

Annex VI

Draft Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean

Executive Summary

In December 2019, the Conference of Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 21) requested the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP) Secretariat, through the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), to elaborate a post-2020 strategic document to further advance and strengthen the network of marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean. It was further recognized that to achieve comprehensive and coherent systems of well-managed MCPAs/OECMs, the strategy should be ambitious, transformational, and in line with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other regional and global processes. Central to the transformative approach will be the incorporation and integration of recognized OECMs in the region to help achieve the ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework relevant targets.

Through a series of consultations and workshops, this Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean was developed under the leadership of the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre, (SPA/RAC) the guidance of its Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM), and in consultation with Contracting Parties Focal Points and Regional and International Organizations active in the Mediterranean. The strategy is aligned with a number of international, regional and sub-regional relevant strategies and ongoing programmes.

POST-2020 TARGETS

It is recognized that each individual country will have its own specific MCPA and OECM coverage targets, however in keeping with global targets for protected areas, regional marine conservation community recommendations, and sub-regional targets for enhanced levels of protection. Two post-2020 targets have been identified for the Mediterranean Sea as a whole; these are:-

- i) **By 2030, at least [30] per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, with the focus on areas particularly important for biodiversity.**
- ii) **By 2030, the number and coverage of marine and coastal protected areas with enhanced protection levels is increased, contributing to the recovery of marine ecosystems.**

STRATEGY

To help achieve these ambitious targets, the strategy has identified five strategic pillars:-

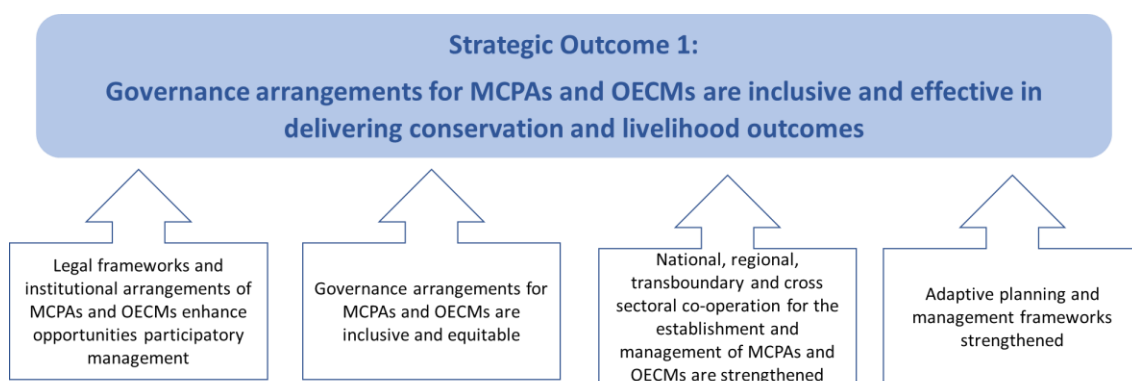
1. **Governance-** Inclusive governance is essential to ensure effective systems of MCPAs and OECMs. This pillar promotes the participation of all levels of stakeholders in both the decision-making processes and management of these systems.
2. **MCPA coverage-** There is a clear need to establish and expand the MCPA network to achieve the ambitious post-2020 target for the Mediterranean. The design of these systems, however, requires a greater balance across countries, sub-regions and habitats coverage to achieve a greater ecological representation across the region and to consider enhanced levels of protection for MCPAs or parts of MCPAs.
3. **OECMs-** A relatively new concept for the region, recognizing marine OECMs, in addition to **increasing** MCPA coverage, will be critical to help advance towards the [30]% coverage target for the region.
4. **MCPA effectiveness-** Increasing the management effectiveness of MCPAs is necessary to achieve conservation outcomes and is essential to avoid MCPA existence on paper only. As the coverage of MCPAs increases over the coming years, it is essential to mitigate barriers to effective management

ensuring these new MCPAs and those already established, are managed effectively to enhance their conservation outcomes.

5. **Government and stakeholder action and support-** A cross-cutting pillar essential to all other pillars identified. Government and stakeholder action and support will be the foundation of achieving all other outcomes and outputs.

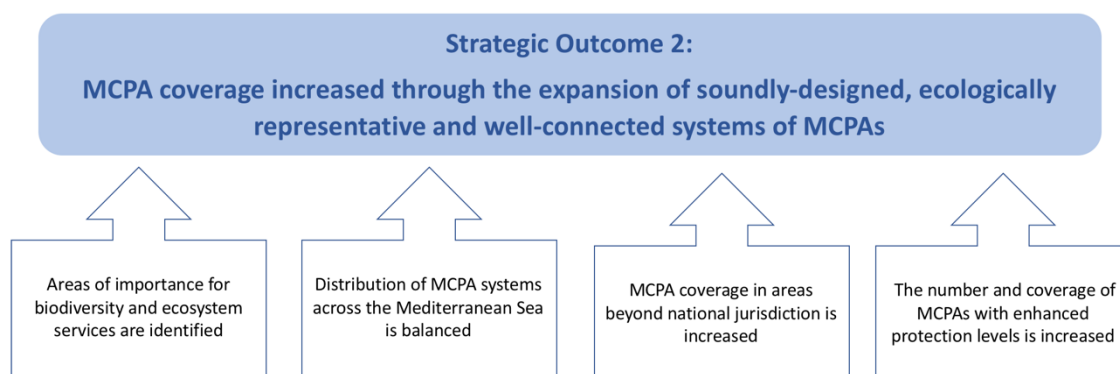
Under each of these pillars, a clear strategic outcome, with corresponding outputs have been identified. Recognizing that countries are at different stages with regard to the establishment and management of their MCPAs, a number of indicative, rather than prescriptive, actions are also proposed at both, Contracting Parties and Regional and International Organization levels. Below summarizes the main aspects for each of the five pillars identified.

Pillar 1: Governance



To meet post-2020 targets for the region, it is essential that governance and co-operation among other sectors and stakeholders, including transboundary co-operation, is strengthened for the establishment and management of MCPAs and OECMs. Effective and inclusive governance is a core element for achieving effective systems of MCPAs and OECMs. It is necessary therefore to ensure that enabling legislation and best practices are applied, that promote the effective and equitable involvement of key stakeholders of all levels in decision-making processes and the management of MCPAs and OECMs, and that their respective planning and management frameworks can adapt to any changes in political, social and environmental conditions that arise. Appropriate governance models are critical for creating and maintaining the necessary conditions for efficient management. Participatory, inclusive and adaptive decision-making, therefore, is critical to the overall success of MCPAs and OECMs.

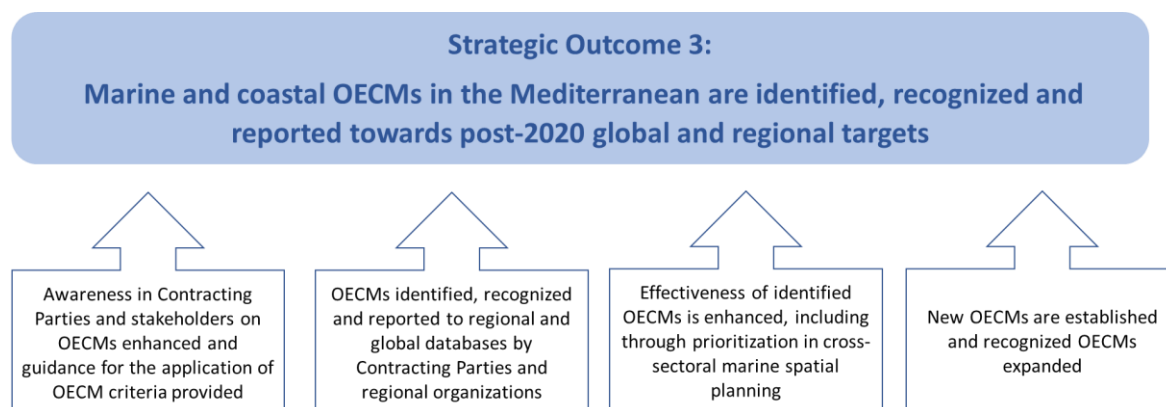
Pillar 2: MCPA coverage



MCPA 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

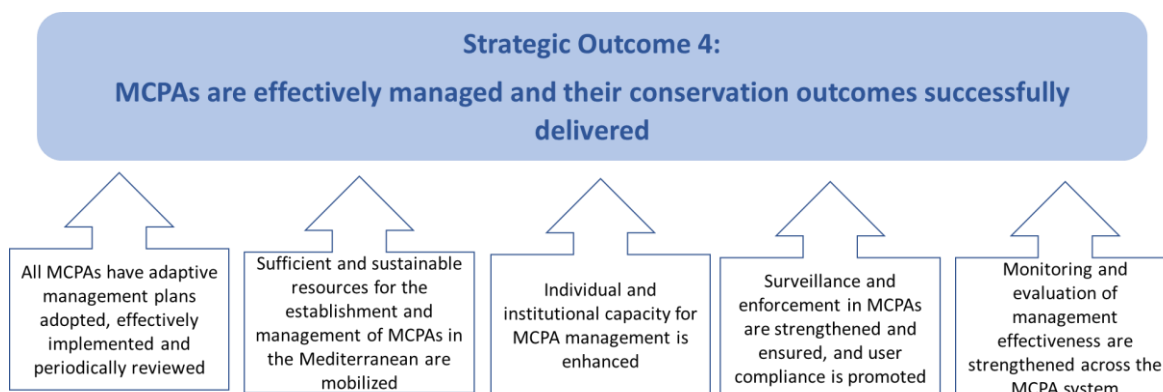
target. It is further essential that this increase in coverage coincides with a more balanced representation across countries, sub-regions and depths and includes areas beyond national jurisdiction. In addition, and in keeping with regional and sub-regional targets, there is a need to enhance the protection 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.

