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**Progress Report of the activities
of the Regional Activity Centre
for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)**

Delegates are kindly requested to bring their documents to the meeting

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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED ON BY RAC/SPA SINCE THE TENTH MEETING OF FOCAL POINTS FOR SPAS (MARCH 2011-April 2013)

I. INTRODUCTION

The present report was drawn up by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) to inform its Focal Points (FPs) for Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) at their Eleventh Meeting (Rabat, Morocco, 1-5 May 2013) about the activities that RAC/SPA has been carrying on since the tenth Meeting.

The report covers the period from 31 March 2011 to 30 April 2013 and comes under the second biannual Programme of Work prepared in the context of the Five-Year Strategic priorities adopted by the Contracting Parties meeting in Marrakesh on 3-5 November 2009.

For the 2012-2013 biennium, RAC/SPA's work programme is focusing mainly on: i) assessment of progress within SAP BIO implementation and its update ii) Contribution to the development of targets and defining Good Environmental Status for the proposed Ecological Objective, in the framework of the Ecosystem Approach. iii) supporting the development of a representative Mediterranean network of marine and coastal protected areas, including the open seas, iii) the conservation of endangered species and the sustainable use of the elements of biodiversity iv) Maintenance and update of the Biodiversity CHM and MedGIS.

It should be noted that a number of adopted actions within 2012-2013 programme of work were not implemented due to the delay and reduction on the availability of MTF fund.

II. Objective 1	BARCELONA CONVENTION, PROTOCOLS AND STRATEGIES DULY APPLIED (THEME I : Governance)
II.1. Expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing consistency, efficacy and responsibility at institutional level - Correcting deficiencies of application: the CPs are helped to attain the aims of the Barcelona Convention, Protocols and strategies adopted - Knowledge and information effectively managed and communicated
II.2. Elements of the MAP and/or other concerned partners	RAC/SPA MEDU, IUCN ACCOBAMS, CGPM, CdL
II.3. Indicators / Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Contracting parties are kept abreast of MAP horizontal and emerging issues in coherence with UN global and regional processes (such as ecosystem based management; governance of the high seas and marine spatial planning) - Marine and coastal data made accessible to Contracting Parties
II.4. Final results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three SPAMIs management performance assessed and evaluated - SPA BIO assessed and updated with CBD strategic Action Plan for biodiversity 2011 and Ecosystem Approach - Governance of high seas issues followed up on regular basis; policy papers prepared and legal and technical advice provided to CP; MAP work on high seas governance projected at regional and global level. - Marine and coastal data accessible through a developed CHM and MedGIS biodiversity Information System
II.5. Total budget spent or committed /compared to budget approved (as a %)	% (in terms of commitments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SAPBIO: 100% (MTF budget for 2012-2013). - 55% of MedOpenSeas project budget

II.6. Main achievements

II.6.1. Improved governance on the high seas

Since 2008, RAC-SPA under the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been implementing the “MedOpenSeas” project to identify and establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the open seas, including the deep seas. The primary objective of this project is to promote the establishment of a representative ecological network of MPAs in the Mediterranean within the framework of SPA/BD Protocol on the establishment of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs). This project is financially supported by the European Commission, and is now in its third phase.

The first phase of the project, completed in late 2009, led to the identification of twelve priority conservation areas in the open seas, including the deep seas. These priority areas could become candidates for SPAMI listing and/or be recommended for inclusion in other frameworks, such as Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The aim of the project’s second phase, completed in early 2012, was to support neighbouring Parties of the above-mentioned priority areas in evaluating and potentially presenting these sites as candidate(s) for inclusion in the SPAMI List, in accordance with the provisions of the SPA/BD Protocol. RAC/SPA has been facilitating this preparatory work, including oceanographic surveys and stakeholder negotiations. The programme of work of the second phase included the establishment of *ad hoc* working groups, composed of representatives from the countries bordering the Alboran Sea (Algeria, Morocco, Spain) and Gulf of Lions (France, Spain) priority areas.

The current third phase activities started on December 2012 and focuses on the spatial planning and evaluation of three priority areas: Adriatic Sea, Alboran Sea and the Sicily Channel/Tunisian Plateau areas. The process in the Alboran Sea benefits from initial preparatory work and a stakeholder meeting in 2011 conducted during the second project phase.

The RAC/SPA is currently starting to prepare meetings with the representatives of the neighbouring countries to these three sites, in order to present the proposed process and to discuss the feasibility of setting up multilateral working groups. Meanwhile, work to obtain compilation reports and review of the current understanding of the biodiversity for each of the four priority areas has been launched.

RAC/SPA has developed an online platform for the MedOpenSeas project, Seasketch, which facilitates planning of SPAMIs in areas within and beyond national jurisdictions. The Seasketch workspace brings together map layers collected by RAC/SPA and its partners, including existing and proposed management areas as well as a selection of biological and physical data. It is envisaged that the Seasketch tool will support pre- and post-meeting discussions on SPAMIs in the open seas and contribute to further strengthening MPA planning in the Mediterranean.

