainability of MCPA will be strengthened.

Then collaboration at the regional scale for management and communication on MCPA will be a pillar of the post-2020 strategy implementation in the region

Then the monitoring of biodiversity, NIS and hydrography and its interlinkages with climate change will be further developed and implemented

Then evidence-based assessment of policy implementation will be generated including on the relative aspects of EU green Deal.

Then effective and timely project coordination and implementation will be ensured

Then an enabling environment for political dialogues, and citizen engagement to sustain environmental conservation will be created

Then institutional, and human capacities of the government to ensure democratic governance and to respond to all citizens' needs will be enhanced

Then the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean will be strengthened through a connected, ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored network of MPAs as well as through the setting up of mechanisms which ensure reliable, regionally agreed assessment of biodiversity and hydrography aspects.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results [maximum 10 @]	Indicators [it least one indicator per expected result @]	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	The Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean is strengthened through a connected, ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored network of MPAs) as well as through the setting up of mechanisms which ensure reliable, regionally agreed assessment of biodiversity and hydrography aspects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of nationally designed MPAs included in the regional MPA network Number of capacity building activities: trainings, workshops and exchange visits Number of National quality assured datasets available online per national/site IMAP selected indicator 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline : 191 MPAs (December 2022) <i>Tbc</i> Baseline: N/A Baseline : One set of quality assured data per national/pilot IMAP selected indicator per country reported and accessible online August 2023 <i>Tbc</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Target : 194 MPAs (December 2026) <i>Tbc</i> Target: 5 trainings, workshops and exchange visits for 100 experts December 2026 <i>Tbc</i> Target: At least 4 set of quality assured data per national/pilot IMAP selected indicator per country reported and accessible online December 2026 <i>Tbc</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on MPA status in the Mediterranean & MAPMED Database Trainings, workshops and exchange visits reports; Interim and final reports of the SEMPA project IMAP InfoSystem 	<i>Not applicable</i>

<p>Outcome 1</p>	<p>1. Improved on-site MCPA management and identified mechanisms that ensure MCPA sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.1 Number of kilometer square of new/existing MPAs receiving support in view of an effective management (EU RF 2.22) 1.2 Number of kilometer square of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems of new/existing PAs receiving support in view of an effective management (EU RF. 2.23) 1.3 Number of new/existing MPAs receiving support for strengthening their financial sustainability 	<p>1.1 Baseline : 0 km2 . August 2023</p> <p>1.2: Baseline : 0km2 August 2023</p> <p>1.3 Baseline : 8 . August 2023 <i>Tbc</i></p>	<p>1.1 Target : 1 500 km2 December 2026 <i>Tbc</i></p> <p>1.2: Target : 150km2 December 2026 <i>Tbc</i></p> <p>1.3 Target : 10. December 2026 <i>Tbc</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management plans documents - Business plans documents -Barcelona Convention Reporting System -MAPAMED database 	
<p>Output 1 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>1.1 Support on the identification and designation of new MCPA, elaboration of MCPA management plans and provision of support for their effective implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.1.1 Number of MPA management plans based on sound scientific knowledge, comprehensive consultation and engagement of stakeholders and integration in the wider social and economic context ▪ 1.1.2 Number of MPA business plans based on sound scientific knowledge, comprehensive consultation and engagement of stakeholders and integration in the 	<p>1.1.1 Baseline : 0 (August 2023)</p> <p>1.1.2 Baseline : 0 (August 2023)</p>	<p>1.1.1 Target : 3 (December 2026) <i>Tbc</i></p> <p>1.1.2 Target : 2 (December 2026) <i>Tbc</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management plans documents - Business plans documents - Studies - Results of IMET assessments 	

