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Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)  
Boulevard du leader Yasser Arafat  
B.P.337 - 1080 Tunis Cedex - Tunisia  
E-mail: [car-asp@rac-spa.org](mailto:car-asp@rac-spa.org)

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**Fourth Meeting of National Correspondents of the Strategic  
Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological  
Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO)  
(Rabat, 1st July 2013)**

**Introduction**

At their Seventeenth Ordinary Meeting (Paris, France; 8-10 February 2012), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, invited the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) to update the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO) with the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Ecosystem approach.

After having convened the Third Meeting of National Correspondents of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean region (SAP BIO)/MedMPAnet Project Mid-term Workshop in Malaga, Spain (4-6 July 2012), RAC/SPA convened the Fourth Meeting of National Correspondents of SAP BIO. The meeting was organized on 1st July 2013, at the Hotel Golden Tulip Farah Rabat (Place Sidi Makhoul, 10000 Rabat, Morocco), with the support of the Moroccan authorities.

**Agenda item 1 – Opening of the Meeting**

The meeting was opened on Monday, 1st July 2013, at 9.00 a.m., by the representatives of the host country, the Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and the RAC/SPA. All the SAP BIO National Correspondents of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention had been invited to attend the meeting or to designate their representative(s). Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned had also been invited to designate their representatives to the meeting as observers.

**Agenda item 2 – Rules of Procedure**

The internal rules adopted for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and its related Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Appendix XI) apply *mutatis mutandis* to the present meeting.

### **Agenda item 3 – Election of Officers**

The participants unanimously elected the following officers:

Chairperson: Dr Leonardo TUNESI  
Vice-chairpersons: Mr Robert TURK  
Mr Mehmet GOLGE  
Rapporteur: Dr Moustafa FOUDA

### **Agenda item 4 - Adoption of the Agenda and organization of work**

The meeting discussed and adopted the provisional annotated agenda proposed by the Secretariat, circulating as document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.381/1 and annotated in document UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.381/2, as well as the schedule proposed at the end of the latter document. The working languages of the meeting were English and French. Simultaneous interpretation was available for all the plenary sessions.

### **Agenda item 5 - Evaluation of the implementation since 2004 of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean region (SAP BIO)**

The Secretariat presented the working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.381/3, *SAP BIO implementation: The first decade and way forward*, and the information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.381/Inf.3, *Report on the evaluation and future orientations of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO)*.

The Secretariat presented the methodology used to evaluate the important, complex and diverse activities undertaken in the region by the Parties and organizations during the past decade. Activities targeted the preservation of Mediterranean biodiversity, with SAP BIO providing strategic direction.

The Secretariat provided detailed explanations of the complex process used to evaluate SAP BIO action: analysis of hundreds of official reports from different countries, other contributions from countries, and some 200 RAC/SPA documents and more than 20 000 scientific and technical documents on Mediterranean marine biodiversity produced during the period under review. On the basis of this documentation, the Secretariat took stock of the progress achieved during the implementation of SAP BIO at regional and national levels, since its adoption in December 2003.

The Secretariat showed the way by which implementation fact sheets provided by countries were analysed, allowing the definition of implementation profiles by each country with regard to the main activity axes and specific actions. Graphic displays showed clearly the similarities or differences among different countries in the implementation approach undertaken along the last decade.

Also the statistical analysis of the progression in the scientific background supporting conservation in the region was explained to show how the trend evolves with the

years. A conspicuous interest in Mediterranean marine biodiversity has taken place in parallel with the SPA/BD Protocol and SAP BIO implementation.

Furthermore the quantification of the scientific and technical work of RAC/SPA was illustrated, showing that the main fields of action fitted properly with the activity attended by the Parties from the RAC.

The National Correspondents of SAP BIO were then invited to comment on the evaluation process and on other information provided.

The participants acknowledged the effort done to analyse that complex information and reach conclusions. Upon the comments of a delegate regarding the doubt that SAP BIO and the SPA/BD Protocol were the reason for an exponential boosting of Parties involvement in increasing the scientific knowledge of Mediterranean biodiversity the secretariat clarified that a cause–effect explanation had not been affirmed. However, a mutual benefit among this policy implementation framework and the necessary background knowledge necessary for its functioning was showed by the parallel changes in scientific base increase trends along last two decades showed by the analysis. A related explanation was that scientific funding priorities set by national ministries to research bodies are linked frequently to needs identified by those ministries.