Pillar 3: OECMs



In addition to expanding MCPA coverage, OECMs will play an increasingly important role in progressing the region towards its post-2020 target. As a relatively new concept for the region, creating awareness on OECMs, providing guidance for applying screening tools and assessments against criteria, and supporting their subsequent reporting to the relevant databases will be key elements under this pillar. Effective inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement, and documenting and sharing experiences, will be critical for the success of this outcome. Since the responsibility for OECMs will generally fall under other sectors, marine spatial planning processes will be an important avenue to help prioritize and promote the identification and recognition of OECMs and to enhance their biodiversity conservation measures. This strategy focuses on the identification, recognition and reporting of OECMs only, and not their subsequent management and monitoring, which are likely to fall under other sectors' mandates.

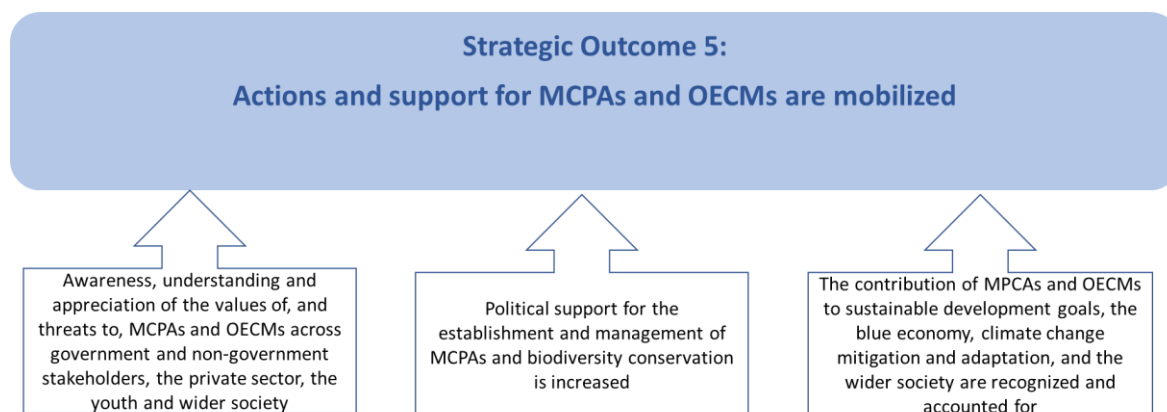
Pillar 4: MCPA Management Effectiveness



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.

Pillar 5: Government and stakeholder action and support



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.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation

The implementation of this strategy should be a co-operative process and as such places the effective participation and collaboration of local, national, sub-regional, and regional stakeholders, encompassing inter-governmental agencies, local communities, civil society, private sector, research/academic community, MCPA networks, and relevant Regional and International Organizations at its core for successful implementation. Contracting Parties will be responsible for the delivery of relevant indicative actions at the national and local levels and creating the enabling conditions for fostering the effective collaboration and active participation of national and local stakeholders and other sectors. SPA/RAC will undertake a central role in co-ordinating and facilitating the delivery of the strategic outcomes through technical, logistical and financial support to the Contracting Parties and fostering regional collaboration between Contracting Parties, and Regional and International Organizations. Regional and International Organizations will also play a supportive role in delivering the outcomes of this strategy through sharing best practices, building capacity, co-financing activities and advising on new tools and approaches.

Financing

Additional and substantial financing will be necessary to support the implementation of national and regional actions identified under this strategy. This will be achieved through the identification and implementation of innovative and diversified financing mechanisms across Contracting Parties and the region, and through the support of Regional and International Organizations and donors.

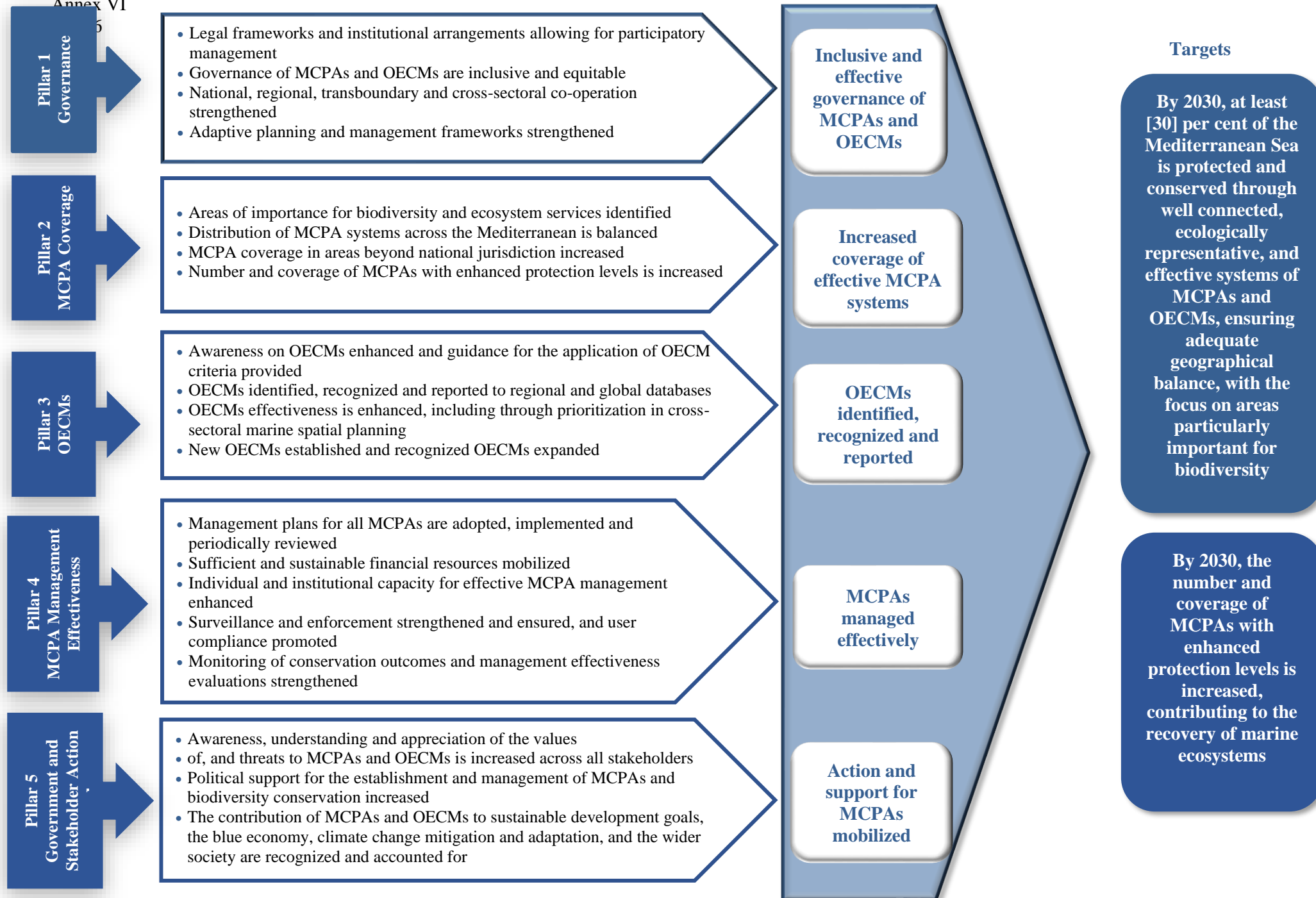
Monitoring and evaluation

The timeframe for the implementation of this strategy is 2021-2030. A full review of the strategy should occur at its mid-point (2026) and at the end of its timeframe (2030). Once adopted, a detailed monitoring and evaluation framework, with associated indicators and targets will be developed. As a living document, progress towards output and outcome indicators and targets should be periodically reviewed and the strategy and its actions revised as required.

A schematic representation of the strategy is provided on the following page.

OUTPUTS

OUTCOMES



Acronyms

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
AGEM	Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas s in the Mediterranean
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCH	Cetacean Critical Habitat
COP	Conference of Parties
CP	Contracting Party
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area
EcAp	Ecosystem Approach
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
FRA	Fisheries Reserve Area
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
IBA	Important Bird Area
IMAP	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related Assessment Criteria
IMMA	Important Marine Mammal Area
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MAPAMED	Database on marine protected areas in the Mediterranean
MedPAN	Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean
MAP CU	Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinating Unit
MCPA	Marine and Coastal Protected Areas
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NbS	Nature-based Solution
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NIS	Non-indigenous Species
OECM	Other effective area-based conservation measures
PA	Protected Area
PR	Public Relations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPA	Specially Protected Area
SPA/BD	Specially protected areas and biological diversity
SPAMI	Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance
SPA/RAC	Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre
PSSA	Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WD	World Database

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I. Introduction

I.1. Background

1. The Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) in the Mediterranean was adopted in 1995 under the Barcelona Convention, to provide a regional framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity in the Mediterranean. Since its adoption a number of strategies, programmes, action plans and roadmaps have been developed to help the Contracting Parties meet their obligations under the Protocol. In 2016, at COP 16, a Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed Marine Protected Areas to achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean was adopted, and in 2019, a final evaluation of this roadmap was made, where findings and priority actions for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) post-2020 were presented at COP 21. In response to this, and noting the shortcomings of the region in meeting global 2020 targets for MCPAs, the geographical imbalance, the strong bias regarding the type of ecosystems protected, and the weak management and enforcement, Contracting Parties requested the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP)-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, through its Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), to elaborate an ambitious and transformational post-2020 strategy that would further advance and strengthen the network of MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean, and that is in line with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and other regional and global processes (Decision IG.24/6). Central to the transformative approach will be the incorporation and integration of recognized OECMs as a means to achieve the ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework relevant targets.

