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Twelfth Meeting of Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas

Athens, Greece, 25-29 May 2015

Agenda item 6: Species conservation

Agenda item 7: Ecosystems conservation

Agenda item 8: Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)/Barcelona Convention (EcAp)

Agenda item 9: The Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean region (SAP BIO) Strategic Goals and Priority Actions

Agenda item 10: Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, including in the open seas and deep sea

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

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The original version of this document was prepared by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA).

NEP/MAP Programme of Work Priority Theme(s)	Governance Integrated Coastal Zone Management Biodiversity Climate Change
Component	Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)
UNEP/MAP Programme of Work References	UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the 2012-2013 biennium UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the 2014-2015 biennium
Period	1 May 2013 - 31 March 2015
<u>Theme I: Governance</u>	
<u>Output 1.1: Strengthening institutional coherence, efficiency and accountability</u>	
<i>1-Expected Results</i>	<p>Expected Result 1.1.3: 2010-2014 Five Year-Programme of Work evaluated (External Evaluation) and the Mid-term Strategy (2016-2021) developed in a participatory manner and the planning cycle is aligned with targets set by other international conventions processes, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) process and EcAp.</p> <p>Expected Result 1.1.6: Fundraising carried out to scale-up implementation of the 2014-2015 Programme of Work and at least 2 projects/programmes developed and funded.</p> <p>Expected Result 1.1.7: MedPartnership Replication Strategy implemented.</p> <p>Expected Result 1.2.7: MSSD revised and updated in light of Rio+20 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Mediterranean ICZM Strategy Developed as part of MSSD; Regional Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation completed.</p>
<i>2- Main achievements</i>	<p>Expected Result 1.1.3: RAC/SPA is contributing to the elaboration of the Draft 2016-2021 Mid-term Strategy, coordinated by the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit.</p> <p>Expected Result 1.1.6: Based on the updated SAP BIO Priority Actions (Eleventh Meeting of Focal Points for SPAs, Rabat, Morocco, July 2013), 11 project concept notes have been prepared. Some of them are being further developed into detailed project proposals. The concept notes were circulated to the UNEP/MAP Secretariat and other Components to pursue synergy on their further elaboration, and forwarded to a number of prospective donors for their feedback and comments, prior to the “Roundtable on the funding of the SAP BIO priority projects/activities” planned under agenda item 11 of the present RAC/SPA Focal Points meeting. A Note on the Funding of SAP BIO priority projects/activities is presented as working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/7.</p> <p>Expected Result 1.1.7: A Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) was signed between RAC/SPA and UNEP/MAP late July 2014. The replication activity concerns the running of ecological and socio-economic studies in view of the creation of an MPA in the North-Eastern part of Kerkennah Islands (Tunisia). A detailed work-plan was set out and the team of experts were identified jointly by RAC/SPA and the Tunisian Coastal Protection and Planning Agency (APAL). The fisheries and socio-economic field surveys will start during May 2015.</p> <p>Expected Result 1.2.7: The biodiversity theme being one of the revised MSSD focus areas, RAC/SPA is member of the MSSD Task Force and is actively participating in the MSSD review process led by Plan Bleu/RAC and</p>

	the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit. In this regard, RAC/SPA took part in the discussions of the meeting of Thematic Working Groups TWG 1, 2 and 4 (Sophia Antipolis, France, 19-20 November 2014) and the Conference on the Review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (Floriana, Malta, 17-18 February 2015).
3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned	–
4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs	A recommendation on RAC/SPA 2016-2017 draft Programme of Work. A recommendation on the process for the funding of the SAP BIO priority projects/activities.
5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19	–
<u>Output 1.2: Implementation gap filled: Contracting Parties supported in meeting the objectives of the Barcelona Convention, protocols and adopted strategies</u>	
1- Expected Results	Expected Result 1.2.4: The First Implementation Cycle of EcAp completed.
2- Main achievements	<p>Expected Result 1.2.4: RAC/SPA has engaged further in the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) through participation in monitoring cluster meetings, GES and targets meetings and in integrated consultation meetings giving technical input to the process. In addition, RAC/SPA facilitated the initiation to develop a regional monitoring system by the preparation of a guidance document on monitoring for the EO1: Biodiversity and its common indicators 3-5 i.e. Species distributional range; Population abundance of selected species (marine mammals, seabirds, marine reptiles and monk seals); and Population demographic characteristics. The latter activity was not initially planned, but was requested by the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit in May 2014. Despite ongoing activities, RAC/SPA delivered expected outputs (contribution to the guiding document on monitoring for indicators 3-5) simultaneously as implementing its planned workload.</p> <p>Three monitoring cluster meetings (including the Biodiversity & Fisheries Cluster Meeting); Two overall integrated monitoring consultation meetings; One GES and Targets integrated consultation meeting; Technical support for three clusters. The related documents are presented in UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/5 and UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/6.</p> <p>A survey to assess the marine environment monitoring activities in Party countries is currently being conducted by the Secretariat with RAC/SPA contribution on the biodiversity area. Creation of an integrated monitoring programme is advancing through CORMON meetings and a technical expert was hired to contribute to the thematic on marine mammals, seabirds, and marine turtles to the ECAP monitoring guidance document, which was presented at the CORMON Group meeting on biodiversity and fisheries in Ankara, June 2014. In addition RAC/SPA will prepare monitoring manuals for marine mammals, seabirds and marine turtles with the collaboration of relevant partners and experts.</p> <p>An illustrated guide on environmental monitoring, ‘Manual on Coastal Biota and their Environmental Monitoring in Mediterranean MPAs, is under finalization in Spanish (original version), English and French, in collaboration with Seville University and the <i>Junta de Andalucía, Spain</i> in the frame of the RAC/SPA regional project MedMPAnet.</p>

3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned	
4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs	
5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19	A Draft Decision on EcAp coordinated at the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit level, with a contribution from RAC/SPA.
<u>Output 1.3: Knowledge and information effectively managed and communicated</u>	
1- Expected Results	<p>Expected Result 1.3.5: Target media outreach activities held events to promote visibility on Barcelona Convention/MAP activities.</p> <p>Expected Result 1.3.6: Implementation of Communications Strategy.</p>
2- Main achievements	<p>Expected Result 1.3.5: RAC/SPA advanced to 50% in the preparation of its refurbished website. The data structure and links are ready. Meanwhile, the RAC/SPA website is being continuously updated with new information on the centre's activities and programmes.</p> <p>The new visual identity and graphic charter is being finalized: several products are ready and started being used and disseminated by RAC/SPA. RAC/SPA started also an external audit for its Information System (IS) to ensure the continuity and security of the existing working data and to facilitate the collaborative work on these data.</p> <p>This audit will lead to recommendations on the way to improve the centralization of data and electronic information on the RAC/SPA, and to prevent any loss or distortion of these information</p> <p><u>MAPAMED database:</u> In the framework of the implementation of the "Regional Working Programme for the Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Sea including the High Sea", RAC/SPA and MedPAN jointly developed, in 2011-2012, a spatial database on Marine Protected Areas and other sites of interest to the conservation of marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea: MAPAMED (www.mapamed.org).</p> <p>Information gathered in this database served as a basis for the analysis of the 2012 Mediterranean MPA Status Report. RAC/SPA and MedPAN are presently launching a new round of data collection and analysis in order to assess what progress have been made since 2012 and more importantly, to identify what is left to be done to reach conservation targets, particularly the CBD Aichi target 11. This new Mediterranean MPA Status Report will be published in 2016, timely for the 2016 Mediterranean MPA Forum.</p> <p>In this perspective, the MAPAMED database will undergo a major update and RAC/SPA Focal Points support will be requested for the review and validation of spatial data as well as basic information related to MPAs in their countries.</p> <p><u>MAMIAS Information System:</u> In order to be in line with the EcAp process and in particular the integrated monitoring and assessment programme, RAC/SPA launched a complete design and an overall improvement of the established online database on marine invasive alien species in the Mediterranean Sea (www.mamias.org). This task is being undertaken through external expertise.</p>