With regard to the open seas conservation issues rise as a priority in the region, showed by the analysis results, the European Union delegate recalled that more emphasis must be placed by UNEP MAP in the collaboration with CBD on these topics. He recalled the pending need of a joint workshop on Mediterranean EBSAs with the CBD Secretariat, demanded by the SPA/BD Parties and also offered by the CBD during the MPAs forum held in Antalya, Turkey last November 2012.

The representative of France emphasized that the holding of the Mediterranean workshop is essential and must be made in advance of the next CBD SBSTTA. The goal would be the full recognition of Mediterranean areas fulfilling the EBSA criteria validated by the Parties in Hyderabad, and their inclusion in the global repository maintained by the Secretariat of the CBD and forwarded to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Secretariat confirmed its willing to undertake the common workshop, and recalled that further to the technical contacts taken place among officers of both Conventions, it was the UNEP/MAP Secretariat which was managing the arrangements with the CBD Secretariat for that purpose.

#### **Agenda item 6 - Discussion on the updating of SAP BIO in line with the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 -2020, taking account of the Ecosystem approach**

The Secretariat gave some information to the meeting about the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and about the Ecosystem approach process being implemented within the MAP system, in relation with the SAP BIO needs for updating on those topics.

The Secretariat briefed the meeting on the main priorities envisaged for the future updated SAP BIO, and their links to the achievement of the Aichi Priority Targets of the CBD Strategic Plan and the ecosystem approach.

Upon kind request by the Secretariat of the UNEP Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the participants were briefed by its representative on to a similar updating on the activity fields of this convention to keep in line with the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 -2020.

The representative from the CMS Secretariat highlighted the new draft Strategic Plan on Migratory Species, a new tool for all stakeholders contributing to the conservation of migratory species, which is envisaged to be fully integrated with the Aichi targets for biodiversity. The instrument was of significant relevance to the Barcelona Convention covering many transboundary cetacean, shark, turtle and seabird populations. It was timely that the SAP BIO and Strategic Plan on Migratory Species were being drafted at the same time, creating a good opportunity for strengthened synergies between the instruments. Participants were encouraged to provide input to the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, the deadline being 30 September 2013.

The participants were invited to share their expert opinions and experience at national and regional levels to further identify the key needs for Mediterranean biodiversity conservation and management up to 2020 and beyond. In that way, details and several modifications would be brought to the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.381/3, *SAP BIO implementation: The first decade and way forward*; in order to present it to the Eleventh Meeting of Focal Points for SPAs (2-5 July 2013) as document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/5, *SAP BIO implementation: The first decade and way forward (as reviewed by the National Correspondents of SAP BIO)*.

Following discussions, several modifications were introduced to the table of priorities within document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.381/3, to fully accommodate to the Parties representatives willing.

The delegate of France remarked that it must be ensured that the follow up in the implementation of SAP BIO is consistent with the results of the ongoing discussion on the governance of the Convention and on the issue of funding mechanisms, Her delegation recalled the rule passed at the last COP of the Barcelona Convention stating that no project can be engaged while an effective financing is not ensured yet. It was important to add a sentence to that effect in the revised draft.

She also agreed that in the current context - including the budgetary context - it is important to set priorities: it is essential to strengthen synergies with other relevant organizations in the region or thematic considered (eg : CITES is responsible for the issue of the impact of international trade in endangered species) as the SAP BIO can not carry all the actions defined itself. However, France believes that the socio-economic and "sustainable development" component aspects should be handled within the SAP BIO because it is an important part of the Barcelona Convention.

The delegate of Greece noted that SAP BIO is an official document that should be based on and make reference to officially agreed and adopted decisions taken by the

contracting parties of international and regional conventions. In that sense, she questioned the use of the draft MPAs roadmap as a reference for updating SAP BIO, before it being officially adopted by the Contracting Parties to Barcelona Convention.

Following exchanges on the above topics, a new chapter related to modalities of implementation was added to the document "*SAP BIO implementation: The first decade and way forward*" to produce the revised version to be presented to the SPA focal points meeting as working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/5, before its further transmission to the MAP Focal Points meeting to be held in Athens on September 2013.