I.2. Strategy Development

2. This strategy was developed under the leadership of the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre, the guidance of its Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM), and in consultation with the Contracting Parties SPA/BD Focal Points and Regional and International Organizations active in the Mediterranean over a period of 5 months.
3. A draft strategic framework (strategic pillars, outcomes and outputs), developed in consultation with SPA/RAC and the AGEM members, was presented in a 2-day remote workshop with 51 participants representing National, Regional and International Organizations, as well as Focal Points, individual experts and representatives from academic institutions. During this 2-day workshop the framework was finalized, and a number of key actions identified for each output. Actions were identified at two levels: Contracting Parties level and Regional and International Organization level. Workshop outputs were incorporated into the strategy with participants provided a further opportunity for review.
4. The revised strategy was then presented to the second meeting of AGEM, then to the SPA/BD Focal Points in a remote consultation workshop where comments were incorporated.
5. A second draft Post-2020 Strategy was presented at the Fifteenth Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points in June 2021, and subsequently revised.
6. This strategy intends to be further submitted to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points (Teleconference, 10, 13-15 and 17 September 2021) and eventually to COP 22 (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021) for consideration.

I.3. Context

7. The Mediterranean Sea is the world largest semi-enclosed sea. It is considered a biodiversity hotspot, representing just 0.3% of the global ocean volume while hosting 4 to 18 % of identified global marine species¹. In addition to its biodiversity value, the Mediterranean has significant historical, cultural and socio-economic value. The Mediterranean comprises 20% of the global marine product despite representing only 1% of all global oceans², is among the world's leading tourism destination³ and encompasses three major maritime crossings. In addition, fisheries and aquaculture, another very important sector in the Mediterranean's blue economy, is thought to provide direct and indirect employment for at least one million people⁴.
8. As a semi-enclosed sea, the Mediterranean is more susceptible to human impacts than more open waters and is one of the world's biomes that shows strong negative responses to land use and climate change pressures⁵. The Mediterranean Sea is already being impacted by climate change at rates exceeding global averages, with more rapid warming during all seasons and a trend towards drier conditions⁶. The Adriatic, Aegean, Levantine and north-east Ionian Seas in particular are amongst the areas currently most impacted by climate change⁷.
9. Approximately 80% of marine pollution comes from land-based sources, mainly agriculture, industry, and municipal waste⁸. Marine litter, largely comprising macro and microplastics, is considered one of the main sources of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. Commercial fishing however has also been recognized as a significant source of litter, particularly discarded fishing gear, such as nets, and fish stock waste⁹. As a major shipping hub, underwater noise and accidental discharges from oil spills and other hazardous substances are also sources of pollution in the region. The high shipping traffic in the Sea presents a further hazard to many marine mammals and the risk of collision between ships and marine mammals is high¹⁰.
10. The Mediterranean is among the most overfished seas in the world¹¹ with bottom trawling and gill nets extensively used in the region. Bottom trawling is the main pressure facing coralligenous assemblages and accidental bycatch is having a profound impact on a number of species, such as marine turtles and seabirds. Non-indigenous and invasive species (NIS) are also increasingly present in the Mediterranean Sea, with a total of more than 1,199 non-indigenous marine species recorded, of which more than 107 are invasive¹². The main introduction of non-indigenous species to the Mediterranean, excluding natural migration or in response to climate change impacts, are largely from the shipping industry through ballast water and hull biofouling.
11. MCPAs are widely considered to be one of the key tools to preserving and restoring biodiversity and regular functioning of marine ecosystems¹³. A healthy and functioning marine ecosystem is essential to

¹ Bianchi, C. and Morri, C. 2000. Marine Biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea: Situation, Problems and Prospects for Future Research. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 40 (5): 367-376. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0025-326X\(00\)00027-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0025-326X(00)00027-8).

² Randone et al. 2017. Reviving the economy of the Mediterranean Sea: Actions for a Sustainable Future. WWF Marine Initiative, Rome, Italy

³ UNWTO 2015. *Mediterranean trends*. 2015 edition

⁴ UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu 2020. *State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean*. Nairobi

⁵ Newbold, T., Oppenheimer, P., Etard, A. et al. 2020. Tropical and Mediterranean biodiversity is disproportionately sensitive to land-use and climate change. *Natural Ecology and Evolution*, 4: 1630–1638. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-01303-0>

⁶ UNEP/MAP and Plan Bleu 2020. *State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean*. Nairobi

⁷ MedECC 2020. *Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future*. First Mediterranean Assessment Report [Cramer, W., Guiot, J., Marini, K. (eds.)] Union for the Mediterranean, Plan Bleu, UNEP/MAP, Marseille, France, 600pp, in press

⁸ Hilderling, A., Keessen, A.M. & van Rijswijk, F.M.W. 2009. Tackling pollution of the Mediterranean Sea from land-based sources by an integrated ecosystem approach and the use of the combined international and European legal regimes. *Utrecht Law Review*, 5(1), 80.

⁹ UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA. 2015. *Action Plan for the conservation of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea*. Dark Habitats Action Plan. Ed. RAC/SPA, Tunis

¹⁰ IUCN 2012. *Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles of the Mediterranean and Black Seas*. Gland, Switzerland and Malaga, Spain: IUCN

¹¹ FAO. 2020. *The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries 2020*. General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. Rome

¹² UNEP/MAP, 2020, *Status of NIS in the Mediterranean and Roadmap for the Elaboration of Baseline at National and Regional Levels*. Integrated Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on IMAP Implementation (CORMONs), Videoconference, 1-3 December 2020. UNEP/MED WG.482/Inf.6. 8 p

¹³ Claudet, J., Loiseau, C., Sostres, M. & Zupan, M. 2020. Underprotected Marine Protected Areas in a Global Biodiversity Hotspot. *One Earth* 2, 380–384

provide food security, jobs, climate regulation and human wellbeing, and therefore for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The important role MCPAs play in helping Contracting Parties to meet national, regional and global commitments is well recognized. Mediterranean countries propose the enlargement of the marine protected area network, setting up ecological corridors to prevent genetic isolation and to allow for species migration, while making it more representative of the Mediterranean Sea ecoregions, particularly extending to the Southern and Eastern coasts. Incorporating Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), in line with the CBD criteria, such as protected cultural areas, and military zones and expanding into the open seas through Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs of GFCM) and candidate areas in Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME of FAO), Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs of IMO) while favouring their setting within Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs listed in the CBD repository), are also proposed.

I.4. The value of MCPAs and OECMs

12. Biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are considered two of the most significant threats to the global economy over the next decade¹⁴. Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are defined as “*actions that protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits*”¹⁵. MCPAs and OECMs offer nature-based solutions to support global efforts towards climate change adaptation and mitigation. They preserve marine biodiversity, enable marine ecosystems to act as heat and carbon pumps, strengthen their resilience to global warming and help to combat acidification. *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in particular, are an important carbon sink and buffer against sea acidification and MCPAs play a very important role in protecting this vulnerable habitat. MCPAs can also protect important coastal habitats by acting as natural barriers to the impacts of climatic hazards through ensuring the effective functioning of the land-sea interface, and by being nature-based solutions for mitigating extreme events, thereby reducing coastal erosion and flood regulation.
13. MCPAs and OECMs also play a critical role in sustainable blue economic growth by restoring and enhancing the value of the Mediterranean’s natural capital on which many sectors depend. Strategically designed MCPAs have shown to increase fish yield via spillover of larvae and adults¹⁶. It is thought that if 30% of the Mediterranean is effectively conserved, the biomass of predatory and large pelagic fish species will show a noticeable increase¹⁷. In addition, MCPAs with high levels of enforcement, among other attributes, have demonstrated healthier fish stocks in their buffer zones, and as a result the incomes of fishers were higher¹⁸. Well-managed MCPAs and OECMs that maintain healthy biodiversity and ecosystems are also an important driver of tourism demand - another significant industry in the region.

I.5. Current status of MCPAs and OECMs in the region

14. There are currently 1,126 MCPAs in the Mediterranean Sea covering 209 303 km² (8.3%), including only 0.06% of strictly protected areas. There are no OECMs 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. Figure 1 clearly shows a large disparity in MCPA coverage between countries, with the majority of MCPAs occurring in the western Mediterranean Sea and 90.05% occurring in EU waters¹⁹. In addition to 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

¹⁴ World Economic Forum 2021. Global risk report 2021 16th edition

¹⁵ WCC-2016-Res-069-EN. Defining Nature-based Solutions. IUCN, World Conservation Congress Hawaii

¹⁶ Cabral et al. 2020. A global network of marine protected areas for food. PNAS 117 (45).

¹⁷ WWF 2021. 30 BY 30: Scenarios to recover biodiversity and rebuild fish stocks in the Mediterranean

¹⁸ Di Franco et al. 2016. Five key attributes can increase marine protected areas performance for small-scale fisheries management. Scientific Reports, volume 6, Article number: 38135

¹⁹ <https://medpan.org/marine-protected-areas/mediterranean-mpas/>

is coverage expected to increase, but it is essential that coverage is more equitably represented across Contracting Parties and the different ecosystems.