	<p>Expected Result 1.3.6: RAC/SPA is contributing to the discussions of the MAP Communication Task Force.</p> <p>RAC/SPA is developing a Communication Strategy for the centre, which preliminary draft will be submitted to the 12th Meeting of Focal Points (in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/15). In the same lines, RAC/SPA is preparing a new visual identity and graphic charter.</p>
3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned	Concerning the communication task force, the monthly skype meetings has been fructuous but they seems to be insufficient for a well managed communication and a better visibility of the MAP system.
4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs	A recommendation on RAC/SPA Communication Strategy.
5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19	-
Theme II: Integrated Coastal Zone Management	
<u>Output 2.1: Coastal zone management achieves effective balance between development and protection (sustainable development of coastal zone)</u>	
1- Expected Results	Expected Result 2.1.1: External evaluation of CAMPs to scale-up Coastal Zone Plans in line with the Protocol and two new CAMPs initiated.
2- Main achievements	<p>Expected Result 2.1.1: Work on adapting the MedMPAnet project activities to biodiversity issues for CAMP Montenegro continued, including synergies with PAP/RAC and SCP/RAC through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of terms of reference, budgets and detailed activities for Montenegro contracts and MoUs regarding the development of a protected area in Kotor Bay. - Implementation of exploration and mapping activities in Kotor Bay. - Elaboration of an online GIS for Kotor Bay. - Work with the Montenegrin authorities and team selected on coordination of the MedMPAnet project and CAMP activities. - MoU and contracts implementation to develop green economy within CAMP Montenegro in cooperation with SCP/RAC. - Organization of a training workshop on ecotourism for local development in Kotor Bay. <p>RAC/SPA is currently contributing to CAMP Italy and CAMP France (CAMP Var) implemented under the lead of PAP/RAC.</p>
3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned	Adaptive programming of activities related to projects being undertaken by RAC/SPA can aid to assist needs araised regarding biodiversity work for CAMP projects
4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs	-
5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19	-
Theme III: Biodiversity	
<u>Output 3.1: Ecosystem services provided by the marine and coastal environment identified and valued</u>	
1- Expected Results	Expected Result 3.1.1: Three Case studies developed regarding services provided by marine and coastal ecosystems

<p>2- Main achievements</p>	<p>Expected Result 3.1.1: RAC/SPA will organise from 2 to 4 April 2015, in Protoroz, Slovenia, a Mediterranean training session on the evaluation of marine ecosystems services. This training will be organized, in the premises of the Marine Biology Station of Piran, in close collaboration with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation (IRSNC). Participants from 6 Mediterranean countries attended the training session. During the session, two case studies were selected in order to be implemented by the trainees in two selected MPAs after the training, with the support and technical supervision of RAC/SPA.</p>
<p>3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned</p>	<p>RAC/SPA was able to finance only two case studies in two MPAs, instead of three, due to the lack of financial resources allocated to this activity.</p>
<p>4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Output 3.2: Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (strategic vision, new objectives in the post 2010 context, including fisheries, ballast, non-indigenous species), endangered and threatened species</p>	
<p>1- Expected Results</p>	<p>Expected Result 3.2.1: The two Action Plans for the conservation of Cetaceans and for the conservation of Coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions in the Mediterranean evaluated and revisions proposed in line with the CBD and EcAp.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.2.2: Rationalization of processes leading to species lists in Annexes II and III to the SPA/BD Protocol with scientific lists of GFCM.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.2.3: EBSAs Mediterranean Workshop organized in cooperation with the CBD Secretariat.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.2.4: More systematic and catalytic action conducted on capacity building and awareness raising on conservation of endangered species within the implementation of the regional Action Plans.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.2.5: Scientific baseline related to the threatened species within the implementation of the regional Action Plans.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.2.6: Maps and inventories of key habitats under the two Action Plans for the conservation of Marine Vegetation and for the conservation of the Coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions in the Mediterranean completed and their conservation promoted through SPAMI establishment.</p>
<p>2- Main achievements</p>	<p>Expected Result 3.2.1: As decided by the last Barcelona Contracting Parties meeting (Istanbul, 2013), RAC/SPA has launched the updating of the Action plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and the action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and other calcareous bioconcretions in the Mediterranean Sea and. The updating should also be in line with the EcAp Process. The drafts are presented in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/8 and the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/9.</p>

RAC/SPA has launched the updating of the Action Plan concerning species introductions and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea, taking into account, among others, the EcAp process and the integrated monitoring and assessment programme being currently developed. The draft is presented in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/11.

The status of the implementation of the sus-mentionned Actions Plans are presented in the following information documents: UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.4; UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.7; UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.8.

Expected Result 3.2.2: RAC/SPA has participated in GFCM meetings and provided technical inputs to discussions on sustainable use of high seas fisheries, small scale fisheries and protected areas, MPAs, by-catch reduction and in the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee meeting where progress on MPAs, cetacean by-catch reduction, stranding and climate change were presented.

Expected Result 3.2.3: The Mediterranean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) was organized, in Malaga, Spain, on 7-11 April 2014, by the Secretariat of the CBD, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), with logistical and technical support of IUCN-Med and RAC/SPA. This workshop was a great achievement and resulted in describing 17 EBSAs that were endorsed by the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in June 2014. During the SBSTTA meeting 3 side events for both UNEP/MAP and RAC/SPA were presented.

The 17 Mediterranean candidate EBSAs were finally presented to the CBD COP 12 (Pyongyang, Republic of South Korea, October 2014), among which 15 EBSAs were included in the CBD EBSA repository. Two other ones remained pending additional work and deliberation by the concerned neighbouring countries for a further cycle of EBSAs listing in the CBD EBSA repository. UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.10.

Expected Result 3.2.4:

Within the implementation of the Action Plan for **the conservation of cetaceans** in the Mediterranean, RAC/SPA has supported the following actions:

- “Satellite telemetry applied to fin whales in the Mediterranean Sea” to be carried out by the “Tethys Research Institute” around Lampedusa Island (Italy).
- A survey on the bottlenose population present in the Northern Tunisian area.
- Data collection on the status of cetaceans populations and their interaction with fisheries in Damietta coast (Egypt).
- The organization of the ACCOBAMS' Third Biennial Conference on Cetacean Conservation in South Mediterranean Countries (Jounieh, Lebanon, 21-23 October 2014).
- The organisation of the 29th European Cetaceans Society Conference (St. Julian's, Malta, 23-25 March 2015).
- The functioning of Mediterranean cetaceans stranding database (Medaces) which managed by University of Valencia.

- The preparation and the edition of the cetacean Manual for MPA managers, in collaboration with ACCOBAMS and MedPAN.
- Within the implementation of the Action Plan for **the conservation of marine turtles** in the Mediterranean, RAC/SPA has implemented the following actions:
- Two national training sessions on the monitoring of Loggerhead turtles nesting in the Kuriat Islands (Tunisia) were held during Summer 2014 and Summer 2015. This activity was jointly organized with APAL (Coastal Planning and Protection Agency) and INSTM (National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies).
- RAC/SPA supported the setting-up of a rescue centre for marine turtles in Tyre Coastal Nature Reserve, in Southern Lebanon and assisted in making operational again of the rescue centre of Monastir (Tunisia).
- The organization of the 5th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles, to be held in Dalaman, Turkey, back to back with the 35th International Sea Turtles Symposium (19-24 April 2015).

Within the implementation of the Action Plan for **the conservation of marine and coastal birds listed in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol** :

- RAC/SPA supported the Tunisian NGO “Association les Amis des Oiseaux” (AAO) in the ringing of 45 greater flamingo chicks that hatched at the Korba Lagoon, Tunisia (Summer 2014).
- RAC/SPA organised the Second Symposium on the conservation of Marine and Coastal Birds in the Mediterranean (Hammamet, Tunisia, 20-22 February 2015), in partnership with the “Association les Amis des Oiseaux” (AAO, BirdLife Partner in Tunisia), MEDMARAVIS and two French organizations: the Tour du Valat Biological Station and Conservatoire du Littoral. The recommendations of this symposium appears in Annex 1 to the present report.

RAC/SPA elaborated review reports on the populations of marine birds, elasmobranchs and cetaceans for the Alboran Sea, Sicily Channel-Tunisian Plateau and Adriatic Sea. UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.11, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.12, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.15, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.16, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.19, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.20, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.21.