#### **Agenda item 7 - Other matters**

No other question relating to the subjects of the meeting was raised by participants or the Secretariat.

#### **Agenda item 8 - Conclusions of the meeting**

It was decided that the draft report of the meeting would be submitted later to participants for adoption, and that the agreed revision of the document on evaluation of SAP BIO implementation would be presented to the SPA Focal Points meeting for consideration before being transferred to the MAP Focal Points

#### **Agenda item 9 - Closure of the meeting**

The chairperson adjourned the meeting on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, at 6.00 p.m.









## **Annex I**

### **List of Participants**

## List of Participants / *Liste des Participants*

### REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

### REPRÉSENTANTS DES PARTIES CONTRACTANTES

#### **Croatia / Croatie**

##### **Ms. Ivna VUKŠIĆ**

Senior Expert Advisor  
Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection,  
Nature Protection Directorate  
Republike Austrije 14, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia  
Tel: 385 1 4866 186  
Fax: 385 1 4866 100  
E-mail: ivna.vuksic@mzoip.hr

##### **Ms Petra RODIC**

Head of Department  
State Institute for Nature Protection  
Department for Wild and Domesticated Taxa  
and Habitats  
Trg Mazuranica 5, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia  
Tel: 385 1 5502 930  
Fax: 385 1 5502 901  
E-mail: petra.rodic@dzzp.hr

#### **Cyprus / Chypre**

##### **Mrs. Marina ARGYROU**

Senior Fisheries and Marine Research Officer  
Department of Fisheries and Marine Research  
Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and  
Environment  
101 Vithleem Street, 1416 Nicosia, Cyprus  
Tel: 357 22807852  
Fax: 357 22775955  
E-mail: margyrou@dfmr.moa.gov.cy  
Web: www.moa.gov.cy/dfmr

#### **Egypt / Egypte**

##### **Mr. Moustafa Mokhtar Ali FOUDA**

Minister Advisor on Biodiversity  
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency  
Nature Conservation Sector  
30 Misr Helwan Zyrae, Maadi, Cairo  
Egypt  
Tel: 20 225 274700  
Fax: 20 225 274700  
E-mail: foudamos@link.net

##### **Mr Mohamed Said ABDELWARITH**

Environmental Researcher (Marine Specialist)  
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency  
Nature Conservation Sector  
30 Misr Helwan Zyrae, Maadi, Cairo  
Tel: 20 225 487 91  
Fax: 20 225 280 93  
E-mail: sevejan010@yahoo.com;  
sevejan008@yahoo.com

#### **European Union / Union Européenne**

##### **Mr. Juan-Pablo PERTIERRA**

Policy Officer  
DG Environment  
European Union Commission  
Av de Beaulieu 9, 1160 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: 32 296 6443  
Fax: 32 2 297 9697  
E-mail: Juan-Pablo.Pertierra@ec.europa.eu

#### **France / France**

##### **Mrs Lydia MEYER**

Coordinatrice Affaires Internationales et  
Européennes  
Ministère de l'Ecologie, du Développement  
Durable et de l'Energie  
Direction de l'Eau et de la Biodiversité  
Grande Arche de la Défense – 92055  
La Défense Cedex, France  
Te: 33 1 40 81 37 20  
Fax: 33 1 40 81 16 10  
E-mail :lydia.meyer@developpement-  
durable.gouv.fr

#### **Greece / Grèce**

##### **Ms Eleni TRYFON**

Staff member  
Ministry for the Environment, Energy & Climate  
Change, Nature Management Section  
36, Trikalon street, GR 115 26, Athens, Greece  
Tel: 30 210 69 18 202  
Fax: 30 210 69 18 487  
E-mail: e.tryfon@prv.ypeka.gr

**Israel / Israël****Dr. Simon C. Nemtzov**

Coordinator for International Treaties  
Israel Nature and Parks Authority  
3 Am Ve'Olam Street  
Jerusalem 95463 - Israel  
Tel: 972-50-5063118  
Fax: 972-2-5006281  
E-mail: simon@npa.org.il

**Italy / Italie****Dr. Leonardo TUNESI**

Head of Department  
3rd Department CRA15 "Marine Habitats  
and Biodiversity Protection "ISPRA"  
Via Vitaliano Brancati, 60, 00144 Rome  
Italie  
Tel: 39 06 5007 4776  
Tel: 39 334 6243333 → Mobile  
Fax: 39 06 5007 4955  
E-mail: leonardo.tunesi@isprambiente.it