MPAs, potential OECMs and other sites of conservation interest in the Mediterranean

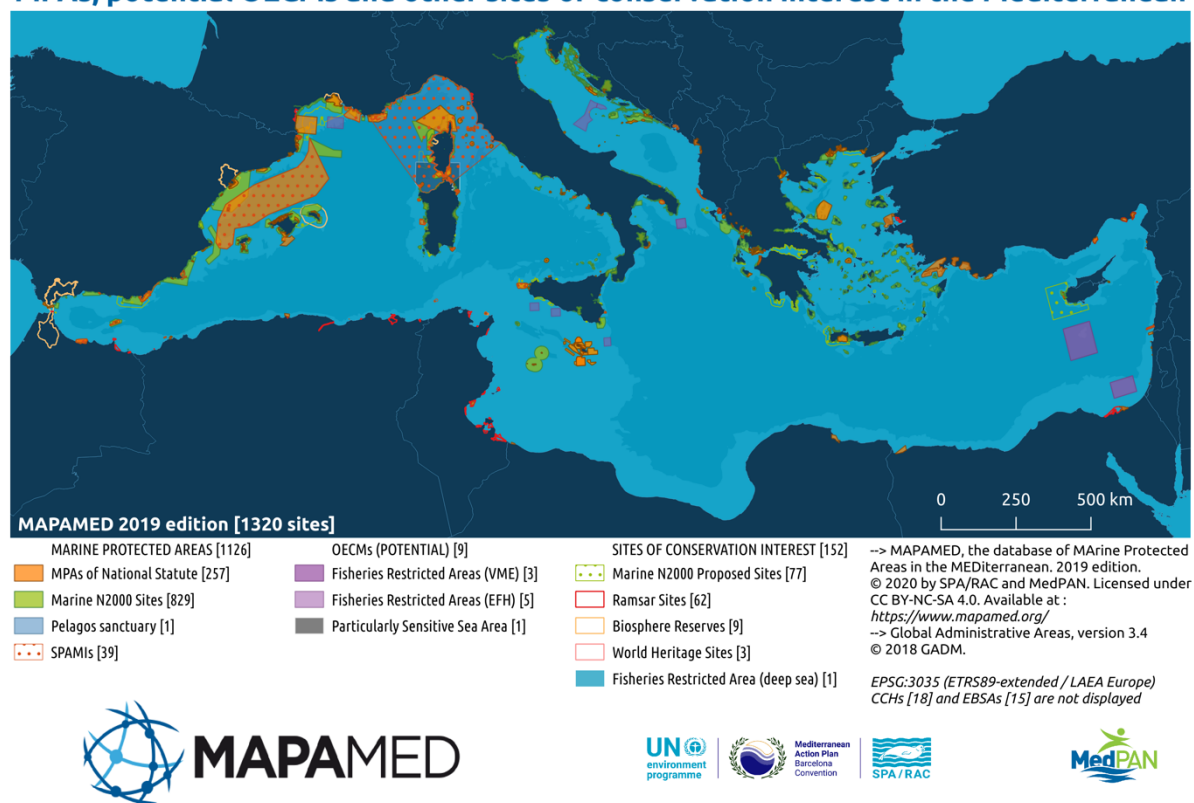


Figure 1. Map showing MPA coverage in the Mediterranean²⁰

- In addition to coverage, previous and current targets (Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework) for protected areas stipulate that systems of protected areas (PAs) and OECMs must be effectively managed. Several surveys have been conducted over the years²¹ to assess management effectiveness and to identify barriers and limiting factors for the establishment and management of MCPAs, however few MCPAs and systems of MCPAs complete regular evaluations of management effectiveness. The surveys and country assessments revealed a number of cross-cutting barriers to the effective management of MCPAs (table 1). Ensuring political will and support for the establishment and management of MCPAs and OECMs is one of the most crucial elements to overcome the remaining barriers in order to meet 2030 targets for MCPAs and OECMs in the region.

²⁰ MAPAMED, the database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, 2019 edition. © 2020 by SPA/RAC and MedPAN. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

²¹ A survey launched by SPA/RAC and MedPAN, in 2015, for the 2016 MPA status report (MedPAN and SPA/RAC, 2019). The 2016 status of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean. By Meola B. and Webster C. Ed SPA/RAC & MedPAN. Tunis 222 pages.; a survey launched by MedPAN, in 2019, about MPA management and enforcement; and a survey launched by SPA/RAC, MedPAN and WWF, in 2020, to prioritise the limiting factors hindering the achievement of MPA objectives, in the framework of the 2020 MPA Forum process and its related post-2020 MPA roadmap development.

Table 1: Main Barriers to effective M CPA management

- **Lack of Political Will and Support**

For MPA establishment and management

- **Insufficient Financing**

Not enough, not sustainable, heavy reliance on external funds

- **Inadequate Human Resources**

Not enough MPA staff, where staff are occurring, many do not have the necessary technical skills for MPA management

- **Lack of Sectoral and Stakeholder Involvement, Cooperation and Support**

Poor coherence and harmonization of policies plans and actions

- **Insufficient Knowledge**

Knowledge gaps for effective decision-making

- **Lack of Management Plans**

- **Inadequate Surveillance and Enforcement**

Unclear procedures in legislation, lack of by-laws, poor cooperation with enforcement agencies, irregular routine patrols, unclear mandates and responsibilities for enforcement

- **Insufficient Monitoring and Evaluation**

Insufficient and inadequate monitoring of management effectiveness, insufficient biodiversity and biological monitoring

1.6. Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures

16. As mentioned previously, the Mediterranean Sea does not currently have any formally recognized OECMs. OECMs will be an essential tool to help Contracting Parties achieve their global and also regional targets for biodiversity conservation under the Barcelona Convention, and to recognize the effort of other sectors in mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into sustainable development. As an increasingly important tool to help Contracting Parties meet these targets and, given the lack of experience across the region in recognizing OECMs in the marine and coastal environment, it is necessary to provide clear guidance and to harmonize the recognition of OECMs across the Contracting Parties. As such, OECMs have been identified as a key strategic pillar (chapter 2) to help Contracting Parties achieve relevant targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework in the Mediterranean Sea. OECMs are defined as:-

A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values. (CBD 2018).

17. OECMs provide a means for more formal recognition of important areas for biodiversity beyond MCPAs. A key difference between MCPAs and OECMs is that protected areas have a primary conservation objective, whereas OECMs deliver effective conservation of biodiversity regardless of

their objectives and their types of governance²². In 2018, at their 14th Conference, Contracting Parties to the CBD agreed on a definition, guiding principles, common characteristics, and criteria for the identification of OECMs (Decision 14/8). The CBD decision however highlights that the criteria should be applied “*in a flexible way and on a case-by-case basis*”.

18. The adoption of the definition and the criteria creates opportunities for Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to begin to recognize and report on OECMs, which, as mentioned, will likely be necessary if the region is to meet the ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Further, the process of identifying OECMs also provides opportunities to bring together the Fisheries and Conservation sectors, both at national and regional levels, with the possibility of fishery-related OECMs helping to achieve both General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and Barcelona Convention objectives. Although no marine OECMs are currently reported for the region, terrestrial OECMs have been recognized and reported in countries within and outside the Mediterranean region. This presents an opportunity for Contracting Parties to learn from the experience gained by these countries in applying the CBD criteria. The following provides a non-exhaustive list of the types of areas that could be potential OECMs in the Mediterranean:

- Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs)²³, in particular those that host critical species, and those that are permanently restricted so as to enhance the long-term conservation outcomes
- Marine or coastal military closure areas, as some are often no go-areas and can have good conservation outcomes²⁴
- Archaeological and cultural heritage²⁵ (sunken ships, archaeological shipwrecks, underwater ancient remains, cities, etc.)
- Areas with oil and gas restrictions
- Areas managed for navigation purposes such as IMO Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas.

II. Strategy

19. Protected areas are considered the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation. Marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) are being increasingly recognized as one of the most effective management and conservation tools to help mitigate the global trends in marine and coastal ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss. In addition to providing biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits, MCPAs and OECMs are also critical tools in helping countries meet their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through the protection and restoration of natural capital. Despite this, their immense socio-economic and cultural values, as well as their role as nature-based solutions, are often poorly understood and underappreciated.
20. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the most important international legal instrument addressing protected areas. The [zero draft of the] Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) [CBD, August 2020] represents a new era for biodiversity conservation, with new goals and targets [currently being developed by the Contracting Parties to the CBD]. The target for protected areas (target 2) [currently under review] has set out an ambitious target to: “*By 2030, protect and conserve through well connected and effective systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures at least 30 per cent of the planet with the focus on areas particularly important for biodiversity*”. It is recognized that each individual country will have its own specific MCPA and OECM coverage targets, however in keeping with these global targets for protected areas, the post-2020 target

²² IUCN/WCPA 2020. Potential contribution of “Other-effective area-based conservation measures” to achieving Aichi Target 11 in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. IUCN Gland, Switzerland and Malaga, Spain. IUCN 20 pp

²³ A Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) is a geographically defined area in which some specific fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted in order to improve the exploitation patterns and conservation of specific stocks as well as of habitats and deep-sea ecosystems

²⁴ Note: some areas may be for weapon testing and could have impacts on ecosystems.

²⁵ Note: the location of these areas may be sensitive to share publicly due to risks of looting and illegal trade.

for Mediterranean MCPAs and OECMs across the region as a whole [which could be amended as the draft Post-2020 GBF progresses] has been identified as:

By 2030, at least [30] per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective²⁶ systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, with the focus on areas particularly important for biodiversity.

21. In addition, and in keeping with the regional marine conservation community recommendations (2%-The 2016 Forum of MPAs in the Mediterranean, Tangier declaration) and sub-regional targets (10%-EU Biodiversity Strategy) for enhanced levels of protection, a further regional sub-target has been identified:

By 2030, the number and coverage of marine and coastal protected areas with enhanced protection levels is increased, contributing to the recovery of marine ecosystems.

22. In order to achieve these ambitious targets, Contracting Parties and the region require transformative actions over the next decade, with an increasing role for OECMs. This Strategy therefore has identified five main strategic pillars necessary to achieve the post-2020 target for Mediterranean MCPAs and OECMs. These are: Governance, MCPA network expansion, OECMs, MCPA management effectiveness, and Government and stakeholder action and support. All of the pillars are inextricably linked and there are several cross-cutting outputs. For example, sustainable financing and enhanced cooperation between sectors, MCPA networks, stakeholders, countries and the region, are necessary for all five pillars. This strategy is aligned with a number of relevant international, regional and sub-regional strategies and policies (Appendix 1).
23. Under each pillar a clear strategic outcome, with corresponding outputs and proposed key actions at both Contracting Party, and Regional and International Organization levels, has been identified. Recognizing that countries are at different stages with regard to the establishment and management of their MCPAs, the proposed actions under each output therefore are meant to be indicative and not prescriptive.
24. This chapter presents each strategic pillar separately and provides a brief rationale and overview of the main focus for each of these five pillars.