Expected Result 3.2.6: Activities concerning the conservation of threatened habitats are being implemented through the **MedKeyHabitats project**:

- The MedKeyHabitats project unit is established and fully operational.
- Official contacts with several countries concerned by the project were made and coordination meetings were held with representatives of Algeria, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia. Four MoCs were signed with Algeria, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia.
- A Regional Training Session on the inventory, characterization, mapping and monitoring of marine key habitats of conservation interest in the Mediterranean Sea (Kuriat Islands - Monastir, Tunisia, 17-24 August 2014) was organized.
- A preliminary field mission was undertaken in Djebel Moussa area, Morocco (13-20 September 2014) in order to identify the main marine key habitats and their distribution. An extensive mapping survey will be implemented in this area during September 2015.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RAC/SPA organized in collaboration with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation three back-to-back symposia on Mediterranean key marine habitats (Portoroz, Slovenia, 27-31 October 2014): (i) the 5th Mediterranean Symposiums on Marine Vegetation (27-28 October 2014); (ii) the 2nd Mediterranean Symposium on Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretions (29-30 October 2014); and (iii) the 1st Mediterranean Symposium on Dark Habitats (31 October 2014). More than 140 participants from 17 countries took part to these symposia and no less than 126 papers and posters presented. The recommendations of these symposia appear in Annex 2, 3 and 4.• During the last symposiums on the marine key habitats held in Portoroz from 27 to 31 October 2014, it became obvious to amend, discuss and propose new facies for integration within the Barcelona Convention's Habitats List. To this end RAC/SPA is proposing a programme of work to direct its action over the coming two-year period towards the following activities:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RAC/SPA is preparing and editing a kit containing guidelines, manuals, methodology, tools and Action Plans on habitats, to be disseminated to scientists and marine conservationists during the project.• RAC/SPA is supporting a research programme on the status of the <i>Cystoseira</i> algae along the Tunisian coast through the MedKeyHabitats project.• Within the framework of the implementation of the Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea, and in order to assist the Mediterranean countries to develop their national capabilities in the field of marine vegetation conservation, RAC/SPA will promote the attendance of participants, including students, from the countries concerned by the MedKeyHabitats project (Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia) to the 4th Mediterranean Seagrass Workshop (MSW'15, Oristano (Sardinia), Italy, 18-22 May 2015).• During the biennial period 2014-2015 and prior to the Twelfth Meeting of Focal Points for SPAs, Albania has submitted to the RAC/SPA Secretariat a proposal for inclusion in the SPAMI List. It is the National Marine Park «Karaburun Sazan». The proposal was prepared through the MedKeyHabitats project support.• In the framework of the MedKeyHabitats project, a conference will be convened in June 2015 in Tunisia in order to discuss the SPAMI process (representativeness, coherence, management effectiveness, etc.). This conference will be organised in collaboration with ACCOBAMS, GFCM, MedPAN and possibly IUCN-Med.• Given the situation prevailing in Libya, the mapping activities planned within the MedKeyHabitats project were replaced by a capacity building programme for three Libyan participants from Environment General Authority of Libya (EGA). The training programme includes the three following steps :<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A training session on mapping of key habitats by satellite imagery and ROV.○ A training session on the use of GIS for mapping key habitats.○ An on-job training on the use of side scan sonar during the mapping activity planned for the Cap Negro-Sidi Mechreg area (Northern Tunisia).
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	<p>Concerning the core activity of the MedKeyHabitats project which concerns the mapping of marine key habitats, RAC/SPA launched two calls for tender in order to undertake the mapping activities in Montenegro and Tunisia using the side scan sonar and the initiation of key habitats monitoring. Concerning Algeria and Morocco, rather classical methods (scuba diving, transects, hydroplan,...) will be used given the geomorphology of the selected working sites. Detailed information on the project' progress is given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.6.</p> <p>RAC/SPA will carry out, in collaboration with OCEANA (lead partner), IUCN Med and the UNEP/MAP Secretariat, a deep-sea conservation project in Lebanon. The project aims to support Lebanon's efforts to implement its MPA strategy and it will contribute to increased information of deep-sea ecosystems, in which areas there is currently lacking data. Supporting partners are GFCM and ACCOBAMS. This proposal is prepared and will be implemented under the dark Habitats Action Plan.</p> <p>During the last symposiums on the marine key habitats held in Portoroz from 27 to 31 October 2014, it became obvious to amend, discuss and propose new facies for integration within the Barcelona Convention's Habitats List. To this end RAC/SPA is proposing a programme of work to direct its action over the coming two-year period towards the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of national inventories of natural sites of conservation interest; - Further assistance to countries for the use of the SDF and to strengthen their capacity to map, monitor and assess the marine habitats status within the framework of EcAp; - Updating of the reference list of marine and coastal natural habitat types; <p>Further details of this draft programme is given in the working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/10.</p>
<p>3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned</p>	<p>The fund allocated for the regional Action Plans on threatened species (Mediterranean Monk Seal, Cetaceans, Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Seabirds) was limited in 2014/2015 and didn't allow the implementation of all the planned activities adopted within their implementation calendars. The activities within other projects being developed by RAC/SPA in related funding e.g. MedOpenSeas, allowed to compile for some sub-regions updates on existing information regarding Cetaceans, Marine Turtles, Cartilaginous Fishes and Seabirds. They will be also useful to aid defining the future feasible activities on the regional action plans with relevant partners for those sub-regions</p>
<p>4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs</p>	<p>A recommendation regarding the inclusion of the candidate site proposed by Albania (the Karaburun Sazan Marine Park) in the SPAMI List.</p> <p>Recommendations of the Second Symposium on the conservation of Marine and Coastal Birds in the Mediterranean</p> <p>Recommendations of the the 5th Mediterranean Symposiums on Marine Vegetation ; the 2nd Mediterranean Symposium on Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretions and the 1st Mediterranean Symposium on Dark Habitats</p>
<p>5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19</p>	<p>A draft Decision regarding the adoption of the updated Action Plans as follows: the action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and other</p>

	<p>calcareous bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea and the Action plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean and the Action Plan concerning species introductions and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea</p> <p>A draft Decision regarding the inclusion of the candidate site proposed by Albania (the Karaburun Sazan Marine Park) in the SPAMI List.</p> <p>Recommendations regarding the accepting of the request of Oceana to become partner of the Dark Habitats Action Plan</p>
<p><u>Output 3.3: Network of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MPAs), including Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), extended, strengthened and effectively managed</u></p>	
<p><i>1- Expected Results</i></p>	<p>Expected Result 3.3.1: Assistance and capacity building provided to primarily the 12 GEF eligible Mediterranean countries in establishing Marine and Coastal Protected Areas with more emphasis on network connectivity and ecological representativeness issues, at national and sub-regional levels.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.3.2: A networking and collaboration process initiated among the declared SPAMIs (SPAMI List), with special emphasis on science-based high quality evaluations and wider dissemination of information.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.3.3: Evaluation of 22 SPAMIs, included in the SPAMI List in 2001, 2003, 2008 and 2009, carried out.</p> <p>Expected Result 3.3.4: The process of establishing joint SPAMIs in open seas supported.</p>
<p><i>2- Main achievements</i></p>	<p>Expected Result 3.3.1: RAC/SPA is contributing to the implementation of the MedPartnership Sub-component 3.1 “Conservation of Coastal and Marine Diversity through Development of a Mediterranean MPA Network”. RAC/SPA activities have been named the “MedMPAnet project” and have been implemented as follows (MedMPAnet project detailed progress is presented under information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.24):</p> <p>Establishment of coordination mechanisms for regional MPA management</p> <p><u>Establish an operative Project Coordination Unit (PCU):</u> In order to ensure the project management efficiency, a four (then five, as of 1 July 2014) member-operative Project Coordination Unit was established within RAC/SPA. The project team is based in annex offices in Tunis, away from RAC/SPA main headquarters.</p> <p><u>Develop the project communication and information tools and raise awareness of key stakeholders on MPA values and importance:</u> Communication and information tools and activities were developed in order to raise the visibility of the project and to enhance awareness of key stakeholders on marine protected areas (MPA) values and importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A website was created as well as 6 pages on social networking platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Vine, Thinglink, and SoundCloud. • Four issues (January 2012, November 2012, March 2014, and March 2015) of the MedMPAnet e-newsletter were compiled and disseminated.

- A documentary film about MPAs in the Mediterranean is being produced (February-July 2015). Shooting is scheduled in 4 Mediterranean MPAs: Porto Palermo Bay in Albania, Nueva Tabarca in Spain and Kuriat Islands and Kerkennah Archipelago in Tunisia. The first screening of the film is scheduled for September 2015, during the MedMPAnet project Final Workshop.
- RAC/SPA was involved in several regional events and international meetings, to share its experience related to MPA programmes and spread inspiring activities. The Centre has co-organized the 2012 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (Antalya, Turkey, 25-28 November 2012), and actively participated to the third edition of the International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC 3; Marseilles, France, 21-27 October 2013). RAC/SPA has also participated to the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress (Sidney, Australia, 12-19 November 2014), and the first Arab World MPA Symposium (Hurghada, Egypt, 19-21 January 2015).
- Bookmarks, postcards, brochures, DVDs, canvas bags, etc., as well as the photobook "*Méditerranées*", were distributed during workshops and events organized by RAC/SPA and other partners.
- An article entitled '*Guidelines to improve the implementation of the Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas network and connectivity between Specially Protected Areas*' was published in the December 2014 CIHEAM Watch Letter n° 31.
- An illustrated article (1000 words) entitled '*Protected Areas in the Making – a Photo Roundup*' about the project activities country by country has been submitted for edition in the Sustainable Mediterranean MedPartnership issue.
- All the project studies, reports and technical outputs are currently being formatted following a standard layout adopted for the project deliverables. These outputs will be printed and/or made available online, as needed and agreed with the concerned partner countries and organizations.