**Libya / Libye****Mr EI Maki AYAD ELAGIL**

Director of Nature Conservation Department  
Environment General Authority (EGA)  
Libya  
Tel: 218 21 4873761  
Tel: 218 92 6508268 → Mobile  
Fax: 218 214872160  
E-mail : makeeagalee@yahoo.com

**Mr. Almokhtar SAIED**

Head of Marine and Wildlife Section  
Environment General Authority (EGA)  
P. O. Box 83618  
Al Gheran  
Tripoli  
State of Libya  
Tel: 218-21-4870266  
Tel: 218914559615 → Mobile  
Fax: 21821-4871590  
E-mail: Mok405@yahoo.com

**Mr Atef SHAMASH**

Secan Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
A-001188 - Tripoli  
Libya  
Tel: 218 21 3403011  
Tel: 218 91 21 03 619 → Mobile  
Fax: 218 21 3402703  
E-mail : a.ShaMash74@gmail.com

**Lebanon / Liban****Mrs Amal ABOU HATAB SULTAN**

Environmental Specialist-Ecosystem  
Management  
Ministry of Environment – Department of  
Ecosystem  
Lazarieh Bldg, 8th Floor, Downtown, Beirut  
Lebanon  
Tel: 961 3 477 960  
Fax: 961 1 976 530  
E-mail: a.sultan@moe.gov.lb;  
Amal1991@hotmail.com

**Monaco / Monaco****Mr. Raphaël SIMONET**

Chef de la Division Patrimoine Naturel  
Direction de l'Environnement  
3 avenue de Fontvieille, 98000  
Principauté de Monaco  
Tel: 377 98 98 19 65  
Fax: 377 92 05 28 91  
E-mail:rsimonet@gouv.mc

**Montenegro / Monténégro****Mrs. Milena BATAKOVIĆ**

Senior Advisor  
Environmental Protection Agency – Department  
for nature protection, monitoring, analyses and  
reporting IV Proleterske no. 19, 81000  
Podgorica  
Montenegro  
Tel : 382 20618256  
Tel: 382 67225504 → mobile  
Fax: [milena.batakovic@epa.org.me](mailto:milena.batakovic@epa.org.me)

**Morocco / Maroc****Ms Sabah TAHARI**

Chef du Service d'Aménagement des Parcs  
et Réserves Naturelles  
Direction de la Lutte contre la Désertification et  
de la Protection de la Nature  
Haut Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et  
à la Lutte contre la Désertification  
3, Rue Harroun Errachid, Agdal, Rabat  
Maroc  
Tel: 212 5 37 67 52 34  
Tel: 212 6 70 62 61 60 □ Mobile  
Fax: 212 5 37 67 26 28  
E-mail : sabah\_tahari@yahoo.fr

**Mr Abdennadi ABARKACH**

Division des Parcs et Réserves Naturelles  
Haut Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et  
à la lutte contre la Désertification  
3, rue Haroun Arrachid, Agdal, Rabat  
Maroc  
Tel: 212 666 29 40 33  
Fax: 212 5 37 67 26 28  
E-mail: abdennadi@yahoo.fr

**Mr Abderraouf BEN MOUSSA**

Pêches Maritimes  
2. bis. Rue Ibn Qassem – Rabat  
Maroc  
Tel: 212 06 35 53 57 89  
Fax: 212 537 68 81 94  
E-mail : benmoussa@mpm.gov.ma

**Mr Mostafa MADBOUHI**

Chef de Service des Sites  
Ministère de l'Energie, des Mine, de l'Eau et de  
l'Environnement  
9. Avenue Al Araar, Section 16, Hay Ryad,  
Rabat  
Maroc  
Tel: 212 6 663 00415  
Fax: 212 6 663 00415  
E-mail : mostamad@yahoo.fr

**Ms Zahra ROCHDI**

Pêches Maritimes  
2. bis. Rue Ibn Qassem – Rabat  
Maroc  
Tel: 212 05 37 68 81 98  
Fax: 212 05 37 68 81 94  
E-mail: rochdi@mpm.gov.ma