II.1 Strategic Pillar 1: MCPA and OECM Governance

**Strategic Outcome 1:
Governance arrangements for MCPAs and OECMs are inclusive and effective in delivering conservation and livelihood outcomes**

25. Strengthening governance and co-operation among actors for both the establishment and management of MCPAs is essential if 2030 targets are to be achieved. Effective governance establishes the overarching framework for MCPA establishment and the management to follow. Governance²⁷ is multi-faceted and considers not only which body or institution has authority over MCPAs, but also who makes decisions and how these decisions are made. MCPA-relevant legislation is relatively strong across the region however a number of gaps have been identified. These gaps largely centre around procedures for enforcement of both national legislation and local by-laws, overlapping or conflicting policies across

²⁶ Effective systems are understood to comprise the four components identified by the IUCN Green List standards: Good governance; sound design and planning, management effectiveness and achieving conservation outcomes. <https://iucngreenlist.org/>

²⁷ Governance is “the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say” (Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2013)

the different sectors for MCPA governance within and outside MCPAs, and poor legislation for promoting/supporting participatory and delegated management of MCPAs. Several countries also report a need for institutional reform, especially to avoid overlap in cases where different authorities are responsible for the country's protected areas. There is a need therefore to ensure that appropriate legislation and institutional frameworks are in place for the establishment and management of MCPAs (output 1.1) and that MCPAs are integrated into countries' SDGs and NDCs, and that, as per best practices, governance models include equitable and effective participation of stakeholders (output 1.2).

26. It is recognized that MCPAs cannot be managed in isolation and stakeholders must be involved at all levels. There is a need therefore for MCPAs to be integrated, recognized and engaged in the governance of surrounding territories, and that inter-sectoral co-operation, policy and action harmonization is improved (output 1.3). Lastly, recognizing that decisions can change in response to changes in political, social and environmental conditions, it is important to ensure that there is flexibility in planning and management frameworks to adapt to these changes (output 1.4).

Table 2: Key outputs and proposed actions for outcome 1

Output 1.1: Legal frameworks and institutional arrangements of MCPAs and OECMs allow for opportunities for participatory management	
Contracting Parties	
A.1.1.1	Assess current relevant legislation and institutional arrangements to allow for participatory management and identify any gaps or areas which need revision, paying particular attention to national and local regulations and participatory mechanisms
A.1.1.2	Develop appropriate governance frameworks to integrate MCPA strategy goals and policies into other sectors' policies
A.1.1.3	Establish, as appropriate, a readily accessible process to identify, hear and resolve complaints, disputes or grievances related to the governance or management of MCPAs and OECMs, or tackle this through already existing processes such as appeals and tribunals.
A.1.1.4	Develop national MCPA and OECM system strategies, standalone or as part of relevant national strategies, with clearly identified monitoring frameworks for system expansion and management
Regional/International Organizations	
A.1.1.5	Provide tailored assistance to Contracting Parties for strengthening appropriate legal and institutional frameworks as required
A.1.1.6	Support the development and implementation of national MCPA and OECM system strategies, including when relevant, transboundary and sub-regional MCPA and OECM systems and action plans
Output 1.2: Governance arrangements for MCPAs and OECMs are inclusive and equitable	
Contracting Parties	
A.1.2.1	Adapt governance structures and mechanisms of MCPAs to provide civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders with appropriate opportunities to participate in management planning, decision-making processes and actions
A.1.2.2	Where appropriate, create a national commission for MCPAs and marine conservation comprising government and non-government stakeholders including the private sector
A.1.2.3	Enhance governance arrangements to advance gender equity in and around MCPAs and OECMs
Regional/International Organizations	
A.1.2.4	Provide case studies and guidelines for best practices on co-management and participatory governance arrangements and support their replication and scaling-up
A.1.2.5	Promote the prerequisite for co-management as an eligibility criterion for regional and national MCPA financing institutions
A.1.2.6	Enhance opportunities for building capacity of national and local stakeholders in co-management
Output 1.3: National, regional, transboundary and cross sectoral co-operation for the establishment and management of MCPAs and OECMs are strengthened	
Contracting Parties	
A.1.3.1	Establish cross-sectoral platforms to improve integrated marine spatial planning and co-ordination and to enhance dialogue between MCPAs and other sectors

A.1.3.2 Enhance transboundary co-operation for the identification of new priority areas of conservation and for the establishment and management of MCPAs
Regional/International Organizations
A.1.3.3 Facilitate regional and transboundary co-operation
A.1.3.4 Support sharing of experiences and best practices between Mediterranean countries
A.1.3.5 Strengthen and support existing national, regional and sub-regional networks of MCPA managers and other stakeholders
A.1.3.6 Facilitate exchanges among similar types of MCPAs such as the previous SPA/RAC's SPAMI Twinning Programme, and build capacity for MCPAs and OECMs' establishment and management across countries
Output 1.4: Adaptive planning and management frameworks of MCPAs and OECMs that anticipate, learn from and respond to changes in decision-making are strengthened
Contracting Parties
A.1.4.1 Ensure flexible and responsive institutional frameworks for governance, management and finance
A.1.4.2 Raise awareness and promote the use of MCPAs/OECMs as reference sites for IMAP within the Barcelona Convention Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process
A.1.4.3 Ensure appropriate multi-stakeholder feedback mechanisms for the integration of scientifically sound monitoring results and any changes in political, social and environmental conditions into MCPA management plans and actions
Regional/International Organizations
A.1.4.4 Follow progress of the BBNJ negotiations and ensure integration of its implementation in the Mediterranean context
A.1.4.5 Support Contracting Parties' disaster and emergency responses to natural hazards, human-made disasters and future pandemics by sharing experiences, human and other resources across the MCPA and OECM systems as necessary

II.2. Strategic Pillar 2: MCPA Network Expansion

Strategic Outcome 2:

MCPA coverage increased through the expansion of soundly-designed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of MCPAs

27. MCPA coverage in the Mediterranean Sea currently stands at 8.3%²⁸. This figure alone however does not illustrate the uneven distribution of MCPAs across the region. There are disproportionately more MCPAs occurring in the western Mediterranean sub-region compared to other sub-regions, significantly more MCPAs occurring in northern Mediterranean countries' waters compared to southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, and the majority of MCPAs occur in shallow waters close to the coast. It is evident that in order for Contracting Parties to advance towards the [30]% target, a more strategic approach to establishing MCPAs is needed, so that there is more equal representation of MCPAs across the Mediterranean Sea sub-regions and ecosystems.
28. A first step in applying a more strategic approach to the establishment of MCPAs is to ensure that areas important for biodiversity and ecosystem services and their planned level of protection are clearly identified across the region (output 2.1), and that Contracting Parties with particularly low MCPA coverage, such as the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, are supported to establish soundly designed MCPAs across these priority areas (output 2.2). MCPAs are also poorly represented in areas beyond national jurisdiction and, particularly as threats continue to emerge in these open waters, there is an urgent need for the establishment of soundly designed MCPAs in these areas (output 2.3). Building

²⁸ MAPAMED, the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Database. 2019 Edition. © 2020 by SPA/RAC and MedPAN. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

upon the text for UNCLOS²⁹, an international legally binding instrument under the Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, of which measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, are currently being elaborated³⁰. This initiative is expected to provide a more explicit framework for establishing and governing MPAs in areas beyond Exclusive Economic Zones in the future and this strategy will ensure synergy with the elaborated text once finalized.

29. MCPAs with enhanced protection levels, including no-take or no-fishing zones, are also severely underrepresented across the Mediterranean MCPA system, with only 0.06% of the Mediterranean considered strictly protected. In keeping with regional and sub-regional expert recommendations and commitments therefore, output 2.4 identifies a need for increasing the percentage of MCPAs with enhanced protection levels, including no-take zones and other enhanced protection measures, across the Mediterranean Sea.

Table 3: Key outputs and proposed actions for outcome 2

Output 2.1: Areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services are identified
Contracting Parties
A.2.1.1 Adequately support the identification of areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services and share information through regional platforms in particular for under-represented ecosystems such as offshore and deep seas
A.2.1.2 Based on a gap analysis, identify and prioritize areas requiring conservation along with their expected level of protection
A.2.1.3 Collaborate with neighbouring countries to promote joint co-ordinated research in ABNJs and to identify potential MCPAs based on harmonized monitoring protocols
A.2.1.4 Develop plan for establishing an ecologically coherent national MCPA system with clear priorities, levels of protection and time-frames, based on priority natural, cultural and landscape values and associated ecosystem services
Regional/International Organizations
A.2.1.5 Provide scientific, logistical and financial support for the identification of important areas based on countries' needs
A.2.1.6 Support the creation of stakeholder meeting/dialogue platforms for proposed MCPAs to obtain appropriate levels of engagement and buy-in from the beginning
Output 2.2: Distribution of MCPA systems across the Mediterranean Sea is balanced
Contracting Parties
A.2.2.1 Contracting Parties with advanced MCPA systems to share experiences and lessons learnt in system design
A.2.2.2 Design and establish a well-connected, soundly designed and effective MCPA system covering all key biodiversity areas, coastal and offshore, based on the best available knowledge and ensuring appropriate engagement of local communities and stakeholders
Regional/International Organizations
A.2.2.3 Provide priority technical, financial and awareness raising support to southern and eastern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to design and establish well-connected, soundly designed and effective MCPA systems
Output 2.3: MCPA coverage in areas beyond national jurisdiction is increased
Contracting Parties
A.2.3.1 Strengthen co-operation between neighbouring States in areas where marine boundaries have not yet been agreed upon, making use of area-based management tools, as relevant
Regional/International Organizations
A.2.3.2 Encourage states to collaborate in establishing transboundary MCPAs to ensure representation of ecosystems beyond their national jurisdiction, as guided by the BBNJ process
A.2.3.3 Assist and support Contracting Parties in the identification of potential transboundary MCPAs and create a platform for initiating and facilitating dialogue
Output 2.4: The number and coverage of MCPAs with enhanced protection levels is increased

²⁹ The reference made to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) should not be interpreted as a change in the legal position of States not party to UNCLOS, nor could it be interpreted as imposing any legally binding obligation on non-party States to UNCLOS.