Elaboration and endorsement of a 'Roadmap towards a comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively connected and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas by 2020' in the framework of the Barcelona Convention

During their Sixteenth Ordinary Meeting (Marrakech, Morocco, November 2009), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted a Regional Working Programme aimed at supporting the Mediterranean countries in their efforts to achieve the CBD's 2012 target regarding marine protected areas (Decision IG.19/13).

Since the adoption of the Programme of Work in 2009, many Mediterranean countries, with the help of RAC/SPA and other relevant regional organisations, endeavoured to further develop their national network of marine and coastal protected areas. Nowadays, the challenge for the Mediterranean countries in this context is to be able to achieve the Aichi target 11 by ensuring that 10 per cent of their coastal and marine areas are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

During their Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting (Istanbul, Turkey, December 2013) the Contracting Parties requested the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to prepare with all relevant MAP components and in close cooperation with Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders a draft roadmap for a comprehensive coherent network of well managed MPAs to achieve Aichi 11 target in the Mediterranean for consideration by the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting with a view to its adoption (Decision IG.21/5).

As a follow-up of this mandate, RAC/SPA will be submitting for the present Twelfth Meeting of Focal Points for SPAs:

- an assessment of the progress made so far in implementing the Regional Working Programme adopted in 2009, (information document: UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.26) and
- a proposal for a Roadmap aimed at achieving a comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively connected and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine (working document: UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/14).

In preparation of the Focal Points meeting, the first draft of the 2020 MPA Roadmap will be discussed, was reviewed and finalized during an ad hoc meeting held in Tunis, Tunisia, on 27-28 April 2015 in presence of a number of Mediterranean experts and regional partner organizations (ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IUCN-Med, MedPAN, and WWF-MedPO).

Identification and planning of new MPAs to extend the regional network and enhance its ecological representativeness

Albania:

Following consultations with the Albanian environmental authorities, the Porto Palermo Bay (Southern Albania) was selected to be declared as an MPA within the MedMPAnet project. The ecological studies conducted in 2013 and 2014, including the mapping of most important marine habitats and species, confirmed the presumed richness of the site. The ecological and socio-economic study reports of the Porto Palermo Bay area were finalized in English and translated into Albanian in 2014.

The process of elaboration of a management plan, based on the ecological and socio-economic assessments and discussions with different stakeholders, started in June 2014. The first draft was ready in Albanian language by late September 2014 and has been presented to local authorities during a workshop held in Himara, on 12 November 2014.

The forthcoming activity in Albania, will consist in demonstrating the financial sustainability for the Porto Palermo pilot MPA. In this regard, a training session on business planning for MPA managers and practitioners in Albania is also scheduled in mid-2015.

Algeria:

In Algeria, a process to develop a national strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and a Coastal Plan for the Réghaia coastal area (Eastern Algiers) initiated by the Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment (MATE) in partnership with PAP/RAC. Both initiatives were supported by UNESCO-IHP, RAC/SPA and the Conservatoire du littoral. In this context, the marine part of Réghaia coastal area was proposed to be declared as an MPA with the support of RAC/SPA.

As a first step and in support to the Réghaia Coastal Plan, a socio-economic study, including the identification of potential stakeholders and partnerships that could be involved in the MPA creation and management was carried out in 2013. In 2014, an Algerian firm of consultants was hired in order to carry out a complementary ecological survey in the Réghaia area, as well as to elaborate a management plan for the future MPA. Data collection and fieldwork started since September 2014 and will be completed by end of March 2015 in order to lead to the elaboration of the management and zoning plans by mid-2015.

Croatia:

In Croatia, the project has been implemented along the coasts of the islands of Prvié, Sveti Grgur, Goli, Krk, Rab, Veliki and Mali Čutin, Susak, Unije and Srakane, which belong to the County of Primorje & Gorski Kotar, in northern Croatia. Ecological studies were conducted in these areas, during 2013 and 2014, in order to map species and habitats and to assess their status. A socio-economic and fisheries study was conducted with a view to encouraging sustainable fishing in the region. In addition, two national monitoring protocols for Posidonia and Coralligenous habitats were developed. Croatian environmental authorities approved the monitoring protocols and endorsed the final field survey reports on Posidonia, Coralligenous, and Fisheries, integrating the results of 2013 and 2014.

Egypt:

The MedMPAnet project planned to work on the planning for the management of the Sallum Bay MPA during the 2014 - mid-2015 period. For that aim, a technical meeting with environmental Egyptian authorities concerning the MedMPAnet Project activity in Egypt was held in Cairo, on 18-20 January 2015. Due to remaining time before the project closure, it was agreed that only a socio-economic study in the Sallum area can be made at this stage. An Egyptian consulting firm was recruited to carry out a literature review and to collect data on the relevant socio-economic activities related to the Sallum Bay MPA. The final report will be available by end of June 2015.

Lebanon:

The activity implemented within the MedMPAnet project in Lebanon focused on rapid natural habitat assessments along the Lebanese coast. Thorough studies were then conducted during 2012 and 2013 in six marine sites, namely Enfeh Peninsula, Ras Chekaa Cliffs, Raoucheh Cliffs, Sidon, Tyre and Naqoura. Inventory of species, mainly of patrimonial and fishing interest, and mapping of benthic habitats were performed. In 2014, the synthesis report of the ecological characterization of the six studied sites has been finalized, including the outlines of zoning and management proposals. The final version of the synthesis report is under edition and will be presented during the final presentation workshop ~~that~~ ~~will be~~ held in April 2015 in Beirut.

Libya:

Following studies made by RAC/SPA and WWF-MedPO in the framework of the MedPartnership project, Libya declared in February 2011, the Ain Al-Ghazala marine area and Elba Island as a new MPA.

Yet, there are neither a specific legislation for protected areas nor a national strategy to develop MPAs and to reinforce stakeholders' participation in Libya. In order to overcome this legal and institutional gap and following a request from the Libyan Environment General Authority (EGA), several workshops were

conducted in order to elaborate a draft law on protected areas. The last workshop was held in Tripoli, on 7 May 2014, following which a draft law was proposed to the Libyan authorities in order to undertake the needed national procedure for its adoption. Besides and following the same participatory approach, a draft national strategy for MPA establishment was developed during 2013 and 2014. The resulting strategy was also submitted to EGA that will share it with all the stakeholders for comments and recommendations in view to its final endorsement.

Furthermore, a Toolkit on Stakeholders Participation in Marine and Coastal Protected Areas establishment in Libya is under finalization.

The other activity initially planned for Libya, which relates to the management planning for El Kouf National Park future marine extension, including a marine ecological survey, and given the security situation prevailing in the country, this activity was canceled.

Montenegro:

In 2011 and 2012, rapid assessments were undertaken along the Montenegrin coast in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Montenegro, Further to this preliminary step, Boka Kotorska Bay was selected as a pilot site. A fishery study and an extensive ecological survey, using the side scan sonar, were carried out in the area. The collected data contributed to the establishment of a GIS database that also served the purpose of CAMP Montenegro project.

Furthermore, RAC/SPA has joined efforts to PAP/RAC and SCP/RAC in a pilot project on testing the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) in Boka Kotorska Bay, A feasibility study on ecotourism, aiming at encouraging the development of green entrepreneurship, was elaborated and presented during a public consultation workshop held in February 2014. The study was finalized and endorsed by Montenegrin environmental authorities in September 2014.

A legal and institutional framework assessment has been also developed and endorsed by the Montenegrin environmental authorities in November 2014.

Morocco:

Following the ecological and socio-economic characterization of the Cap des Trois Fourches area (North-eastern Morocco) undertaken in 2012 and 2013, a management plan is being developed. This activity has been launched in June 2014. Two workshops were held in Nador. The last one that took place on 1 October 2014 served to present the diagnosis and assessment phase and to discuss the management vision and objectives with stakeholders. The following consultation workshop is scheduled on 21-22 April 2015 and aims at discussing the draft management plan and the proposed participation and involvement mechanism of local stakeholders in the process of creation and management of the future MPA.

Tunisia:

Two surveys to assess the marine biological features of the Kuriat Islands (Eastern Tunisia) have been undertaken respectively in 2010 and 2011. Barrier reefs of Posidonia, maerl banks and other marine biocenosis were characterized and mapped. This work served as a basis for initiating the process of elaboration of a management plan for the area. Two consultation workshops with local stakeholders took place in Monastir in April and May 2014. Based on the results of these workshops, a management plan was drafted and presented and endorsed during a stakeholders' public workshop, held on 26 February 2015.

As a follow-up of the project activities, the Tunisian Coastal Protection and Planning Agency (APAL) took rapidly action and built on the project achievements. In this regard, a small meeting with key stakeholders took place in Monastir on 18 March 2015, in order to set up the future MAP steering committee.