	<p>A Note on the establishment of MPAs beyond national jurisdiction or in areas where the limits of national sovereignty or jurisdiction have not yet been defined in the Mediterranean Sea was prepared within the implementation of the second phase of the Project and printed on paper and online. Detailed information on the project' progress is given in the document (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382 /Inf.5)</p>
<p><i>II.6.2.Updating the Strategic Programme to protect marine and coastal biodiversity (SAPBIO) with the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in line with the ecosystems approach</i></p>	<p>The activities suggested by RAC/SPA under this heading aim to assess the implementing of SAP BIO and redefining, if necessary, priorities at national and regional level. In this respect RAC/SPA organized the Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the SAP BIO in Malaga (Spain) on 4 July 2012 as well as the Third Meeting of National Correspondents of the SAP BIO (4-6 July 2012). The process and roadmap were discussed with the Parties representatives. Factsheets were distributed to SAP BIO national correspondents and SPA focal points as well as to the Advisory committee members to contribute with information to the evaluation of SAP BIO.</p> <p>Moreover, a consultancy, through a team of international experts and a universities consortium were engaged to undertake a forward looking and integrated analysis at policy and technical levels of the degree of implementation with regard to the adopted documents, including NAPs and RPAs, and provide adequate proposals and recommendations to further enhance their implementation. An expert meeting to further work on the the assessment of SAP BIO progress of implementation will be held from 2 to 3 May in Malaga (Spain). The documents (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/5) and (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382 /Inf.3) show the results of the evaluation and the process followed to achieve it.</p>
<p><i>II.6.3. Regular assessing of SPAMIs</i></p>	<p>The procedure for the periodic ordinary review of the SPAMIs concerns, for the current biennium, the SPAMIs included in the List in 2005. This concerns the Marine Reserve of Banc des Kabyles and Habibas Islands (Algeria) and the marine Protected Areas of Portofino (Italy). The results of this ordinary periodic review appear in detail in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/6.</p>

<p><i>II.6.4. Maintenance and further development of the Regional and thematic clearing-house mechanism on biodiversity (CHM) and MedGIS biodiversity information system</i></p>	<p>As regards the collection and dissemination of information, RAC/SPA is working on the finalisation and maintenance of the following tools:</p> <p><u>Mediterranean Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) on Biodiversity:</u></p> <p>In order to provide Contracting Parties with accurate and most updated information on biodiversity in the Mediterranean, RAC/SPA has structured and set up a new website for the Mediterranean Clearing House mechanism on biodiversity to be a central node for the dissemination of information, meanwhile the RAC/SPA website will be dedicated to promote RAC/SPA's activities. Further information are given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.14</p> <p><u>Web Application Standard Data Entry Form (SDF) 2.0 :</u></p> <p>In order to assist countries to draw up inventories of sites of conservation interest, RAC/SPA developed a database and computerized version of the Standard data Entry Form (SDF). The web application has a user friendly interface in order to help user in the crucial phase which is the filling of the SDF by providing validation rules, interpretation sheets on the habitats and species. Each Party has its repository and accessed through a login system and they can access useful statistics as the occurrence of threatened species and habitats, impacts and use of the sites and protection status. SDF web manager is also a tool developed under the clearing house mechanism on biodiversity and it is accessible at http://sdf.medchm.net.</p> <p><u>The Mediterranean Geographical Information System on Biodiversity (MedGIS):</u></p> <p>The geographical information system has been proved to be crucial for biodiversity conservation, spatial planning, decision making. To this end RAC/SPA developed the Mediterranean Geographical information system on biodiversity in order to provide useful tools for the Mediterranean countries with updated and accurate geographical information on key habitats, on critical areas for threatened species and other informations on physical features of the Mediterranean sea. The system is user friendly and its use doesn't need any special competence. MedGIS is also a tool developed under the clearing house mechanism on biodiversity and it is accessible at http://medgis.medchm.net.</p> <p>Further information on the development of the above-mentioned tools are given in the document (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/14) and UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.14.</p> <p><u>RAC/SPA web site</u></p> <p>RAC/SPA has been working to improve its website and to make it a precious tool for delivering accurate information about the different activities.</p> <p>RAC/SPA edited and disseminated four newsletters in English, since the last SPA FPs meeting, at a rate of two editions by year. These publications summarized the major activities, achievements and products of RAC/SPA in its different work scopes. They were transmitted by mail to the whole RAC/SPA mailing list and putted online through the RAC/SPA website.</p> <p><u>An online platform for the MedOpenSeas project</u></p> <p>As mentioned earlier in this document, RAC/SPA has developed an online platform for the MedOpenSeas project, Seasketch, which facilitates planning of SPAMIs in areas within and beyond national jurisdictions. The Seasketch workspace brings together map layers collected by RAC/SPA and its partners,</p>
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II.6.5 Strengthen regional and sub-regional mechanisms of data collection and dissemination of information on non-indigenous invasive species

including existing and proposed management areas as well as a selection of biological and physical data. It allows simultaneous chat of several stakeholders at the same time that permitting drawing on the maps and exchange in real time those images. It is envisaged that the Seasketch tool will support pre- and post-meeting discussions on SPAMIs in the open seas and contribute to further strengthening MPA planning in the Mediterranean. Address:
<http://www.seasketch.org/#projecthomepage/50ec2c788aba407518518a4c/about>.

An online database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MaPAMed)

RAC/SPA and MedPAN network, has set up an online database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MaPAMed). The development of the MaPAMed database stems from the need to have a resource centre which gathers and structures existing information on Mediterranean MPAs. The main objectives of this database are:

- Improving data access ,
- Supporting the analysis and assessment of the status and trends observed within MPA network
- Identifying ecological and management matters at a larger scale.

Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species (MAMIAS):

As provided for by Action Plan concerning species introduction and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea, RAC/SPA in collaboration with Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR) developed a first attempt of regional system to collect, analysis and diffusion of information on alien and invasive species in line with the feasibility study realised during the last biennium. The online database on marine invasive species in the Mediterranean sea (MAMIAS, www.mamias.org) gives information on invasive non-indigenous species in the Mediterranean (list of alien species, list of marine invasive species, list of vectors, etc...) and allows the use of different filters to find required data and the making of Different statistics at regional and national level about aliens and invasive species.

The system was already useful for the preparation of a scientific paper on introduced marine species in Croatian waters (Eastern Adriatic Sea) and on the update of the introduced species list in Tunisian water. The proposal for further development of the system and its promotion in the Mediterranean region is presented in the documents UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/14 and UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.14.

An educational document on introduced species and invasive species in the Mediterranean region was elaborated in collaboration with Nice University (France). This is intended for the wider public, NGOs and decision-makers. The document is translated published in English and French.

II.7. Difficulties encountered and lessons learned	<p>The late availability of funds for the open seas activities did not allow to launch them before end 2012. Additionally, this phase of the project does not have a budget to engage a project backstopper as it was the case for the two previous ones.</p> <p>The evaluation of SAP BIO has been hampered by the weak contribution reaction by the side of the majority of the Parties.</p> <p>New charge of work, notably whole projects, should not be allocated to RACSPA without ensuring in parallel appropriate human power reinforcing.</p> <p>Similar processes of all-Parties documentation sorting compilation and valuation has been in the past well addressed through the engagement of national assistance for all the Parties willing it, but the new approach of the Parties does not favour such method. Evidence shows that the topic should be revisited for future region wide documentary processes.</p>
II.8. Draft recommendations	<p>That the concerned neighbouring Parties of the three priority areas: Adriatic Sea, Alboran Sea and the Sicily Channel/Tunisian Plateau areas pursue the consultation to propose SPAMIs within these areas.</p> <p>That RAC/SPA pursues the work for collecting, compiling and circulating information in the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol.</p>
II.9. Draft decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Proposal of new SPAMIs.-Carry out, during the 2014-2015 biennium, the ordinary periodic review for the twenty-two SPAMIs (included in the list in 2001, 2003, 2008 and 2009), according to the procedure adopted by the Contracting Parties:-Proposal of amendment of annexe I and II to the Protocol SPA/BD.- Adoption of the updated SAPBIO.

III. Objective 2	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COASTAL AREAS ENHANCED (Theme II : Integrated coastal zone management)
Expected results	Coastal zone management achieves effective balance between development and protection (sustainable development of coastal zone)
III.2. Elements of the MAP and/or other concerned partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RAC/SPA - RAC/PAP, Plan Bleu, MEDU, RAC/PP, INFO/RAC - Andalusia region - Ministry of the Environment of Spain - Ministry of the Environment of Montenegro.
III.3. Indicators/ achievements	Biodiversity issues integrated in at least 3 ICZM processes
III.4. Final results	- Launching of CAMP Montenegro
III.5. Total budget spent or committed /compared to budget approved (as a %)	(% of the terms of commitment) Budget ICZM : 100% (MTF 2012-2013)
III.6 Main achievements III.6.1 Implementing ICZM protocol through specific local and policy initiatives	<p>III.6.1.1 Carrying out of biodiversity-related activities as part of CAMP Almeria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting held in Almeria, (June, 2011) aided to set the GIS needs with regard to the analysis of conservation needs interaction with fisheries and other human activities. • The second experts' group meeting to support the development of the singular project "Marine Environment Sustainable Use" within the framework of CAMP Levante de Almeria took place. The proposed methodology was validated and the available spatial data were presented. • The Final Presentation Conference for CAMP Levante de Almeria (Almeria, May 2012) presented the results obtained, including those related to biodiversity and GIS mapping. <p>III.6.1.2 Carrying out of biodiversity-related activities as part of CAMP Montenegro</p> <p>Work on adapting MedMPAnet activities to biodiversity issues for CAMP Montenegro was undertaken, including synergies with PAP/RAC and CP/RAC through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of ToRs, budgets and detailed activities for Montenegro contracts and MoUs regarding the development of a protected area in Kotor Bay and tender selection of a team to develop the field activities for ecological quantification • Work with Montenegro authorities and team selected on coordination of MedMPAnet and CAMP activities <p>MoU elaboration and negotiation with authorities on expert transfer of baseline info from MedMPAnet to CAMP Montenegro, including for economic sustainability of eco-friendly activities.</p>

III.7 Difficulties encountered and lessons learned	CAMP Montenegro had not enough MTF funding as initially planned. Adaptive mitigating alternatives were found through synergies with activities framed within the project MedMPAnet.
III.8. Draft recommendations	No recommendations for this objective

IV. Objective 3	REDUCED LOSS OF MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY (Theme III: Biodiversity)
IV.1. Expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecosystem services provided by the marine and coastal environment identified and assessed - Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (strategic vision, new objectives in the post-2010 context, including fishing, ballast water, non-native species), and threatened and endangered species - Network of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MPAs), including areas lying outside national jurisdictions, widened, enhanced and effectively managed
IV.2. Elements of the MAP and/or other concerned partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RAC/SPA - RAC/BP, RAC/PAP, MEDU, Plan Bleu, REMPEC - ACCOBAMS - FAO, GFCM - IUCN - National partners - Partners in the Action Plan on turtles - Partners in the Action Plan for the conservation of Bird Listed in annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol - Partners in the Action Plan on cartilaginous fishes - WWF MedPO - MED PAN
IV.3. Indicators / achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twenty experts trained on issues related to ecosystems services - At least 2 Pilot projects for establishing joint SPAMIs and management plans drafted - New MPAs with their Management Plans Created - Guidelines and teaching tools on MPAs elaborated and made available - Mediterranean Conference on Marine Protected Areas organised - 3 SPAMIs management plans updated to include ecosystem based management approach - 200 managers of marine protected areas trained - 1 Atlas of seagrass meadows distribution in the Mediterranean , - 1 reference list of pelagic habitat types established , - 2 action plans on endangered species updated; - the Action Plan on Med dark marine habitats prepared, - 1 taxonomic Reference Lists prepared. - 2 countries assisted to monitor Posidonia meadows - 3 countries assisted on monitoring and enforcement with regard to ballast water convention and strategy.