³⁰ UN General Assembly Resolution 69/292 and Resolution 72/249

Contracting Parties
A.2.4.1 Establish new MCPAs with enhanced protection levels and review existing MCPAs leading to enhanced protection levels, facilitate their rezoning, and increase protection measures, [in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030]
A.2.4.2 Document experiences and impacts of MCPAs with enhanced protection levels, including the no-take zones
Regional/International Organizations
A.2.4.3 Provide scientific, logistical and financial support, build capacity and enhance experience sharing for the creation of new MCPAs with enhanced protection levels, including no-take zones
A.2.4.4 Provide tools for monitoring, documenting and communicating impacts of MCPAs with enhanced protection levels

II.3. Strategic Pillar 3: Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures

Strategic Outcome 3:
Marine and coastal OECMs in the Mediterranean are identified, recognized and reported towards post-2020 global and regional targets

30. OECMs will be a critical tool to help Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention meet Post-2020 GBF targets. The Barcelona Convention has an important role to play in facilitating the identification, recognition and reporting of OECMs, but their management and monitoring would generally fall under other sectors and within the mandate of other regional organizations. Therefore, under this strategic pillar, outputs and activities centre around supporting Contracting Parties to identify, recognize and report on OECMs in areas within and beyond their jurisdiction, but not their subsequent management or monitoring.
31. Although no marine OECMs are currently recognized in the region, there has been some experience among Contracting Parties in the recognition of terrestrial OECMs. These present an opportunity for learning and for adapting these to the marine context. Activities under this pillar will therefore focus on supporting Contracting Parties in understanding OECM criteria and ensuring appropriate and harmonized approaches to the application and testing of sites against these criteria (output 3.1). Further guidance and support will be provided for potential and candidate OECM recognition and reporting to relevant regional and global databases (output 3.2).
32. OECMs provide an opportunity to recognize efforts and contributions by other sectors to biodiversity conservation. Some OECMs may host important biodiversity and ecosystem services that would benefit from additional area-based measures to increase their biodiversity outcomes, and should therefore be prioritized in cross-sectoral marine spatial planning³¹ (MSP) (output 3.3) so that new OECMs can be established (output 3.4). This is highly relevant to achieving Target 1 of the current GBF but also to achieving the various commitments and initiatives on MSP under the Barcelona Convention.

Table 4: Key outputs and proposed actions for outcome 3

Output 3.1: Awareness in Contracting Parties and stakeholders on OECMs enhanced and guidance for the application of OECM criteria provided
Contracting Parties
A.3.1.1 Raise awareness on OECMs across multi-sectoral stakeholders and promote understanding of the CBD criteria ³² for their identification

³¹ MSP is a “public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process” (Ehler & Douvère, 2009)

³² CBD COP Decision 14/8

A.3.1.2 Where appropriate, establish multi-stakeholder platforms and use relevant screening tools to identify potential OECMs
Regional/International Organizations
A.3.1.3 Increase awareness on OECM identification, recognition and reporting across Contracting Parties and key sectors
A.3.1.4 Increase communication and awareness about OECMs and their role in contributing to biodiversity conservation and SDGs across Contracting Parties and sectors
A.3.1.5 Facilitate and initiate inter-sectoral and regional dialogue and sharing experiences around OECMs
A.3.1.6 Develop sectoral and other guidance, such as tools and templates, for applying OECM criteria and establishing processes for identifying OECMs
A.3.1.7 Provide training on the identification of OECMs and the application of OECM criteria
Output 3.2: OECMs identified, recognized and reported to regional and global databases by Contracting Parties and regional organizations
Contracting Parties
A.3.2.1 Engage with the relevant sectors and governance authorities of the potential OECMs identified to encourage and establish processes for a full assessment of the potential OECMs against the CBD criteria
A.3.2.2 Enable assessments of the potential OECMs (identified in output 3.1) against the CBD criteria through a multi-stakeholder process and following relevant guidelines, and recognize OECMs that meet the CBD criteria, ensuring consent by the governing authorities of the areas
A.3.2.3 Report OECMs to MAPAMED and WD-OECM databases and ensure regular update of OECM data as new OECMs are identified and provide relevant data for OECM status reports, as part of regular reporting.
Regional/International Organizations
A.3.2.4 Support countries in their efforts to identify, recognize and report OECMs
A.3.2.5 Document and analyze Mediterranean countries' experiences and challenges of applying OECM criteria to marine and coastal areas
A.3.2.6 Relevant regional organizations to assess potential OECMs under their mandate, recognize the areas meeting the CBD criteria as OECMs, and accordingly report them to MAPAMED and WD-OECM
Output 3.3: Effectiveness of identified OECMs is enhanced, including through prioritization in cross-sectoral marine spatial planning
Contracting Parties
A.3.3.1 Initiate and/or advance Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)
A.3.3.2 Prioritize OECMs (alongside MCPAs) in the MSP process and encourage cross-sectoral dialogue to enhance their biodiversity outcomes
A.3.3.3 Encourage OECM governance authorities to include specific biodiversity conservation objectives in OECM management, where needed
Regional/International Organizations
A.3.3.4 Support Contracting Parties in their MSP processes
A.3.3.5 Encourage and assist Contracting Parties to identify potential threats to OECMs from other sectors
A.3.3.6 Facilitate dialogue with other sectors to increase the protection level of identified OECMs
A.3.3.7 Develop best practices and share lessons learnt/success stories on integrating OECMs and MCPAs in marine spatial planning exercises
Output 3.4: New OECMs are established and recognized OECMs expanded
Contracting Parties
A.3.4.1 Engage with the relevant sectors, stakeholders and governance authorities of potential OECMs that partially met the full assessment, to enhance governance, management and/or monitoring of the areas in order to fully meet the OECM criteria and be recognized as OECMs
A.3.4.2 Engage with the relevant sectors and stakeholders to establish new OECMs or expand areas of existing OECMs ensuring compliance with the CBD criteria
Regional/International Organizations
A.3.4.3 Develop guidance for future OECM designation, recognition and reporting
A.3.4.4 Undertake analyses and provide recommendations to Contracting Parties and relevant regional organizations on needs for additional new OECMs

II.4. Strategic Pillar 4: MCPA Management Effectiveness

Strategic Outcome 4:

MCPAs are effectively managed and their conservation outcomes successfully delivered

33. Post-2020 GBF targets go beyond simply increasing coverage of MCPAs and OECMs and require that protected area systems must also be effectively managed. There are a number of MCPAs in the Mediterranean that currently lack management plans, and many of those that have plans are not implementing them effectively, if at all. Management plans should be developed in participation with stakeholders and are a crucial tool in providing clear guidance to both MCPA managers and users alike. There is a clear need therefore to support the development of practical and cost-effective management plans for MCPAs in the region (output 4.1). Although an essential first step, a standalone plan will not increase the management effectiveness of MCPAs, and these plans, once developed, need to be implemented in an effective and cost-efficient manner. Lack of sufficient and sustainable finances and lack of institutional and staff capacity have been identified across all countries as the main barriers for effective management plan implementation. If MCPAs are to be established and managed effectively in the long-term, sufficient and sustainable finances are also required (output 4.2). Many Mediterranean MCPAs in addition have insufficient staff numbers and capacity. Once MCPAs have staff in place, it is essential that there are targeted and regular capacity development and training programmes available. Thus, capacity and training needs specific to MCPAs should be reviewed and regional capacity development programmes supported (output 4.3).
34. A central activity to reduce threats and enhance MCPA management effectiveness is ensuring the effective enforcement of MCPA rules and regulations and promoting compliance among MCPA users (output 4.4.). Strengthening enforcement across MCPAs will require appropriate infrastructure and equipment, and agreed and clearly defined roles, responsibilities and powers identified for all agencies responsible for enforcing MCPA regulations. Since enforcement requires the support of external enforcement agencies, ensuring they are fully aware of MCPA regulations and that guidelines for enforcement procedures are provided will be essential actions under this output.
35. Lastly, routine and regular patrolling and monitoring of illegal activities, ecosystem and biodiversity health and socio-economic benefits is critical to support adaptive management efforts and in turn the effective management of MCPAs. Supporting and harmonizing biodiversity, socio-economic, and threat monitoring methods will help fill the biodiversity and threat status information gaps that exist and provide the information necessary to carry out management effectiveness evaluations (output 4.5). Ensuring there is adequate handling, management, analysis and interpretation of data, and that data is fed back into management, will be key to strengthening the effective management of MCPAs and MCPA systems across the region.