Elaboration of MPA creation and management guidelines and teaching packages:

- The technical tool ‘Monitoring Mediterranean Lesser Crested Terns *Thalasseus bengalensis emigratus*’ was electronically published (in English) and disseminated through the web.
- English and French paper editions of the ‘Guidance for building Marine Protected Areas: Guidelines to improve the implementation of the Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas network and connectivity between Specially Protected Areas’ were elaborated and disseminated.
- A ‘Cetacean Manual for MPA managers’ (English) was elaborated and paper edited in collaboration with ACCOBAMS and MedPAN.
- A ‘Stakeholder participation toolkit for identification, designation and management of marine protected areas’ (English) was elaborated and electronically edited, in collaboration with IUCN-Med.
- A ‘Manual on Coastal Biota and their Environmental Monitoring in Mediterranean MPAs’ is under finalization in Spanish (original version), English and French, in collaboration with Seville University and the *Junta de Andalucia, Spain*.
- A ‘Teaching Package on Ecological Monitoring in Mediterranean MPAs’ is under finalization in English and French, in collaboration with the University of Alicante’s CIMAR (Santa Pola, Spain).

Improved MPA management

- RAC/SPA supported the Tunisian APAL and INSTM in running the 2013 and 2014 summer turtles monitoring campaigns in Kuriat Islands and also in providing training to a number of Tunisian and non-Tunisian young scientists on turtle nesting sites monitoring techniques.
- RAC/SPA organized in Santa Pola, Spain (23-28 September 2013) the Third Mediterranean Training Session on Ecological Monitoring in MPAs, in collaboration with CIMAR (University of Alicante). Twelve participants from nine Mediterranean countries took part to this session which particularly focused on field work.
- RAC/SPA organized in Santa Pola and Nueva Tabarca Marine Reserve, Spain (22-27 September 2014) the Fourth Mediterranean Training Session on Ecological Monitoring in MPAs, in collaboration with CIMAR (University of Alicante). Ten MPA managers and practitioners, and marine researchers, from Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, Lebanon, Montenegro and Tunisia, took part to this session.
- RAC/SPA provided support to 9 marine scientists and MPA practitioners (from: Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, Morocco, and Spain), to attend the RAC/SPA-convened Symposia on the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Key Habitats (Portoroz, Slovenia, 27-31 October 2014). These participants have had the opportunity to present to the Mediterranean scientific community the results of the MedMPAnet project habitat-related field assessment results.

- RAC/SPA co-organized with MedPAN two regional experience-sharing workshops respectively in 2013 and 2014 on “Surveillance and enforcement of regulations in MPAs: how to maximize the efficiency and sustainability of actions” (Hyères, France, 12-14 November 2013) and “Monitoring for managing Mediterranean MPA” (Tirana, Albania, 25-27 November 2014).
- RAC/SPA co-organized with MedPAN a regional training workshop for Mediterranean MPA managers on “Climate change in Mediterranean marine protected areas” (Cadaqués, Spain, 1-4 April 2014).
- RAC/SPA provided its support to a Tunisian young researcher working on the setting-up of an ecological monitoring system of fish populations and marine biocenosis in Tunisian marine protected areas (including in the Kuriat Islands MPA).

Ensuring financial Sustainability of regional and national MPA networks
RAC/SPA and MedPAN are collaborating with WWF-MedPO in order to: (i) elaborate a study of financial needs of Mediterranean MPAs, (ii) develop a Guide for the financing of MPA, and (iii) prepare a training workshop on MPA financing.

Data collection and processing are currently in progress regarding the study on financial needs, which should be finalized by April 2015. The training is scheduled for September 2015 in the Natura Reserve of Scandola (Corsica, France).

The gap analysis on financial needs of Mediterranean MPAs is preseted for information in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.25. Detailed information on the project’ progress is given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.24.

Expected Result 3.3.2: In the framework of the MedKeyHabitats project, a conference will be convened in June 2015 in Tunisia in order to discuss the SPAMI process (representativeness, coherence, management effectiveness, etc.). This conference will be organised in collaboration with ACCOBAMS, GFCM, MedPAN and possibly IUCN-Med.

Expected Result 3.3.3: In the framework of the 2014-2015 biennium ordinary periodic review (Decision IG.21/5 of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, Istanbul, December 2013), the 22 concerned SPAMIs are the following:

- Bouches de Bonifacio Natural Reserve (France);
- Port-Cros National Park (France);
- Pelagos Sanctuary for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (France, Italy, Monaco);
- Marine Protected Area and Natural Reserve of Torre Guaceto (Italy);
- Marine Protected Area of Capo Caccia-Isola Piana (Italy);
- Marine Protected Area of Tavolara-Punta Coda Cavallo (Italy);
- Miramare Marine Protected Area (Italy);
- Plemmirio Marine Protected Area (Italy);
- Punta Campanella Marine Protected Area (Italy);
- Al-Hoceima National Park (Morocco);
- Alboran Island (Spain);
- Archipelago of Cabrera National Park (Spain);

- Cabo de Gata-Nijar Natural Park (Spain);
- Cap de Creus Natural Park (Spain);
- Columbretes Islands (Spain);
- Mar Menor and Oriental Mediterranean zone of the Region of Murcia coast (Spain);
- Maro-Cerro Gordo Cliffs (Spain);
- Medes Islands (Spain);
- Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria (Spain);
- Kneiss Islands (Tunisia);
- La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia); and
- Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia).

For that aim, 22 mixed (independent-national) Technical Advisory Committees were set-up by the concerned national authorities under the supervision of the concerned country RAC/SPA Focal Point and with the RAC/SPA support (mainly for the mobilization of non-national independent experts).

The signed review reports, along with their set of conclusions-recommendations were forwarded to the RAC/SPA Secretariat by the concerned Focal Points for SPAs. The results of the ordinary periodic review appear in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/12.

Expected Result 3.3.4: The ongoing work on the **creation of SPAMIs in the open seas including in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJs)** has made progress through the implementation of two consultation meetings for the neighbouring countries of the two priority areas Sicily channel/Tunisian plateau and the Adriatic open seas (Gammarth, Tunisia, in September 2014) Libya was unable to participate due to the unstable situation in the country and was officially excused.

Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro were absent and were also officially excused. Major key results were two draft roadmaps for each respective area indicating the way forward in the process to identify, establish and declare SPAMIs in the open seas.

For each priority area, thematic reports on the status of conservation of seabirds, fisheries and cetaceans together with a general ecology report were presented and were reviewed by the involved Party countries (i.e. Sicily channel/Tunisian plateau: Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia; and Adriatic Sea: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia) presented in the documents :

- UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.12;
- UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.13;
- UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.14;
- UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.19;
- UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.20;
- UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.21;
- UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.22;
- UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.23 .

There were announcements of the second round of meetings to be held in Italy, in April 2015.

	<p>A follow up meeting for the Alboran Sea that was planned to be held in December 2014 was postponed until a possible date can be agreed between the neighbouring countries concerned and RAC/SPA, the related documents are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.15; - UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.16; - UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.17; - UNEP(DEPI)/MEDWG.408/Inf.18. <p>Detailed information on the project' progress is given in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.9</p> <p>Noting the international ocean governance discussions and the importance of regional sea governance, there is an urgent need to start collaborating, between the key organizations, which aim to achieve the sustainable management of natural resources of the Mediterranean Sea. UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN and MedPAN thus aim to create a joint strategic framework, with specific emphasis on addressing issues where the above institutions have common synergies, building on their existing cooperation arrangements and joint work streams in the framework of various projects, such as the MedOpenSeas, EcAp-MED.</p> <p>The Joint Strategy, as a first step would focus on the conservation priority areas, where activities to promote spatial management and conservation are already being promoted by RAC/SPA in the framework of the EcAp/MED project (Alboran Sea, Sicily Channel/Tunisian Plateau and Adriatic Sea).</p> <p>A final version of this draft Joint Strategy is expected to be jointly developed by end of September 2015, with a vision to develop it further, as a second step, into a wider common strategy document, aiming to achieve synergies and more coordinated regional sea governance, with the common aim of sustainable management of marine resources, to be finalised and agreed along 2016.</p> <p>The Draft elements for a Common strategy among RAC/SPA, GFCM, ACCOBAMS and IUCN-Med, with the collaboration of MedPAN are described in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/17.</p> <p>The development of a study on the identification of good practices useful for elaborating, adopting and implementing management plans in the case of the joint SPAMIs embracing the open seas is underway, in line with the approach to facilitate the preparation of joint proposals for inclusion in the SPAMI List in accordance with Article 9 of the SPA/BD Protocol. The outline is given in the annex of the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/ Inf.9.</p>
<p><i>3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project activities related to the conservation of the open seas and on monitoring of biodiversity in the Mediterranean are still in implementing phase and have only a few reflections.. Regarding implementation of stakeholder engagement with several countries with different cultures and resources is important to keep the momentum in such process. The other challenge is-that this kind of activities, where institutional and political decisions are involved, need indeed a long coordination processes. • The future phase of establishing SPAMIs in the Mediterranean, in