<p>IV.4. Final results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New MPAs with their Management Plans Created - Guidelines and teaching tools on MPAs elaborated and made available - Mediterranean Conference on Marine Protected Areas organised - 200 managers of marine protected areas trained - 1 reference list of pelagic habitat types established , - 3 action plans on endangered species updated; - the Action Plan on Med dark marine habitats prepared, - 1 taxonomic Reference Lists prepared. - 2 countries assisted to monitor Marines turtles. - 1 country assisted to monitor coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concentrations - 3 countries assisted to monitor marine mammals - Project prepared to assist countries to monitor key habitats
<p>IV.5. Total budget spent or committed/compared to budget approved (as a %)</p>	<p>% (in terms of commitments), 16% of the adopted MTF budget for 2012-2013 and 80% of the budget made available until April 2013. 76% of MedP budget for 2012-2013) 55% of MedOpenSeas project budget</p>
<p>IV.6 Main achievements</p> <p><i>IV.6.1. Assist countries implementing case studies on pilot sites regarding services provided by marine and coastal ecosystems:</i></p> <p><i>IV.6.2. Mapping of seagrass meadows another assemblages and habitats of particular importance for the marine environment in Mediterranean areas</i></p>	<p>A training session on the economic value of sustainable benefits rendered by the Mediterranean marine ecosystems and the economic effects of Marine and coastal protected areas is scheduled for the second term of 2013. The proposed study areas will be among the MedMPAnet project pilot sites. RAC/SPA is seeking the collaboration of Blue Plan and other relevant partners.</p> <p>A project concept form on key habitats inventorying and mapping in order to extend the SPAMIs network has been drafted and submitted in December 2012, to the MAVA Foundation. The MAVA Foundation board has expressed its interest to support the submitted project and asked RAC/SPA to develop the full project proposal. The project that will last 30 months will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the mapping of key habitats and the elaboration of an atlas of their distribution in the Mediterranean - the proposal of new SPAMIs taking into account the distribution of key habitats in order to extend the SPAMI network and its representativity. <p>Discussion is underway with eligible concerned countries, in order to define pilot sites and implementation timetable.</p> <p>It should be noted that the planned activities under this heading for the ongoing biennium will be implemented as a RAC/SPA's contribution to the above mentioned project.</p>

IV.6. 3 Strengthening the Mediterranean monitoring system for the key biodiversity components

IV.6. 3.1 Good Environmental Status Ecological Objectives of the Mediterranean sea

Support work to the Coordinating Unit of MAP was undertaken for the definition of Good Environmental Status Ecological Objectives of the Mediterranean Sea, in the framework of the ecosystem approach process within UNEP MAP.

Support work to the Coordinating Unit of MAP was done for the elaboration of related indicators and targets for the Biodiversity and Fisheries related Ecological Objectives, including strong collaborative exchanges with GFCM for the latter purpose. Also substantive contribution was provided to the elaboration of related indicators and targets for Pollution related and ICZM Ecological Objectives, finally discussed in an ECAP coordination meeting with Parties' experts on April 2013 at Athens, Greece.

IV.6. 3. 2 Assistance to countries to carry out field survey, monitoring and mapping of biodiversity

Within the implementation of the "Regional Action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and others calcareous bio-concretion in the Mediterranean Sea " adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention during their Sixteenth ordinary Meeting (Marrakech, November 2009), RAC/SPA supported the Archipelagos institute (Greece) to establish a monitoring system of the coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concentrations, based on mapping techniques, in the eastern Aegean Sea.

A regional training has also been organized in parallel to the survey, (June 2012 Fourni Island, Greece). These courses aimed to provide comprehensive training on standardised methodology (the same protocol of mapping) to monitor coralligenous reefs in order to ensure their conservation.