**Slovenia/ Slovénie**

**Robert TURK**

Head, Regional Unit Piran  
Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature  
Conservation  
Piran, Trg Etbina Kristana 1,  
6310 Izola, Piran,  
Slovenia  
Fax: 386 5 671 09 05  
Tel: 386 5 671 09 01  
E-mail: robert.turk@zrsvn.si

**Spain / Espagne**

Ms Sagrario ARRIETA ALGARRA  
Head of the Area of Community Affairs  
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment  
PZA San Juan de la Cruz S/N, 28071 Madrid,  
Division for the Protection of the Sea, Spain  
Tel: 34 91 59 75 565  
Fax: 34 91 59 76 902  
E-mail: sarrieta@magrama.es

**Tunisia / Tunisie**

Mme Saba GUELLOUZ  
Chargée des Aires Protégées Marines et  
Côtières  
Agence de Protection et d'Aménagement du  
Littoral (APAL)  
2, rue Mohammed Rachid Ridha, 1002 Tunis-  
Belvédère, Tunisie  
Tel: 216-71 90 64 13  
Tel: 216-99 25 04 97 □ Mobile  
Fax: 216-71 90 84 60  
E-mail: s.guellouz@apal.nat.tn

**Turkey / Turquie**

**Mr Mehmet GOLGE**

Expert  
Survey Inventory Division  
Turkish Ministry of Forestry & Water Affairs  
Sogutozu cad. No: 14/E, 06560 Ankara  
Turkey  
Tel.: 90 312 2075906  
Fax: 90 312 2075959  
E-mail: mgolge@ormansu.gov.tr



**UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES, FUNDS, AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS**  
**PROGRAMMES, FONDS ET ORGANISATIONS CONNEXES DES NATIONS UNIES**

**UNDP – TURKEY / PNUD - TURQUIE**

**Mr Harun GUCLUSOY**

Project Manager  
Environment & Sustainable Development Program  
UNDP Turkey  
Birlik Mah 415 Cad n°11 Çankaya - Ankara  
Turkey  
Tel: 90 312 454 1100  
Fax: 90 312 496 1463  
E-mail: [harun.guclusoy@undp.org](mailto:harun.guclusoy@undp.org)

**UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre**

**Ms Corinne MARTIN**

Programme Officer  
Marine Assessment and Decision Support  
219, Huntington road, Cambridge CB3 0DL  
United Kingdom  
Tel: 44 1223 81 46 88  
E-mail: [Corinne.martin@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:Corinne.martin@unep-wcmc.org)



**REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTAL OR INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**  
**REPRÉSENTANTS D'ORGANIZATIONS GOUVERNEMENTALES OU**  
**INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES**

**ACCOBAMS**

**Mrs. Marie-Christine GRILLO -COMPULSIONE**

Executive Secretary

ACCOBAMS

Jardin de l'UNESCO

Terrasses de Fontvieille, 98000

Monaco

Tel: 377 98 98 80 10/ 4275

Tel: 33 6 98 82 75 44 → Mobile

Fax: 377 98 98 42 08

E-mail: [mcgrillo@accobams.net](mailto:mcgrillo@accobams.net)

**Ms Maylis SALIVAS**

Scientific Officer

Jardin de l'UNESCO

Terrasses de Fontvieille, 98000

Monaco

Tel: 377 98 98 4275

Fax: 377 98 98 42 08

E-mail : [msalivas@accobams.net](mailto:msalivas@accobams.net)

**IUCN-Med / UICN-Med**

**Mr Alain JEUDY DE GRISSAC**

Marine Conservation Programme Manager

IUCN – Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

22. Call Marie Curie (IUCN) Habited-PTA 29590

Campanillas Malaga, Spain

Tel: 34 952 028 430 ext 304

Tel: 34 693 813 972 → Mobile

Fax: 34 952 028 145

E-mail : [alain.jeudy@iucn.org](mailto:alain.jeudy@iucn.org)

**REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**  
**REPRÉSENTANTS D'ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES**

**MedPAN**

**Ms. Purificacio CANALS**

Présidente

MedPAN

48, rue Saint-Suffren, 13006 Marseille

France

Tel: 33 6 45 73 33 83

Fax: 33 4 91 48 77 14

E-mail: [pcanals@tinet.org](mailto:pcanals@tinet.org); [pcanals@tinet.org](mailto:pcanals@tinet.org)