		<p>wider social and economic context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.1.3 Number of consultation workshops ▪ 1.1.4 Number of stakeholders contributing to the management plans elaboration processes ▪ 1.1.5 Number of complementary ecological studies, including GIS-based maps ▪ 1.1.6 Number of complementary socio-economic/fisheries studies 	<p>1.1.3 : TBC</p> <p>1.1.4 : TBC</p> <p>1.1.5 Baseline: 0 August 2023</p> <p>1.1.6 Baseline : 0 August 2023</p>	<p><i>1.1.3 TBC</i></p> <p><i>1.1.4: TBC</i></p> <p>1.1.5 : Target : 3 December 2026 . <i>Tbc</i></p> <p><i>1.1.6 : Target : 3 December 2026. Tbc</i></p>	<p>- consultation workshops minutes</p> <p>- Lists of participants</p>	
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 Improvement of existing MCPA management through capacity building and initiation of management plan implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.2.1 Number of training workshops ▪ 1.2.2 Number of management actions implemented per MPA ▪ 1.2.3 Number of stakeholders involved in MPA management advisory committees 	<p>1.2.1 Baseline : 0 August 2023</p> <p>1.2.2 Baseline : 0 August 2023</p> <p>1.2.3 Baseline : 0 August 2023</p>	<p>1.2.1 Target : 3 December 2026. <i>Tbc</i></p> <p>1.2.2 Target : 2 December 2026 <i>Tbc</i></p> <p>1.2.3 Target: 80 December 2026</p>	<p>- Training workshops reports</p> <p>- MPA socio-economic benefits case study reports</p> <p>- Minutes of the MPA management advisory committees meetings</p>	
Outcome 2	2.Enhanced collaboration at regional scale for management and communication on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	

<p>Output 1 related to Outcome 2</p>	<p>2.1 Organization of the 2024 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (fourth edition)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2.1.1 The Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean is organized ▪ 2.1.2 Number of participants to the 2020 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean 	<p>2.1.1 Baseline : 3 August 2023</p> <p>2.1.2 Baseline : 0</p>	<p>2.1.1 Target : 4 December 2026</p> <p>2.1.2 Target : 300 December 2026 Tbc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proceedings, Declaration and recommendations of the 2020 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean - List of participants to the 2020 Forum 	
<p>Outcome 3</p>	<p>3.IMAP biodiversity, NIS and Hydrography clusters and its interlinkages with climate change further developed and implemented to generate evidence-based assessment of policy implementation including on the relative aspects of EU green Deal.</p>	<p>3.1 Number of workshops, national trainings, per country</p> <p>3.2 Number of experts benefitting from training on different aspects of IMAP, per country</p>	<p>3.1 Baseline : 0 August 2023</p> <p>3.2 : Baseline : 0 August 2023</p>	<p>3.1 : Target : 2 December 2026 <i>tbc</i></p> <p>3.2 Target : 40 December 2026. <i>Tbc</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training / workshop reports - List of participants 	
<p>Output 1 related to Outcome 3</p>	<p>3.1 Support the development of the IMAP toward the integration of climate change, biodiversity and hydrography related indicators and indicators related to pressures and drivers, in synergy with H2020 indicators</p>	<p>3.1.1 Number of indicators developed</p> <p>3.1.2 Number of meetings organised to establish the new indicators</p>	<p>3.1.1 Baseline : 27 August 2023</p> <p>3.1.2 Baseline : 0 August 2023</p>	<p>3.1.1 Target : 30 December 2026. <i>Tbc</i></p> <p>3.1.2 Target: 10 December 2026. <i>Tbc</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IMAP indicator list - Meeting reports 	
<p>Output 2 related to Outcome 3</p>	<p>3.2 Integrated monitoring carried out in identified pilot sites for biodiversity, NIS and hydrography common indicators</p>	<p>3.2.1 Number of integrated monitoring pilots in MPAs and in high</p>	<p>3.2.1 Baseline: 14-21 (2-3/country, in line with IMAP, one or two in MPAs, and one in a</p>	<p>3.2.1 Target : 21-28</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated monitoring programmes reports - Quality assured data - National monitoring 	

		pressure areas	high-pressure area) 31 December 2022 <i>Tbc</i>		data populated in IMAP Compatible Info System	
		3.2.2 National monitoring data uploaded in the IMAP Compatible Info System	3.2.2 Baseline : 7 sets of National data (one per country) August 2023 <i>Tbc</i>	3.2.2 Target : 21 sets of national data (3 per country) <i>Tbc</i>		
		3.2.3 Number of national experts trained for the implementation of the national integrated monitoring programmes	3.2.3 Baseline : 50 August 2023 <i>Tbc</i>	3.2.3 Target : 75 December 2026 <i>Tbc</i>		
		3.2.4 Number of new integrated monitoring stations, both in MPAs and high-pressure areas	3.2.4 : Baseline : 0 August 2023 <i>Tbc</i>	3.2.4 : Target : 7 December 2026 <i>Tbc</i>		
Output 3 related to Outcome 3	3.3 Capacity building and exchange of best practices at the national, sub-regional and regional level through specific training sessions and meetings	3.3.1 Number of workshops, national trainings. Dedicated trainings, country missions, ‘Train the trainers’, exchange of specific best - practices (possible	3.3.1 Baseline: 18 August 2023 <i>Tbc</i>	3.3.1 Target : 25 December 2026 <i>Tbc</i>	- Guideline documents . - Training / workshop reports - Exchange meeting reports - List of participants	