<p>IV.6. 4 Strengthening the Regional Mechanism for collecting, compiling and circulating information on invasive non-indigenous species</p>	<p>An Ad-Hoc expert meeting was organized on November 2011 in Tunis to discuss operational plan for the establishment of a regional mechanism to collect, compile and circulate information on invasive non-indigenous species in the Mediterranean sea, following a feasibility study prepared for the RAC/SPA.</p> <p>The structure of a complete and comprehensive mechanism was highlighted with three steps including, among other, national networks for collecting data, a Mediterranean database and a regional warning system.</p> <p>More details are given in the section “Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species (MAMIAS)”</p>
<p>IV.6. 5 Elaboration of reference list of pelagic habitat types</p>	<p>With the need to complete the tools (Standard Data-Entry Form (SDF) For National Inventories of Natural Sites of Conservation Interest, Reference List of Marine habitat types for the selection of sites to be included in the National inventories of Nature sites of conservation interest, Reference List of coastal habitat types for the selection of sites to be included in the National inventories of Nature sites of conservation interest), provided to Mediterranean countries to help them identify and assess their marine and coastal habitats, RAC/SPA has prepared the document (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/11) where a draft reference list of Pelagic Habitat types in the Mediterranean is presented, in view of its finalization through an extensive consultation among multidisciplinary experts</p> <p>IV.6. 5.1 Action Plan for the management of Monk seal in the Mediterranean:</p> <p><u>Capacity building effort for the conservation of Monk seal in the Mediterranean region</u></p>
<p>IV.6. 6 Assistance to countries to implement the regional action plans on endangered species</p>	<p>RAC/SPA, in coordination with the focal point of Greece, supported the Archipelagos institute of marine conservation for the monitoring of monk seal population and their habitats in Fourni Island. This action was also an opportunity to organize the first regional training workshop on the Mediterranean Monk seal (<i>Monachus monachus</i>) (June, 2012 Fourni Island) The workshop brought together six scientists from across the Mediterranean. The main objective of this training session was to provide and share knowledge, as well as exchange experiences on the threats, management and conservational practices affecting the species. This was accomplished through a series of lectures, seminars, discussions and field surveys on topics including monk seal monitoring and surveying techniques, and the uses and methodologies of photo-identification with the aim to unifying the techniques and approaches used to monitor this species.</p> <p><u>Setting up regional/subregional programmes to protect the monk seal</u></p> <p>As agreed during the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Marrakesh, 2009), the Mediterranean countries confirmed their commitment towards the recovery of the species and proposed that RAC/SPA prepare distinct subregional programmes aimed at the formulation of a regional plan of priority activities aimed at the immediate conservation of the Monk seal throughout the Mediterranean sea.</p> <p>With this regards, RAC/SPA assisted the Cyprus and Turkey to prepare/ to update their National Action Plans for the conservation of the Mediterranean Monk seal. Moreover subregional action Plan for the</p>

Conservation / management of the Monk seal in areas of the Mediterranean basin where the species is believed to exist in low density numbers was elaborated.

Based on these APs and other referenced documents, A Mediterranean strategy for the management of Monk seal, presented in the document (UNEP (DEPI)/MED WG.382/9) is elaborated. The strategy is a result of the outcome of broad consultation among a group of selected experts working with the subject in the Mediterranean and beyond.

<p>IV.6. 7 Action Plan for the conservation of Mediterranean Turtles</p>	<p>The 4th Mediterranean Conference on marine turtles was held in Naples, Italy from 7 to 10 November 2011. The conference was organised by the Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn under the auspice of the three conventions: Barcelona Convention, Berne Convention and Bonn Convention. The conference was attended by more than 100 participants mostly from Mediterranean countries but also from other regions. Thanks to RAC/SPA contribution, more than 20 participants were supported to attend this important event.</p> <p>The organising committee of the 5th conference is setup and is discussing the venue and the date of this conference.</p> <p>In the framework of the capacity building efforts for the conservation of threatened species, RAC/SPA organized the following field work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellite tracking of two marine turtles in south Lebanon in collaboration with Zoological Station of Naples and Nature Reserve of Tyre.(July, 2012) • Monitoring of nesting areas of Loggerhead turtles in Kuriat Island (Tunisia), in collaboration with National institute for marine science and Technology (INSTM) and the “Agence pour la protection et maménagement du Littoral (APAL) (August, 2012). <p>With the aim to support awareness raising initiatives on the marine/coastal biodiversity, RAC/SPA collaborated with the Ministry of Environment of Tunisia in the organization of an awareness day on marine turtles (Monastir, Tunisia, October 2012).</p>
<p>IV.6. 8 Action Plan for the conservation of cetacean in the Mediterranean</p>	<p>RAC/SPA collaborated in the organisation of the following gathering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Second Biennial Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries. (El Jedida, Morocco, October 2011) • The Southern Mediterranean Workshop on ACCOBAMS Implementation (Hammamet, Tunisia, June 2012) • The cetacean national stranding network: functioning and organisation (Salambô, Tunisia, May 2012) • The 27th Annual conference of the European society for research on cetaceans (Setubal, Portugal, April 2013) • The IX European Seminar on Marine Mammals: Biology and conservation (Valencia, Spain, September 2012) • Cetology module for the Environment Master Courses (Tunis, Tunisia, March 2013) <p>Within its assistance to implement conservation and monitoring of cetaceans in the Mediterranean region, RAC/SPA supported the running of the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelagic cetaceans of the north oriental Sardinia, implemented by CIMA Fondation and Sassari University • The cetacean sanctuary Research Project (Pelagos Area), implemented by Tethys Research Institute. • The Ionian dolphin project (Greece), implemented by Tethys Research Institute. <p>RAC/SPA is collaborating with the permanent secretariat of ACCOBAMS to organize a workshop on the impact of Climate Change on Marine Environment.</p> <p>The workshop is aiming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a state of knowledge on the prediction of climate change and its impacts on the marine environments in the Black and Mediterranean Seas • determine the consequences of climate change for migratory species, in particular cetaceans in the Black and Mediterranean Seas and turtles in the Mediterranean Sea • identify gaps in knowledge and possible subject for further research