Table 5: Key outputs and proposed actions for outcome 4

Output 4.1: All MCPAs have adaptive management plans adopted, effectively implemented and periodically reviewed	
Contracting Parties	
A.4.1.1	Identify MCPAs where management plans are lacking and ensure that all MCPAs develop integrated conservation and management measures that include MCPA conservation challenges beyond their border, climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, a zoning plan, and site-specific measures for all marine activities
A.4.1.2	Ensure there is a mandatory requirement for all MCPAs to have a management plan that is developed in participation with stakeholders (local and national actors, users and other sectors and ministries)
A.4.1.3	Periodically review, revise and adapt MCPA management plans and actions and ensure plans are effectively implemented, monitored and enforced
Regional/International Organizations	
A.4.1.4	Develop guidelines for participatory management planning tools and key components to be included in management plans and support their development by providing small grants and building capacity for management planning
A.4.1.5	Strengthen networks of MCPA managers at national, regional and sub-regional scales to facilitate experience and knowledge sharing regarding management plan development and adoption
A.4.1.6	Encourage national and regional financing tools to include the existence of a management plan for access to funding
Output 4.2: Sufficient and sustainable resources for the establishment and management of MCPAs in the Mediterranean are mobilized	
Contracting Parties	
A.4.2.1	Build capacity for, and develop sustainable financing plans for MCPAs and national systems of MCPAs, and where appropriate develop business plans
A.4.2.2	Diversify income generation opportunities by MCPAs beyond tourism to ensure greater resilience to the financial impacts of future pandemics, human-made risks or natural hazards
A.4.2.3	Establish national environmental/MCPA financing mechanisms (including trust funds) to increase the ear-marking of finances for MCPAs from national trust funds
A.4.2.4	Establish offset mechanisms ³³ for MCPAs establishment including MCPA conservation
A.4.2.5	Include values of MCPAs into natural capital accounting and increase MCPA investments funding as part of National Recovery Plans, if applicable
Regional/International Organizations	
A.4.2.6	Support and promote the regional MedFund and national MCPA trust funds to donors
A.4.2.7	Identify opportunities for regional and national MCPA financing mechanisms (e.g. blue carbon, blue bonds, etc.) including in case of emergencies
A.4.2.8	Provide guidance to Contracting Parties and build capacity in MCPA managers for diversified and sustainable financing mechanisms
Output 4.3: Individual and institutional capacity for MCPA management is enhanced	
Contracting Parties	
A.4.3.1	Carry out capacity development needs' assessments and undertake capacity development programmes for MCPA staff, management authorities and MCPA-related stakeholders
A.4.3.2	Support the establishment and long-term functioning of national networks of MCPA managers to enhance the sharing of experiences
A.4.3.3	Strengthen stakeholder involvement and engagement particularly in conflict prevention and resolution
Regional/International Organizations	
A.4.3.4	Support capacity development programmes in meeting MCPA staff training needs across the region and support and strengthen joint training programmes from different regional organizations to target MCPA managers and other relevant stakeholders
A.4.3.5	Support and prioritize national, sub-regional and regional MCPA manager networking, capacity building initiatives, and experience sharing and exchange programmes, in particular between north and south Mediterranean countries

³³ offsets are measurable conservation outcomes designed to compensate for adverse and unavoidable impacts of projects, in addition to prevention and mitigation measures already implemented (<https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/biodiversity-offsets>)

Output 4.4: Surveillance and enforcement in MCPAs are strengthened and ensured, and user compliance is promoted
Contracting Parties

A.4.4.1 Identify and pilot innovative and cost-effective approaches for surveillance control and enforcement including by engaging with the private sector, academics and universities etc., to identify potential emerging technologies (for example drones or VMS for tracking movement of boats)

A.4.4.2 Identify and meet staff, infrastructure and equipment needs for effective surveillance and enforcement

A.4.4.3 Strengthen collaboration and where appropriate establish enforcement inter-agency committees to build awareness and capacity in enforcing MCPA rules and regulations, as well as to jointly develop enforcement procedures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities

A.4.4.4 Raise awareness to improve knowledge of environmental legislation and MCPA regulations at local and national levels, and engage resource users in the decision-making process to increase compliance

Regional/International Organizations

A.4.4.5 Strengthen and support regional co-operation, experience and data sharing between Contracting Parties and other key actors (e.g. networks of environmental prosecutors) for effective surveillance and enforcement

A.4.4.6 Provide technical and financial support to Contracting Parties for the effective surveillance and enforcement of MCPA rules and regulations

A.4.4.7 Provide information on new, emerging and cost-effective technologies and their applications for surveillance

Output 4.5: Monitoring of conservation outcomes and evaluation of management effectiveness are strengthened across the MCPA system
Contracting Parties

A.4.5.1 Establish monitoring programmes and define a set of performance measures and thresholds to evaluate conservation outcomes of MCPAs and systems of MCPAs, including levels of conservation of MCPA values, level and intensity of threats, and achievement of management goals and objectives

A.4.5.2 Adopt standards and undertake regular evaluations of MCPA management effectiveness

A.4.5.3 Ensure data collection methods are environmentally friendly, sustainable, feasible in terms of cost and capacities, reliable, and adaptive

A.4.5.4 Build partnerships with academic institutions, NGOs, and citizen science initiatives, to meeting needs for both monitoring and management effectiveness evaluation and seek out opportunities for increasing stakeholder participation in these activities

A.4.5.5 Establish national information systems and databases and ensure data sharing and data viability

A.4.5.6 Identify potential emerging technologies that could be piloted and used to assist MCPAs with monitoring

Regional/International Organizations

A.4.5.7 Support MCPA contributions to IMAP within the Barcelona Convention Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process

A.4.5.8 Identify priority information gaps for the region as a whole and promote them widely across academic institutions

A.4.5.9 Identify regional and harmonized biodiversity, socio-economic and threat indicators for MCPAs and establish a data repository

A.4.5.10 Strengthen and support regional co-operation for monitoring and data sharing between Contracting Parties and other MCPA-related stakeholders and institutions

A.4.5.11 Provide information on emerging technologies and their applications for monitoring to Contracting Parties

A.4.5.12 Provide guidance on, and implement a regional approach for evaluating management effectiveness of MCPAs and OECMs

A.4.5.13 Facilitate capacity building across Contracting Parties for the implementation of MCPA management effectiveness assessments, including on the socio-economic aspects

II.5. Strategic Pillar 5: Government and Stakeholder Action and Support

Strategic Outcome 5:

Actions and support for MCPAs and OECMs are mobilized

36. The central aim of this outcome is to initiate change in behaviour across the different sectors, to move away from business-as-usual and to have MCPAs and OECMs valued as essential elements to achieve national agendas. Output 5.1 therefore aims to increase understanding and appreciation of the values of, and threats to, MCPAs and OECMs across government and non-government stakeholders, the private sector, the youth and wider society. Key actions under this output will centre around the development of a communication and awareness strategy targeting the different groups through a variety of mechanisms, including workshops, publications and other awareness creating activities. The socio-economic values of MCPAs and the impact of poorly managed MCPAs on these socio-economic values should be a major focus of these activities in addition to their biodiversity values and threats. It is important that harmonization of communication and awareness messages occur across the region, and that positive, non-technical language and wording are used to convey key MCPA-related terms and concepts to local actors and other key stakeholders. In addition to communicating messages and information, encouraging the greater involvement of stakeholders in management activities can also promote more positive attitudes towards MCPAs, which is an important driver for initiating change and enhancing support.
37. A major barrier to achieving the 2020 target for MCPAs has been the lack of political will to establish MCPAs and to support MCPA management. Without political will and support, Contracting Parties will not be able to achieve the new Post-2020 GBF targets for MCPAs and OECMs. Critical to securing government support will be advancing their recognition of the value and importance of MCPAs and OECMs in contributing to achieving national and international commitments as well as their contribution to the national economy. There is a need therefore to establishing strong communication channels between MCPA management and governments and to reinforce networking and co-operation between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at local, national and Mediterranean levels. Further, ensuring governments are familiar with their MCPAs, the biodiversity they protect, their economic importance, and their importance as nature-based solutions for meeting SDGs and national climate change agendas, will be a key focus of actions under this output (output 5.2).
38. Stakeholders often perceive MCPAs to be in direct competition with their own needs. Ensuring that the wider society recognizes the functional and supportive role that MCPAs and OECMs play in helping to achieve other non-biodiversity conservation agendas, and their socio-economic value, especially through opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, will be critical to mobilizing action and support across the different sectors and wider society (output 5.3). There is a need therefore to strengthen cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration in order to recognize MCPAs and OECMs values and their contribution to achieving countries' SDGs and NDCs. Studies and success stories demonstrating the tangible benefits of MCPAs and OECMs to these sectors need to be shared, and the benefits of MCPAs and OECMs to livelihoods and ecosystem service protection must be enhanced, understood and valued in the wider society.

Table 6: Key outputs and proposed actions for outcome 5

Output 5.1: Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the values of, and threats to, MCPAs and OECMs across government and non-government stakeholders, the private sector, the youth and wider society
Contracting Parties
A.5.1.1 Develop a national communication and awareness strategy tailored to each intended audience on MCPAs/OECMs focusing on the ecological, cultural and socio-economic values of MCPAs and the impact of poorly managed MCPAs/OECMs to these values
A 5.1.2 Establish a national online repository accessible to stakeholders and the general public for accessing information and updates on marine ecosystems and MCPAs/OECMs
A.5.1.3 Seek out opportunities for increasing exposure of MCPAs/OECMs and the marine environment on national media outlets (TV, radio, newspapers, social media)
A.5.1.4 Provide concrete examples of successful MCPAs, in particular no-take zones, providing ecological and socio-economic benefits to local actors and how they contribute to the national economy and GDP, as well as towards other national policies and agendas
A.5.1.5 Promote further research on the financial impacts of unhealthy marine ecosystems on the national economy, socio-economic benefits and other sectors and compare with costs for MCPA and OECM protection
A.5.1.6 Engage in in-country consultations with local and national stakeholders about the environmental and socio-economic effects of MCPAs with enhanced protection levels
Regional/International Organizations
A.5.1.7 Promote a regional approach to communication and environmental education regarding the marine environment and MCPAs/OECMs ensuring harmonization of wording and messages
A.5.1.8 Gather and share success stories of MCPAs providing social, cultural and economic benefits to local stakeholders and the private sector and the negative financial impacts of a degraded marine environment
A.5.1.9 Develop and disseminate regional communication and awareness publication materials for use across Contracting Parties
Output 5.2: Political support for the establishment and management of MCPAs and biodiversity conservation is increased
Contracting Parties
A.5.2.1 Increase awareness and appreciation of the wider reaching values, in particular climate adaptation and socio-economic contribution of MCPAs, across the different ministries
A.5.2.2 Provide concrete examples of the contribution of the countries MCPA network to wider society and the national economy
A.5.2.3 Reinforce knowledge sharing and networking links between government and MCPAs
A.5.2.4 Ensure key decision makers are familiar with national MCPA networks, by supporting familiarization trips and develop opportunities for interactions between government and field actors and recognition of efforts towards MCPAs
A.5.2.5 Establish and encourage Public-Private Partnerships
Regional/International Organizations
A.5.2.6 Facilitate higher level government decision-makers field trips to successful MCPAs across the region, in particular for Contracting Parties with low MCPA representation or where political support is significantly lacking
A.5.2.7 Strengthen information and capacity for benefit assessments of MCPA's ecosystem services
Output 5.3: The contribution of MPCAs and OECMs to sustainable development goals, the blue economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the wider society are recognized and accounted for
Contracting Parties
A.5.3.1 Enhance knowledge of the role of MCPAs and promote the inclusion of MCPA initiatives in NDCs and other climate-related programmes and funding
A.5.3.2 Initiate pilot projects that demonstrate sustainable blue economy growth in line with MCPA/OECM objectives
A.5.3.3 Encourage further studies on the values of MCPAs/OECMs to the sustainable blue economy, local livelihood and climate change mitigation and adaptation and other SDGs, and widely disseminate findings to the wider society using various media
A.5.3.4 Promote the use of MCPAs as sentinel sites for climate change monitoring