		South-South, but also North-South cooperation),				
		3.3.2 Number of regional best practices meetings	3.3.2 Baseline: 2 August 2023	3.3.2 Target 3 December 2026		
		3.3.3 Number of experts trained	3.3.3 Baseline : 50 August 2023 Tbc	3.3.3 Target: 100 December 2026 Tbc		
Outcome 4	4. Effective and timely project coordination and implementation ensured					
Output 1 related to Outcome 4	4.1 Project management and coordination	4.1 Number of reports during implementation of project received	4.1 Baseline : 0 August 2023	4.1 Target : 2 per year per country per executing partner		
		4.2 Number of Steering Committee meetings held	4.2 : Baseline : 0 August 2023	4.2 : Target : 4 December 2026		
		4.3 Number of SEMPA project activities/actions that promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment	4.3 : Baseline :0 August 2023	4.3 : Target : 20 December 2026 Tbc		- Steering committee minutes - reports from executing partners - Communication material
		4.4 Number of project implementation staff trained on gender governance and management, disaggregated by sex, age and position	4.4 : Baseline : 6 August 2023	4.4 : Target : 10. December 2026. Tbc		- Gender assessment reports
		4.5 Number of communication				

		<p>products with evidence of gender mainstreaming</p> <p>4.6 Percentage of stakeholder consultations that are inclusive / gender-responsive</p> <p>4.7 Number of gender assessment report submitted</p>	<p>4.5 Baseline : 0. August 2023</p> <p>4.6 Baseline: 75%. August 2023. Tbc</p> <p>4.7 : Baseline : 1. August 2023</p>	<p>4.5 : 6. December 2026. Tbc</p> <p>4.6 : Target : 100%. December 2026</p> <p>4.7 : Target : 8. December 2026. Tbc</p>		
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4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries.

4.2. Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures³¹.

4.3.1. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity³²

This action may be implemented in indirect management with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The envisaged entity has been selected because of the role of coordination assigned to the UNEP-MAP - Barcelona Convention Secretariat within the environment and climate regional institutional set-up. The UNEP and the UNEP-MAP - Barcelona Convention Secretariat is one of the major actors in the landscape of the organisations providing with comprehensive data on Good Environmental Status (GES) and hosts regional protocols supporting biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation in the region. Such modality is allowed as the UNEP provides the Commission with assurance on the level of protection of the financial interests of the Union.

The specificity and sensitivity of this particular type of intervention requires a body with appropriate technical competence, high degree of specialisation and mandate. In this respect, the UNEP and the UNEP-MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariat offers trustful credibility and reliability, and enjoys close ties with the European Union. This unique position, combined with a good track-record of managing projects on behalf of the European Union, makes the UNEP and UNEP-MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat an adequate partner for implementing conservation actions and regional cooperation on Environmental and Climate Change aspects.

³¹ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

³² The signature of a contribution agreement with the chosen entity is subject to the completion of the necessary pillar assessment.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Indirect management with UNEP – cf. section 4.3.1	4 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	will be covered by another Decision
Communication and visibility – cf. section 6	N.A.
Contingencies	N.A.
Totals	4 000 000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Under the overall supervision of UN Environment/MAP senior management, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established and convene annual. The PSC will carry out the function of a Project Board. The PSC will consist of: The Focal Points appointed by the beneficiary countries, DG NEAR and DG ENV representatives, the Executing Agency representatives. Moreover, a member from the UfM secretariat will be invited as an observer.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

The implementing partner will provide with any requested information within the course of the project monitoring and he will assist the Commission staff or any responsible agent contracted by the Commission during the implementation of such monitoring exercises.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision).

In case an evaluation is not planned, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 3 months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination³³. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner countries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

³³ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

5.3. Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the "Communicating and raising EU visibility – Guidance for external actions – July 2022" document³⁴.

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and contribution agreements.

³⁴ Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions (europa.eu)