<p>IV.6. 9 Action Plan for the conservation of bird species listed in annex II to SPA/BD Protocol</p>	<p>With the aim to make finding and data collected from 2005-2010 on waterbird of Libya available to researchers, university and those interested to bird migration, a significant reference work called “ Atlas of wintering waterbirds of Libya” has been prepared and published in English and Arabic, in 2011.</p> <p>the Preparation and the edition of the Atlas was achieved thanks to collaboration among RAC/SPA, the Environment General Authority (EGA), the agreement on the conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory waterbirds (AEWA), Wetland International (WI), the Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA, Italy), the National Office for Hunting and wildlife (ONCFS, France) the French Ministry de l'Ecologie, du Développement Durable, des Transports et du Logement , the French Coastline Conservation Agency (CdL, France) and the Water Agency (France).</p>
<p>IV.6. 10 Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean</p>	<p>RAC/SPA finalized 2010-11 work on the amendment of Annexes II and III to the Protocol, through improving the updated scientific assessment of some of the elasmobranch species listed in Annex III, upon some Parties contributions with a view to their inclusion in Annex II. The decision (IG.20/5) of the 17 COP of the Barcelona Convention in February 2012 agreed on this amendment.</p> <p>Collaboration with the GFCM and European Commission took place for the workshop on Stock Assessment of Selected Species of Elasmobranches in the GFCM area held in Brussels, Belgium on November 2011.</p> <p>Guidelines for shark and ray recreational fishing in the Mediterranean were prepared and edited in English and French.</p> <p>A base of elasmobranch specialist and experts was elaborated by RAC/SPA.</p>
<p>IV.6. 11 Update of Regional action plans calendars: turtles, birds and sharks</p>	<p>With regards to update and/or to adjust the work timetables of the Action plans related to the conservation of marine turtles, bird species listed in annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol and cartilaginous fishes, an assessment of the implementation of their previous calendars has been done. This evaluation appears in the information document (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.11</p> <p>The assessment of the implementation of these action Plans has taken into account the RAC/SPA Progress activities achieved during the two last biennium (2009-2011/2012-2013), The activities realized by Contracting Parties as requested by the adopted timetables.</p> <p>Multilateral Environment Agreements, regional organizations and institutions as well as Partners to these actions Plans were also invited to report on their achievements within the conservation of these species. All the answers received in due time was incorporated on the evaluation document. The draft updated implementation timetables are given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/8.</p>
<p>IV.6. 12 Elaboration of the Action Plan for the conservation of marine dark assemblages in the Mediterranean (caves, canyons, etc)</p>	<p>As decided by the last Barcelone Contracting Parties meeting (Paris, February 2012), RAC/SPA has launched the elaboration of the action Plan for the conservation of the biodiversity of the caves and the canyons, which complements the other regional strategies for the conservation of threatened species and habitats and in particular the Action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea.</p> <p>The draft Action Plan of the Action Plan on Mediterranean dark assemblages (caves, canyons, etc) will be discussed during an Adhoc meeting to be held from 7 to 8 May 2013 in Marseilles thanks to the support of the French Agency of Marine Protected Areas. The draft is presented in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/10.</p>

<p>IV.6.13 Assist countries for the creation of SPAMIs on high seas: give support to Parties to prepare presentation dossiers for potential SPAMI sites</p>	<p>Further to the information already reflected in section II.6.1.(Improved governance on the high seas) the following was undertaken: The Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the MedOpenSeas project for supporting the establishment of SPAMIs in open seas, including the deep seas was held at Tunis, Tunisia, in December 2011 following on from a suite of meetings specifically targeting the Alboran Sea and the Gulf of Lions during the second project phase (see II 6.1).</p> <p>Support to the French – Spanish working group for the Gulf of Lions: mission for preparing marine ecology report for the region, as well as collecting and compiling environmental data available for the Gulf of Lions</p> <p>In order to facilitate the establishment of SPAMI(s) in the Gulf of Lions RAC/SPA prepared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Description of the ecology of the Gulf of Lions shelf and slope area and identification of areas that may deserve to be protected. (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.6)- Important areas for the conservation of cetaceans in the Gulf of Lions shelf and slope area: synthesis of existing data on cetaceans and threats to them (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.7)- Seabirds in the Gulf of Lions shelf and slope area (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.8)- Fisheries in the Gulf of Lions (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.9)- <u>Organization of a meeting of the France-Spain working group on the Gulf of Lions</u> <p>Amongst other meetings, RAC/SPA organized in December 2011 a meeting of the France-Spain working group in order to present to the countries representatives the work carried out by the experts involved in the mission for collecting and compiling environmental data available on the Gulf of Lions.</p> <p>The discussions between the experts and the countries' representatives were fruitful and have led to a number of outputs, most notably the synthesis report on the "Description of the ecology of the Gulf of Lions shelf and slope area" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.6).</p>
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IV.6. 14 Implementation of the MedMPAnet Project

Establishment of coordination mechanisms for regional MPA management (MedMPAnet Project)

Organization of the MedMPAnet Project Mid-term Meeting:

RAC/SPA convened on 4-6 July 2012, in Malaga (Spain), the Third Meeting of National Correspondents of the SAP BIO serving as Mid-term Workshop for the MedMPAnet Project.

Developing communication and information tools and raising awareness of key stakeholders on MPAs values and importance

RAC/SPA is undertaking the main following communication activities:

- Compiling and disseminating the MedMPAnet electronic newsletter through RAC/SPA mailing list;
- Dissemination of the major achievements of the Project through MedMPAnet Project website, the RAC/SPA website, the MedPartnership collaborative web portal and social media.
- Elaboration and dissemination of leaflets featuring the Project objectives and scope (first version in 2011; second version in 2012);
- The Project presented a special event during the 2012 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (Antalya, November 2012);
- The Project supported the 2012 MPA Forum website development and the creation of a movie on MPA networking in the Mediterranean in collaboration with the MedPAN Secretariat.