Regional/International Organizations
A.5.3.6 Provide cases studies and best practices for scaling up benefits of MCPAs to wider society
A.5.3.7 Enhance collaboration between regional organizations supporting MCPAs and OECMs and other platforms on SDGs, blue economy, and climate change mitigation and adaptation
A.5.3.8 Provide guidance on using MCPAs and OECMs as nature-based solutions to contribute to climate change and SDGs building on success stories, case studies and exchanges, at a regional level

III. Strategy implementation

III.1. Implementation

39. This Post-2020 Strategy should be used as a tool to harmonize efforts to meet 2030 targets for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean and to promote joint activities by Contracting Parties, SPA/RAC, and other Regional and International Organizations and programmes. As such, the implementation of this strategy should be a co-operative process and its successful implementation will depend on the effective participation and collaboration of local, national, sub-regional, and regional stakeholders, encompassing inter-governmental agencies, local communities, civil society, the private sector, the research/academic community, MPA networks, and relevant Regional and International Organizations.
40. Under the direction of the UNEP/MAP and the supervision of the MAP co-ordinating Unit (MAP CU), SPA/RAC, supported by the AGEM, will undertake a central role in co-ordinating and facilitating the delivery of the strategic outcomes. The main role of SPA/RAC will be to provide technical assistance and support to the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties, to foster collaboration, strengthen synergies and joint efforts between the different implementing partners, as well as other MAP regional activity centres, to contribute in mobilizing resources for strategy implementation, to support and strengthen existing relevant regional initiatives, and to ensure that awareness of the strategy is raised, and progress towards outcomes are regularly communicated among all key actors engaged with MCPA- and OECM-related activities in the Mediterranean.
41. The overall success of this strategy, however, relies on the political will of Contracting Parties for its implementation. Contracting Parties will be responsible for the delivery of indicative actions at the national and local levels and for creating the enabling conditions for fostering the effective collaboration and active participation of national and local stakeholders, including socio-economic sectors. Key socio-economic sectors and industries include spatial planning, fisheries, tourism, culture, shipping, oil and gas, trade and industry, agriculture, education, research, social affairs, economic, local small, medium and large enterprises and multinationals. Implementation of strategic actions will also require transboundary cooperation between the Contracting Parties.
42. Although shouldering the main responsibilities for strategy implementation, Contracting Parties and SPA/RAC will depend on crucial partnerships and technical, logistical and financial support from National, Regional and International Organizations that are active in marine biodiversity conservation and MCPAs/OECMs in the Mediterranean. The efforts of these organizations to share best practices, build capacity, co-finance activities and advise on new tools and approaches will be critical. In addition, and although not directly responsible for implementation, the inclusive, equitable and meaningful co-operation, collaboration and participation of local communities, civil society, the general public and other sectors, an overarching principle central to all five strategic pillars, will be essential to successfully achieving the targets of this Post-2020 Strategy.
43. Lastly, in order to recognize and report marine OECMs as a relatively new concept for the region, effective inter-sectoral dialogue and co-operation will be essential to successfully achieve this particular outcome. Therefore, engagement with stakeholders involved in countries' MSP processes, as well as the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, will be important.

III.2. Financing

44. Mobilizing sufficient and sustainable finances for the establishment and management of MCPAs and OECMs at both national and regional levels is a key output under this strategy. Additional and substantial financing will be required however to implement the national and regional actions identified under this strategy. The development of this strategy provides an opportunity for enhanced regional co-operation, the harmonization of activities and the avoidance of duplication of effort across organizations, thereby increasing overall cost-efficiency through the co-financing and joint implementation of overlapping interests from Regional and International Organizations. The strategy also provides clearly identified actions for implementation, aspects of which can be packaged and presented to potential donors targeting specific and individual mandates by each donor agency. The adoption of this strategy by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention will further create opportunities for funding by demonstrating Contracting Parties' commitments to the outputs identified, making it more attractive to potential regional and international trust funds and donors such as The MedFund, EU, and the GEF, for example. Countries and MPA actors are encouraged to identify and use innovative, diversified and sustainable financing mechanisms, that suit best their context, at national and local levels.

III.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

45. Adaptive management is an important guiding principle for this strategy. It is essential that as the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets evolve, and as knowledge and circumstances change, that the plan is responsive and is adapted accordingly. Conducting periodic reviews that allow for learning and adaption of actions as necessary will be important to ensure 2030 targets for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean are met. The Directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) could serve as a tool recognized by the countries to report and measure the progress towards the targets of the post-2020 strategy.
46. An external mid-term evaluation of the strategy should be conducted in 2026. The mid-term evaluation should focus on evaluating progress against indicators and on providing recommendations for any necessary changes required to increase the likelihood of achieving the strategy's post-2020 targets. Mid-term review findings and proposed amendments should be presented at the 2027 subsequent COP meeting of the Barcelona Convention, and an effective communication and awareness strategy should be developed to disseminate findings among Contracting Parties and National, Regional and International Organization and stakeholders. A final external evaluation should also be conducted towards the end of the strategy's timeframe, focusing on lessons learnt and any barriers or enabling factors that either prevented or enhanced the achievement of the proposed outcomes. The final evaluation (to be conducted in 2030) and its recommendations should assist with the development, in 2031, of a new strategy for the post-2030 decade (2031-2040) and findings should be presented at the 2031 COP meeting and distributed to the wider stakeholder community.
47. To ensure the necessary time to identify practical indicators, a detailed monitoring framework with indicators and targets will be developed in line with the global biodiversity one, under the guidance of the Contracting Parties and with the support of AGEM, once the strategy is adopted at the next COP meeting. This detailed monitoring framework will be then submitted for adoption at the following COP meeting.

Appendix 1: Linkages with other global, regional and sub-regional strategies

Other strategies	Post-2020 Strategy MCPAs and OECMs
International	
Zero draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework	Target 1& 2, 7, 10, 11 <i>All outcomes</i>
Sustainable Development Goals	SDG 14.1 <i>outcome 1</i> & 5; SDG 14.2 <i>outcome 4</i> ; SDG 14.3 <i>outcome 1</i> & 5; SDG 14.4 <i>outcome 2,3 & 4</i> ; SDG 14.5 <i>outcome 2</i> ; SDG 14.7 <i>outcome 4</i> ; SDG 14.c <i>output 2.</i> ; SDG 12.2 <i>all outcomes</i> ; SDG 12.8 <i>output 5.1</i> ; SDG 13.1 <i>outcome 1 & 5</i>
Convention of the Law of the Sea	Output 2.3
Regional	
UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021	SO 3.1 <i>all outcomes</i> ; IKO 1.1.4 <i>output 5.2</i> ; SO 1.6 <i>output 5.1</i> ; SO 2.6 <i>output 1.3</i> ; IKO 3.2.2/3 <i>output 3.1&3.2</i> ; IKO 3.3.2./3 <i>output 4.4</i> ; SO 3.4 <i>output 4.5</i> ; SO 3.5 <i>output 4.3</i> ; SO 3.5 <i>output 4.3</i> ; SO 3.6 <i>outcome 1&5</i> ; SO 3.7 <i>output 2.3</i> ; IKO 5.1.2 <i>outcome 1</i> ; IKO 6.4.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.5 <i>output 5.3</i>
Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (SAP BIO) in the Mediterranean Region.	<i>All outcomes</i>
Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025.	SD 1.1, 6.1, 6.3 <i>output 1.3</i> ; SD 2.1, 2.3, 5.3-5.3 <i>outcome 5</i> ; SD 4.1 <i>output 5.3</i> ; SD 4.4 <i>output 1.1</i> ; SD 6.2 <i>output 1.2</i> ; SD 6.5 <i>output 4.3</i>
Ecosystem Approach and agreed roadmap for its implementation	EO1 <i>outcome 2,3 & 4</i> ; EO2,4-11 <i>outcome 1&5</i>
Common Regional Framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management	<i>Outcomes 1 and 5</i>
Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related Assessment Criteria	<i>Output 1.4</i>
Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas	SD 1.5 <i>output 4.1</i> ; SD 2.2 <i>output 1.3</i> ; SD 4.1 <i>output 5.1</i> ; SD 4.3 <i>outcome 5</i>
Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in the Mediterranean ⁴ .	OO 3.1 <i>output 1.3, 5.3</i>
UfM post 2020 Environment Agenda	Thematic axis 3; <i>All outcomes</i>
GFCM strategy towards sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea	Target 1 and 4; <i>all outcomes</i>
Post-2020 MPA roadmap (jointly led by SPA/RAC, MedPAN and WWF)	<i>Outcomes 1,2,4,5</i>

Sub-regional	
EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive	<i>Outcome 2</i>
EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030	<i>Obj. 2.1 outcome 2; Obj. 2.2.6/9/10 output 1.3, outcome 5</i>
EUSAIR	<i>S.O. 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.2 All outcomes</i>
Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean	<i>Priority 2.4; Goal 3 -All outcomes</i>
The EU Habitats Directive	<i>All outcomes</i>
The EU Birds Directive	<i>All outcomes</i>
EU Green Deal	<i>Preserving and protecting biodiversity policy and actions; All outcomes</i>