	<p>particular in the priority areas of the Alboran Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Sicily Channel/Tunisian Plateau, will require a close follow-up after this phase. Engaged countries should ideally proceed with selecting SPAMI sites and to prepare presentation documents to be adopted at Contracting Parties meetings. This will require continued facilitation and future funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contracting Parties of the neighbouring countries of the Sicily channel/Tunisian plateau and the Adriatic open seas selected representatives and participated in the two consultation meetings for the development of SPAMIs in those two priority areas. The representatives were engaged during the meetings and thereafter responsive in finalization of the meeting reports and they are currently reviewing the ecology reports. The success of creating SPAMIs in the open seas is highly dependent on their engagement and it has been satisfactory so far. • There have been internal events occurring in Libya interfering on RAC/SPA's work on establishment of new coastal MPAs and SPAMIs in the open seas. RAC/SPA's work on the establishment of a new MPA in El Kouf coastal area has been on standby. • Concerning the participation of neighbouring countries of Sicily Channel/Tunisian Plateau, Libya was restricted to come to the consultation meeting on the development of SPAMIs, held in Gammarth, Tunisia, in September 2014. The security situation in Libya prevented the invited national Focal Point and his expert colleague to leave the country, despite their willingness to try even by car. RAC/SPA asked for possible Libyan representatives already outside of Libya to participate, but there was no one available.
<p>4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19</p>	<p>Draft Decision on the 'Roadmap towards a comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively connected and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas by 2020'.</p>
<p>Theme VI: Climate Change</p>	
<p><u>Output 6.1: Mediterranean region able to face climate change challenges through a better understanding of potential impacts and ecological vulnerabilities</u></p>	
<p>1- Expected Results</p>	<p>Expected Result 6.1.1: Assessment of indicators of climate change impact on biodiversity in specially protected areas conducted</p>
<p>2- Main achievements</p>	<p>Expected Result 6.1.1: A team of experts on biodiversity monitoring was identified to work on assessing climate change indicators in three SPAMIs located in Italy and Spain serving as model for the future implementation of different indicators measuring, linked to climate change monitoring. Where possible, the same indicator will be compared in at least two SPAMIs. The work will aid to identify the main science, technical and operational gaps for the monitoring of climate change in the different habitats and oceanographic parameters considered.</p>
<p>3-Difficulties encountered and lessons learned</p>	<p>There is limited past or ongoing work on the topic in the Mediterranean, basically through work developed by RAC/SPA in collaboration with IUCN Med, and the team will face this challenge along the development of its activity.</p>

4-Draft Recommendations by the 12th meeting of FPs for SPAs	-
5-Draft Decisions to MCP 19	-

INTER-LINKAGES AND SYNERGIES WITH OTHER PROJECTS

In order to avoid duplication and make better use of the available resources, linkages and synergies with other MAP Components and relevant actors and organizations have been always sought by RAC/SPA. In this regards, RAC/SPA is closely collaborating with:

- (i) The Barcelona Convention/MAP Secretariat, MED POL, REMPEC, PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu/RAC, GFCM, ACCOBAMS and others in the implementation of the EcAp;
- (ii) ACCOBAMS in the implementation of the Action Plan for the conservation of Cetaceans (RAC/SPA is playing the role of ACCOBAMS' Sub-regional Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean);
- (iii) MEDMARAVIS, Conservatoire du Littoral, the Tunisian NGO "Association *Les Amis des Oiseaux*" and *La Tour du Valat* for the organization of the Second Symposium on the Conservation of Marine and Coastal Birds in the Mediterranean (Hammamet, Tunisia, 20-22 February 2015)
- (iv) REMPEC for the development of a web based Regional Ballast Water Information Exchange System, and any other activity related to ships' ballast water and invasive aquatic species issues;
- (v) PAP/RAC for delivering biodiversity-related activities as part of CAMP projects;
- (vi) UfM, in close cooperation with UNEP/MAP Secretariat, in activities related to marine and coastal ecosystems and biodiversity protection in the Mediterranean region; A meeting has been organised in July 2014 with UfM, IUCN-Med, MedPAN and WWF-MedPO to further advance the topic of EBSAs management along 2014-15;
- (vii) GFCM/FAO, in close cooperation with UNEP/MAP Secretariat, in: (a) promoting ecosystem based approaches for the conservation of the marine and coastal environment and ecosystems and the sustainable use of its living and natural resources; (b) mitigating the impact of fisheries and aquaculture activities on marine habitats and species; and (c) identification and management of EBSAs and marine areas of particular importance;
- (viii) CBD, in close cooperation with UNEP/MAP Secretariat, for the activities related to EBSAs in the Mediterranean
- (ix) MedPAN for updating the Database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MAPAMED), improving marine protected areas managers capacities, developing guidelines and technical tools for MPA management strengthening in the region;
- (x) WWF-MedPO for a number of activities in relation with MPA management improvement and capacity building for MPA managers and practitioners;
- (xi) MedPAN, WWF-MedPO and Conservatoire du Littoral for ensuring commitment of coastal and marine protected areas decision-makers and players towards ICZM initiatives and to the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms to support the management of local territories and biodiversity conservation; ACCOBAMS, GFCM and MedPAN for the organization of the Conference on SPAMIs; and
- (xii) Many other ad hoc organizations and partners as relevant.

RAC/SPA has collaborated closely with IUCN-Med in the preparation and implementation of the three consultation meetings on the development of SPAMIs in the Alboran Sea (Malaga, Spain, December 2013) the Sicily channel/Tunisian plateau open seas (Gammarth, Tunisia, September, 2014) and the Adriatic open seas (Gammarth, Tunisia, September, 2014).

RAC/SPA will in collaboration with OCEANA (lead partner), IUCN Med and the UNEP/MAP Secretariat carry out a deep-sea conservation project in Lebanon. The project aims to support Lebanon's efforts to implement its MPA strategy and it will contribute to increased information of deep-sea ecosystems, in which areas there is currently lacking data. Supporting partners are GFCM and ACCOBAMS.

RAC/SPA was invited to participate and contribute with technical expertise at the first Advisory Panel meeting (Malaga, October 2014) for a new project – FishMPABlue, together with some main policy-making institutions in the Mediterranean i.e. MedPAN, the GFCM – FAO, MedWet and the Italian Institute for Environment Conservation and Research (ISPRA). The project aims to integrate different approaches on the co-existence of artisanal fisheries and MPAs.

In the framework of EcAp, RAC/SPA has discussed on possible workshops and collaboration on biodiversity indicators between OSPAR, HELCOM and the Barcelona Convention in order to harmonize between conventions and be more cost-effective. RAC/SPA participated in the coordination meeting between OSPAR and HELCOM to present EcAp's aims towards a regional integrated monitoring programme in the Mediterranean and to find synergies between the other conventions' work on the same issue. In addition, RAC/SPA participated and contributed with experiences from the Mediterranean in a meeting organized by ICES on the MSFD's descriptors that were based on criteria and methodological standards on Good Environmental Status of marine waters (Decision 2010/477/EU).

ANNEX 1

Recommendations of 2nd symposium on the conservation of marine and coastal birds in the Mediterranean

Hammamet, Tunisia, 20 – 22 February 2015

The participants from 14 Mediterranean countries attending the 2nd Symposium on the Conservation of Marine and Coastal Birds in the Mediterranean, organized by RAC-SPA (Mediterranean Action Plan), Medmaravis and Les Amis des Oiseaux (BirdLife partner in Tunisia), under the auspices of Conservatoire du Littoral (France) and Tour du Valat Biological Station,

1. being aware of the rapidly deteriorating ecological conditions, in some Mediterranean regions, of various marine and coastal bird species and their habitats which are threatened by unsustainable coastal development, overfishing, bycatch (= accidental mortality of seabirds caused by fishing gear), invasive predators, lack of effective management in protected areas such as Specially Protected Areas, human disturbance in breeding colonies, illegal hunting and pollution from several sources,

Urge the Barcelona Convention Secretariat to call up on its Contracting Parties including the European Union:

- to devote special attention to the study and conservation of the Critically endangered Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*, which is experiencing a sharp decline which may lead to its extinction in a few decades, and to extend and implement the EU Action Plan for the conservation of the species in all relevant countries including those in North Africa;
- to conduct population studies on the Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*, and more particularly its movements through the bottlenecks of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles;
- to launch research projects and an effective conservation plan for the populations of Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii* which are at present decreasing in most of the species' range, particularly in the central and eastern Mediterranean;
- to aid census programmes of seabird populations which need to be carried out simultaneously with a common protocol in all countries holding key breeding populations, especially in countries lacking census data;
- to encourage the continuation of long-term monitoring in a number of key and representative colonies and to aid the launching of new long-term monitoring programmes in countries lacking such surveys;
 - to encourage the continuation of long-term assessments of seabird distribution patterns at sea, by boat surveys and GPS tracking, and to aid the launching of new surveys in countries lacking such data, as well as in international waters, which would serve as a platform of cooperation among neighbouring Mediterranean countries;
 - to promote, for species whose breeding habits (i.e. nocturnal attendance, nesting in crevices and caves in small islets and sea cliffs) make difficult to come out with accurate population estimates, the establishment of a set of key colonies of reference where detailed monitoring of nests is conducted, in order to properly estimate demographic parameters (breeding success, survival, recruitment, rate of sabbaticals, etc.) that ultimately will allow to assess population trends;
 - to assist in the establishment of research programmes related to seabird bycatch, particularly of shearwaters on longlines, tuna fish decoys, illegal driftnets and other potentially impacting fishing techniques, as well as to work out and implement effective mitigation measures to reduce bycatch mortality of seabirds and seek coordination with existing Mediterranean initiatives such as GFCM/35/2011/3 recommendation on reporting and reducing seabird bycatch;

- to enforce existing EU regulations (e.g. 1143/2014 of 22 Oct. 2014) which address the issue of the eradication of invading predators threatening breeding populations of seabirds, to implement adequate management measures in order to control such a threat, and to establish similar regulations in non-EU Mediterranean countries;
- to launch census surveys on coastal species, particularly on the dwindling populations and habitats of Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* and Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaulti*, listed in Annex 2 of the Barcelona Convention;

2. realising that various coastal habitats are being degraded rapidly by development in the Mediterranean region, due to the lack of adequate protection, the contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention are urged:

- to provide adequate legal protection and an effective conservation management plan to all marine and coastal Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout the Mediterranean, whether or not they are designated as a Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI);
- to accelerate the approval of management plans for the already existing marine and coastal protected areas, particularly where draft plans have been properly elaborated, including successful participatory processes such as occurring in the Balearic Islands;
- to introduce a Diploma award system, similar to the European Diploma for Protected Areas used by the Council of Europe, to honour outstandingly managed SPAMIs;

3. considering the acute need for efficient long-term conservation measures in coastal habitats and hotspots threatened by unsustainable coastal development, the contracting parties are urgently requested:

- to stop all further deterioration and afford an effective long lasting conservation status of key salt marsh sites holding internationally important populations (breeding, wintering or migrating) of coastal bird species listed in Annex 2 of the Barcelona Convention, such as found in the Gediz delta and in the Ulcinj salt pans;
- to provide effective protection to the three breeding sites in the Mediterranean of the Lesser-crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*, which are threatened by coastal development and human disturbance, partly due to lack of public awareness;
- to launch an in-depth survey of the conservation status and priorities of the very few tidal wetlands existing in the Mediterranean, concentrated around the Gulf of Gabès (from Sfax to Zuwara) and in the northern Adriatic (from Ravenna to Trieste), bearing in mind that functional alterations of these fragile and irreplaceable ecosystems may lead to consequences affecting huge numbers of coastal and wetland bird species, many of which are threatened;

4. realising that various offshore oil and gas drilling platforms are being initiated in the Mediterranean Sea, especially in the North-Western part of the Mediterranean and in the Adriatic, without appropriate analyses of the ecological impacts on marine wildlife and seabirds, the participants of the Hammamet 2015 Symposium urge the governments concerned to carry out in-depth and impartial Environmental Impact Assessments of these projects including:

- the assessment of all operational impacts of drilling activities, as well as those likely to occur by accident, on the marine ecosystems, particularly on seabirds;
- the assessment of potential risk of oil pollution at sea endangering the vulnerable marine and coastal ecosystems;
- the identification of compulsory compensation measures in case of occurrence of such impacts;
- the recruitment of ornithologists and marine biologists of vast Mediterranean experience, in the assessment processes, as well as making full use of the existing literature and databases existing at national and international levels;

5. the participants of the 2015 Hammamet Seabird symposium would like to thank the Regional Activity Centre for Special Protected Areas (RAC-SPA) for organising this successful symposium and would like to extend a vote of thanks to the Tunisian association Les Amis des Oiseaux, BirdLife partner in Tunisia, for its invaluable help in the organisation, its warm welcome and hospitality enjoyed by all participants.

ANNEX 2

Recommendations of the 5th Mediterranean Symposium on Marine Vegetation

Portoroz, Slovenia, 27-28 October 2014

Scientific interest in the Action Plan

Generally speaking, there has been increased interest in the knowledge of marine plant species and growing scientific attendance, plus greater geographical diversity, at the 'Marine Vegetation' Symposium.

Most of the papers (81%) concern marine magnoliophytes, particularly Posidonia meadows (59%), though there is growing interest in other marine magnoliophytes (19%), particularly the Fucales, notably the Cystoseira genus.

In the papers, the major role played by Marine Protected Areas in conserving marine plants was highlighted, but the continuation of illegal trawling practices constitutes a significant danger to plant formations, especially Posidonia meadows.

Recommendations

Much has been done regarding the knowledge and monitoring of plant formations, and new data is now available even though there is still a lack of balance between the countries of the north-western Mediterranean and those of the southern shore and the eastern basin. Efforts here must be kept up; particularly the need to integrate this data to adapt the existing protocols to the specific features of these sub-regions (defining reference conditions, oligotrophy of water, etc.)

→ Pursue and amplify the procedure initiated by RAC/SPA within the framework of the MedPosidonia and MedKeyHabitats programmes, with particular attention paid to the eastern basin and the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

The scientific community highlighted the general regression of Fucales (e.g. Cystoseira forests, gulfweds) even though putting the Cystoseira genus on Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol has been a significant advance. As well as taking into account such regulatory aspects, it is necessary to enhance national capacities to get a Mediterranean-scale overall vision

→ Mobilise all the actors as to the interest of these formations (distribution, dynamics) and the need to identify the origin of the regressions observed, in order to suggest concrete steps likely to solve this problem (e.g. being taken into account in the context of impact studies)

Regulations that are indispensable for conserving vegetation exist in almost all the countries. However, the difficulties encountered in enforcing these persist, particularly because of illegal fishing activities. A special effort must be made to make the Focal Points aware of this, for this lacuna is responsible for significant regressions

→ Draw up an updated assessment of the direct and indirect regulatory measures (regulating human-origin activities that affect these formations) that aim at protecting and conserving the species in the Action Plan on the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Vegetation, working alongside the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

Guidelines for mapping and monitoring are an interesting element but there is still a need for simpler, more robust and non-destructive tools to assess the conservation state of marine plants. Similarly, synergy of actors (scientists, managers) and the widest possible provision of the available data would certainly enable the means to be optimized. The need to have long-term monitoring (chronological series) was recalled; it remains an indispensable precondition for better grasping the changes that have been observed

→ Make exchange of data possible, especially under the aegis of RAC/SPA, by improving the functionality of the current internet site.

ANNEX 3

Recommendations of the 2nd Mediterranean Symposium on Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretions

Portoroz, Slovenia, 29-30 October 2014

In the light of the work presented at this Symposium, we should stress the strides made in knowledge of these formations since the first, Tabarka, Symposium in 2009. The strong participation of the Mediterranean scientific community, and the quality and number of the papers, confirm the interest of these meetings.

The main concerns are both the acquisition of new knowledge about the species or the distribution of these formations, and the means of understanding their good ecological state and how to conserve them more efficiently.

The introductory session presented the CIGESMED Programme, which, based on the coralligenous, aims at identifying indicators for assessing and monitoring the good ecological state of the coastal waters of the Mediterranean. One specific feature of the project is the geographical area that it addresses (the western and eastern basins).

Session 1 aimed to give an appraisal on the progress that has been made in the knowledge of coralligenous formations.

The discussions particularly addressed the standardization of methods for data comparison. The diversity of approaches and tools is a result of the multiple objectives pursued. Recourse to several complementary tools was often noted, and a predominance of non-destructive methods (photographs, videos, ROV, acoustic detection methods) was recorded.

There is an obvious need to have the same type of data in order to compare it over several scales and biogeographical areas. What is important is to make sure that the data is reproducible, reliable, and representative, given that the aim is always to best adapt the sampling effort to these parameters. It is also interesting to be able to keep the raw data in order to re-study it, given that one of the limiting factors is often the qualification of the operator.

Some participants recalled the need to have user-friendly tools for monitoring these formations.

Session 2 addressed the impact of global change.