Strengthening the marine protected areas network (MedMPAnet Project)

Establish priority activities needed to create MPAs

Lebanon: Following the rapid assessment carried out early June 2011, a field survey has been undertaken in three selected sites along the Lebanese coast (Chikaa, Enfeh and Raoucheh) (June 2012), by a team of international and national experts. This survey led also to a set of recommendations and orientations for the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon in view of the future management of the studied areas.

Bosnia & Herzegovina and Montenegro: RAC/SPA started early 2012 an extensive analysis of the existing legal and institutional frameworks in the concerned countries in close collaboration with the IUCN-Med.

Identify stakeholder group and potential partnerships

Albania: RAC/SPA started early 2012 an extensive analysis of the existing legal and institutional frameworks (including the identification of stakeholder group and potential partnerships) in close collaboration with the IUCN-Med.

Morocco: RAC/SPA has drafted a study for the identification of stakeholder group and potential partnerships for MPA creation and management, in close consultation with the *Haut Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la Lutte Contre la Désertification*.

Characterization of priority marine sites suitable to become MPAs

Montenegro: A second and third and final rapid assessment survey took place at end of October 2011 and mid-June 2012, respectively. A synthesis report for the valuation of marine areas, in order to select the best sites to become MPAs, including GIS-based mapping was finalized. A report on coastal fisheries was prepared. SDF files and GIS shapes of Montenegro were elaborated.

Morocco: A mission of valuation of marine areas along the Moroccan Mediterranean coast, including GIS-based mapping, in order to select the best areas suitable to be declared as MPAs have been undertaken and led to the selection of the Cap des Trois Fourches site. For this aim, an on-site

field assessment has been undertaken early September 2012. The report of characterization of the Cap des Trois Fourches site has been finalized.

Demonstration Projects for MPA creation: Inception, planning, zoning and development of newly created MPAs

Albania: The MedMPAnet Project has run an Inception Meeting, in Tirana on 3 May 2012, during which the Project work-plan has been agreed upon by the Albanian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration. Porto Palermo Bay was selected as a pilot site for MPA creation. A team of national consultants has been hired and the field work started early 2013.

Algeria: A coordination meeting took place, end of January 2012, in the Algerian Ministry for Land Planning and Environment (Algiers), in presence of the MedPartnership executing agencies acting in the Réghaïa area and all the concerned national institutions. A team of scientists assigned by the Conservatoire du Littoral has already undertaken, mid-May 2012, a survey in the coastal wetland of Réghaïa. A socio-economic and fisheries study started in early 2013. A field survey of the marine is planned during 2013.

Croatia: a work-plan has been agreed upon with the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, focusing on an ecological study, a fishery study and capacity building activities for the inventory of marine biodiversity, in the County of Primorje & Gorski Kotar. Field activities started early 2013.

Libya: RAC/SPA launched, in 2012, socio-economic surveys for the pilot site of El-Kouf National Park, in view of backing the ecological surveys undertaken in autumn 2010 and the final recommendations for the management of the area.

Montenegro: Based on the preliminary results of the rapid assessments undertaken in October 2011 and June 2012, and in close consultation with the Ministry of Environment of Montenegro, it has been agreed that RAC/SPA will be joining efforts to PAP/RAC and CP/RAC in the "Pilot Project on Testing the Ecosystem Approach (ECAP) application in Boka Kotorska Bay". The pilot activity concerning the assessment of key marine ecosystems and the characterization of their ecological values has started in December 2012 and keeps ongoing.

Tunisia: A second ecological field survey has been undertaken mid-June 2011. It allowed the design of a preliminary zoning for the area. Besides, a socio-economic study has been undertaken on the area during the first half of 2012. A management plan is being drafted in close collaboration with the Tunisian Coastal Protection and Planning Agency and a team of national experts.

	<p>MPA creation guidelines and teaching packages</p> <p>RAC/SPA has collaborated with the MedPAN Network Secretariat and WWF-MedPO, in running a region-wide need assessment in terms of guidebooks and technical tools among MPA managers and practitioners and relevant authorities in the Mediterranean countries. The results of this study have been issued in March 2012. Based on the findings of this survey, RAC/SPA has launched the elaboration of a technical guide on Mediterranean marine species ecological monitoring in MPAs, and a Protocol for the monitoring of Mediterranean Lesser Crested Terns (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.12).</p> <p>Convene the training of new MPAs managers and practitioners</p> <p><u>Capacity-building and technical assistance</u></p> <p>RAC/SPA collaborated with WWF-MedPO and MedPAN in designing a long-term capacity building strategy to enhance the management of Mediterranean MPAs. The study synthesis was finalized in June 2012. RAC/SPA is collaborating with WWF-MedPO and MedPAN in setting-up a Mediterranean web portal for capacity-building on marine conservation and MPA management issues.</p> <p>Technical assistance has been provided to: (i) Albania for the identification of tourism potential activities in the Sazan-Karaburun MPA and (ii) Montenegro for undertaking an exchange visit to Miramare Marine Reserve (Italy), in order to learn about best practices for visitor management in MPAs.</p> <p>RAC/SPA has organized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In collaboration with WWF-MedPO, the 3rd Regional Training Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Planning in MPAs (Split (Croatia), October 2011); - The Mediterranean training session on the "Identification and classification techniques of marine and coastal species for the ecological monitoring of marine protected areas (Santa Pola (Spain), September 2011) - Second regional training on ecological monitoring in MPAs (Santa Pola, Tabarca Marine Reserve (Spain), September 2012. <p>RAC/SPA and WWF-MedPO provided their support for Libyan national authorities in terms of capacity-building as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training on the Planning of socioeconomic assessments in MPAs (Tunis, Tunisia, June 2012); - Training on GIS application to marine environment (Bizerte, Tunisia, May 2012); and - Training on Participatory process and stakeholders' engagement in MPAs (Akyaka, Turkey, February 2013)
<p>IV.6. 15 Mediterranean Conference on Marine Protected Areas in relation to the CBD and SAP BIO targets</p>	<p>RAC/SPA co-organised with the MedPAN Secretariat, UNDP Turkey and the Ministry of Environment of Turkey the 2012 Forum on Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (Antalya, November 2012). The "Roadmap towards a comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively connected and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas network by 2020" and the Antalya Declaration were the main outputs of the Forum. The draft roadmap, presented in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/7, is submitted for discussion and endorsement to the present meeting.</p>
<p>IV.6. 16 Assessment of the representativity and the effectiveness of the marine and coastal protected areas</p>	<p>Guidance for building MPA networks – Draft Guidelines to improve the implementation of the Mediterranean SPA network and connectivity between SPAs have been finalized in May 2012. These guidelines (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.10) have been translated into French, in view of their paper edition as part of the activities of the MedMPAnet Project.</p>