**Ms Marie ROMANI**

Secrétaire Exécutive

MEdPAN

48, rue Saint-Suffren, 13006 Marseille

France

Tel : 33 6 81 75 61 78

Fax : 33 4 91 48 77 14

E-mail: [marie.romani@medpan.org](mailto:marie.romani@medpan.org)

**OCEANA**

**Ms Pilar MARIN**

Mednet Project Coordinator/Marine Scientist

OCEANA

Leganitos, 47, 28013 Madrid

Spain

Tel: 34 911 440 886

Fax: 34 911 440 890

E-mail: [pmarin@oceana.org](mailto:pmarin@oceana.org)

**SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT**

**Regional Activity Centre for Specially  
Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)  
Centre d'Activités Régionales pour les  
Aires Spécialement Protégées  
(CAR/ASP)**

Boulevard du Leader Yasser Arafat  
B.P. 337 - 1080 Tunis Cedex, Tunisia  
Fax: (+216) 71 206 490  
E-mail: [car-asp@rac-spa.org](mailto:car-asp@rac-spa.org)  
Web: [www.rac-spa.org](http://www.rac-spa.org) -  
<http://medmpanet.rac-spa.org/>

**Mr. Abderrahmen GANNOUN**

Director / *Directeur*  
Tel.: (+216) 71 206 649 / 71 206 485 / 71  
206 851  
E-mail: [gannoun.abderrahmen@rac-spa.org](mailto:gannoun.abderrahmen@rac-spa.org)

**Mr. Daniel CEBRIÁN MENCHERO**

SAP BIO Programme Officer / *Chargé du  
Programme PAS BIO*  
Tel.: (+216) 71 947 162 / 71 947 506  
E-mail: [daniel.cebrian@rac-spa.org](mailto:daniel.cebrian@rac-spa.org)

**Ms. Souha EL ASMI**

MedMPAnet Project Officer / *Chef du  
Projet MedMPAnet*  
Tel.: (+216) 71 947 162 / 71 947 506  
E-mail: [souha.asmi@rac-spa.org](mailto:souha.asmi@rac-spa.org)

**Mr. Atef OUERGHI**

Programme Officer / *Chargé de  
Programme*  
Tel.: (+216) 71 206 649 / 71 206 485 / 71  
206 851  
E-mail : [atef.ouerghi@rac-spa.org](mailto:atef.ouerghi@rac-spa.org)

**Mrs Lobna BEN NAKHLA**

Programme Officer / *Chargée de  
Programme*

Tel.: (+216) 71 206 649 / 71 206 485 / 71  
206 851

E-mail: [lobna.bennakhla@rac-spa.org](mailto:lobna.bennakhla@rac-spa.org)

**Mr. Atef LIMAM**

MedMPAnet Technical and Coordination  
Backstopping Officer / *Adjoint au Chef du  
Projet MedMPAnet*  
Tel.: (+216) 71 947 162 / 71 947 506  
E-mail: [atef.limam@rac-spa.org](mailto:atef.limam@rac-spa.org)

**Mr. Chedly RAIS**

RAC/SPA Consultant/*Consultant*  
CAR/ASP  
E-mail: [c.rais@planet.tn](mailto:c.rais@planet.tn) ;  
[chedly.rais@okianos.org](mailto:chedly.rais@okianos.org)

**Mr. Jose PINO**

RAC/SPA Consultant/*Consultant*  
CAR/ASP  
E-mail : [jpinod@uma.es](mailto:jpinod@uma.es)

**Ms Aline Kühl**

RAC/SPA Consultant/*Consultant*  
CAR/ASP  
[Aline.kuehl@rac-spa.org](mailto:Aline.kuehl@rac-spa.org)

**Mr. Lemoyne BAQUET**

English Reviser/Report Writer  
E-mail: [lemoynebaquet@yahoo.com](mailto:lemoynebaquet@yahoo.com)

**Mr. Jean Pierre LERAY**

French Reviser/Report Writer  
E-mail: [leray.engel@gmail.com](mailto:leray.engel@gmail.com)

**Staff de support de l'organisation**

**Mrs. Naziha BEN MOUSSA**

**Mrs Intinene KEFI**

**Mrs Souad BEN AOUICHA**

**Ms Habiba MAKHLOUF**



## **Annex II**

### **AGENDA**

## **AGENDA**

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