<p>IV.7. Difficulties encountered and lessons learned</p>	<p>The major success stories experienced by the MedMPAnet project are mainly collaborations and synergies with other regional organizations.</p> <p>The MedMPAnet project flexibility to enable countries to redirect project activities according to new country-level developments or to national needs and priorities redefinition has been a strength allowing greater responsiveness on the part of the countries.</p> <p>Some activities planned for the biennium, like organizing the second Mediterranean Symposium on coraligenous Formations and the 5th Mediterranean symposium on marine vegetation, the organization of the second symposium on bird species listed in annex II to SPA/BD Protocol, have not been organized due to the delay on the availability of MTF fund.</p>
<p>IV.8. Draft Recommendations</p>	<p>Take into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The darft "<i>Roadmap towards a comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively connected and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas network by 2020</i>" -the draft Guidelines to improve the implementation of the Mediterranean SPA network and connectivity between SPAs. - the draft Protocol for the monitoring of Mediterranean Lesser Crested Terns (<i>Thalasseus bengalensis emigratus</i>) - the Draft Reference List of Pelagic Habitat Types
<p>IV.9. Draft decisions</p>	<p>Adoption of the following Drafts:</p> <p>The darft "<i>Roadmap towards a comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively connected and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas network by 2020</i>" as part of the decision on the adoption of the updated SAPBIO</p> <p>The draft Action Plan for the conservation of marine dark assemblages in the Mediterranean (caves, canyons, etc)</p> <p>The draft strategy for the conservation of Monk seal in the Mediterranean</p> <p>The draft updated timetable of the action Plans for Marine Turtles, Bird species, cartilaginous fishes</p>

V. Objective 4	A MEDITERRANEAN ENVIRONMENT LESS VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE (THEME VI : CLIMATE CHANGE)
V.1. Expected results	A Mediterranean region able to overcome the challenges of climate change thanks to better understanding of vulnerability and potential ecological impacts
V.2. Elements of the MAP and/or other concerned partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RAC/SPA - RAC/PAP, MEDU, IUCN, MedPAN
V.3. Indicators / achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate Change impact indicators available specific to the - Mediterranean region: A first set of indicators <p>indicators of climate change impact on biodiversity in specially protected areas elaborated,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance programme to 3 countries to address the CC issue and its impacts on natural marine habitats and endangered species developed;
V.4. Final results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A first set of indicators of climate change impact on biodiversity in Specially protected areas elaborated.
V.5. Total budget spent or committed / compared to budget approved (as a %)	<p>% (in terms of commitments, solely on the basis of the MTF 2012-2013) budget) 0%</p>

<p>V.6. Main achievements</p> <p><i>V.6. 1. Development and elaboration of a regional project aimed at assisting countries to address the CC issue and its impacts on natural marine habitats and spp</i></p> <p><i>V.6. 2. Elaboration a first set of indicators of climate change impact on biodiversity in specially protected areas in consultation with relevant experts.</i></p>	<p>A project elaboration on restoration and rehabilitation of degraded wetlands and lagoons as climate change mitigation measure. The project aims to provide Mediterranean countries with an integrated strategy to conserve and manage coastal biodiversity, promoting the use of aquaculture and capture fishery as a base for habitat restoration, climate change mitigation, and the improvement of local communities' welfare.</p> <p>Indicators standardized for the monitoring of climate change in Mediterranean MPAs are being elaborated in collaboration with the IUCN. A second meeting of experts took place in Malaga ,Spain (October 2012), organized by RAC/SPA with the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med) to continue guiding the development of indicators for biodiversity impacts in marine protected areas (MPAs) by the threats of climate change (CC). (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.13) Moreover, RAC/SPA in collaboration with IUCN Med is finalising a guide on regional monitoring and adaptation opportunities to CC in Mediterranean MPAs. The document will be published in collaboration with IUCN.</p>
<p>V.7. Difficulties encountered and lessons learned</p>	<p>There was not current funding available at RAC/SPA for the biennium to address this activity. The activity still needs further progress.</p>
<p>V.8. Draft recommendations</p>	<p>CC should be a topic to be still supported in future biennia</p>