The work presented showed marked differences in terms of the vulnerability of the structuring species of the coralligenous (*Cladocora caespitosa*, *Corallium rubrum*, *Paramuricea clavata*) and stressed the risks of significant changes (disappearance or appearance of new species), things which are likely to restrict these formations' capacity for recruitment and restoration. Future development of the work could consist of better identifying the share of environmental change, specifically linked to climate change, in degrading other environmental factors.

Session 3 was devoted to the mapping and monitoring of coralligenous habitats. Discussions stressed the great diversity of these formations and the complexity of the coralligenous and other bioconstructions, and the chance offered to the scientific community to discuss and propose new facies for integration within the Barcelona Convention's Habitats List. These lists can later be taken into consideration in the context of the European Commission's normative approaches.

The impact of fishing activities on coralligenous populations was mentioned by several participants; they argued that it is difficult, even within the MPAs, to find formations that are unharmed by any form of fishery (traditional, recreational or commercial).

Session 4 concerned genetic studies of key species of the coralligenous.

Genetics seems to be an innovative tool that can perhaps respond more efficaciously to the requirements of the identification of sites, adapted to the conservation of coralligenous formations and to the prediction of impacts linked to climate change. In the light of these techniques' potential, it was suggested that they be extended to other species and other parts of the Mediterranean.

During the discussion that followed, the interest of multidisciplinary approaches was mentioned with particular attention to the geomorphologic aspects that are important elements in the structuring of the coralligenous. As well as lists of characteristic species of the coralligenous formations, it would be useful to record the features of the habitat sampled.

Session 5 has concerned management of coralligenous habitats and other bio concretions. This session revealed that anthropogenic pressures on coralligenous habitats are apt to affect the deepest sites. Although many economic actors (eg divers, fishermen, coral divers) seem to be aware of the conservation issues in these habitats, it appears necessary to better evaluate and quantify the pressures exerted in standardized approach that can be comparable on a large scale

The discussion allowed to highlight the importance of shared and open information systems, where data on the ecological status and pressures would be accessible, standardized and therefore comparable. Although some broadcast platforms exist, an effort could be made in terms of availability and reliability. It was recalled that despite the emergence of new indicators to compare the ecological status or the pressures on these habitats, evaluation is often based, for lack of sufficient resources, solely on expert opinion. In the same way, several participants highlighted the dramatic lack of mapping data on these habitats for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.

The round table on updating the list of species to be taken into consideration in the context of mapping and monitoring habitats aroused the interest of participants in this type of approach. However, no consensus emerged as to the amendments to be made to the current list. In this respect, the participants suggest setting up, under the aegis of RAC/SPA, theme-based working groups (list of typical species, genetics, mapping, state of conservation etc.). The aim would be using themes to group efforts (synthesis of current knowledge, standardizing work methods, etc.), and sharing information to propose *in fine* conclusions likely to give better management and conservation of the coralligenous and other Mediterranean bioconstructions.

The round table on protecting coralligenous habitats based on scientific knowledge and the present legislative context recalled that European laws ban trawling over the coralligenous, rhodolith beds and marl. The absence of an official map of the distribution of these beds acts as a brake on implementing the regulations. It is thus necessary that already available information be handed to the competent bodies.

The interest in making the public aware of the importance of these formations was recalled.

An assessment of the ecosystem services rendered by these formations would also help their economic value to be highlighted.

In the light of all these considerations, the participants advise:

- encouraging the states to elaborate their National Action Plans for the protection of the coralligenous and other bioconstructions and start implementing these as soon as possible
- urging the states to validate existing maps so that these may be taken into consideration in the context of implementing regulations on commercial fisheries
- suggesting that RAC/SPA:
 - ✓ Set up collaborative tools to help scientists to exchange data and share their experience
 - ✓ Help countries start awareness campaigns on the interest of protecting coralligenous habitats and training and capacity-building sessions
 - ✓ Start addressing the assessment of ecosystem services rendered.

- ADD Work group
- ADD Session 5 report
- Various platforms exist on the circulation of data and an effort could be made on the availability and reliability of data
- Indicators based on the words of experts' opinions to be deepened
- Future stakes on deep-sea formations
- Make an effort on mapping habitats in the countries of the south and east.

ANNEX 4

Recommendations of the 1st Mediterranean Symposium on Dark Habitats Portoroz, Slovenia, 31 October 2014

The first 2 sessions were devoted to deep habitats, largely focussing on canyons, rocky banks and escarpments. A lot of attention was given to describing the spatial distribution of biodiversity mostly from the western Mediterranean basin. The data gathered has already helped some countries to revise their typology of assemblages. It was clear to all that this initiative should be transferred to other Mediterranean countries, in agreement with international initiatives currently undertaken.

The main impact documented by participants was the accumulation of marine litter, most particularly lost fishing gear and plastics. The participation of stakeholders and decision-makers to deep exploration seems a good idea to increase awareness about the damage caused by such human activities. Outreach / educative actions targeted towards the general public and especially towards recreational and professional fishermen could enhance environmental awareness.

Many efforts were made to georeference data and feed interactive databases. This effort should be supported in the long term. Environmental (e.g. temperature, currents, etc.) data are missing from the depth range where most these studies were carried out (50-500 m). MPAs beyond national jurisdiction are still too few to ensure poorly resilient deep-sea communities can persist in the future.

The session on caves gathered contributions from different parts of the Med. Many efforts were made on gathering existing information on the distribution of caves, our degree of knowledge and how to evaluate the ecological quality status, through their functional components. It was stressed that they are a significant reservoir of biodiversity and that they too are poorly resilient. However, although within the reach of recreational divers, human impact on caves other than global warming and pollution is believed to still be marginal. Possible impacts would have to be evaluated. Meanwhile we need to improve our basic knowledge on connectivity among cave populations, their biodiversity and functioning of their communities.

ANNEX 5

Recommendations from the 5th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles Dalaman,
Turkey, 19th -23rd April 2015

The 5th Mediterranean Conference, held in Dalaman, Turkey, from April 19th to April 23rd , focused on the current knowledge about the demography of loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) nesting in the Mediterranean. The communications presented at the conference and the ensuing discussion lead to the creation of **demography working group**, responsible for the development of a research agenda aiming to create a demographic model that assists managers to predict the future trends of the populations of loggerhead and green turtles nesting in the Mediterranean. The members of the demography working group and their tasks are detailed below.

Members of the demography working group

Name	Task 1	Task 2	email
Broderick, Annette	nesting parameters	adult satellite tracking	A.C.Broderick@exeter.ac.uk
Camiñas, Antonio	Juan bycatch and mortality	post-release	juanantonio.caminas@ma.ieo.es
Cardona, Luis	chair	juvenile isoscape	luis.cardona@ub.edu
Casale, Paolo	sex ratio at foraging grounds		paolo.casale1@gmail.com
Godley, Brendan	adult isoscape		b.j.godley@exeter.ac.uk
Hochscheid, Sandra	juvenile satellite tracking		sandra.hochscheid@szn.it
Kaska, Yakup	primary sex ratio		caretta@pau.edu.tr
Lazar, Bojan	juvenile satellite tracking		bojan.lazar@upr.si

Miaud, Claude	skeletochronology	Claude.MIAUD@cefe.cnrs.fr
Mifsud, Carmen	size of stranded turtles	Carmen.Mifsud@mepa.org.mt
Tomás, Jesús	aerial surveys	Jesus.Tomas@uv.es

Antonio Mazaris (amazaris@bio.auth.gr) offered his assistance for modeling if needed.

The task of the demography working group will start in May 2015, but the following provisional recommendations emerged from the Conference:

1. Collect the following information on a regular basis at nesting beaches and foraging grounds
 - a. Nest counts
 - b. Clutch size
 - c. Emergency rate
 - d. Primary sex ratio
 - e. Clutch frequency
 - f. Remigration interval
 - g. Size of nesting females
 - h. Proportion of neophytes
 - i. Turtle abundance at foraging grounds through aerial surveys*.
 - j. Size of stranded turtles

* Contact ACCOBAMS to explore synergies for aerial surveys.

2. Focus research efforts on the following issues:
 - a. Remigration interval, number of clutches per female, female nest fidelity and primary sex ratio at Libya, Dalyan, Dalaman, Western Greece and Crete, central and eastern Turkey and Cyprus.
 - b. Annual survival rate of females at Libya, Dalyan, Dalaman, Western Greece and Crete, central and eastern Turkey and Cyprus.
 - c. Satellite tracking of adults nesting at Libya, Dalyan, Dalaman, central and eastern Turkey and Cyprus (here loggerheads only) to identify their foraging grounds. No more tracking effort is needed for loggerheads nesting in western Greece or Crete or for greens nesting in Cyprus.

- d. Create an isoscape of the Mediterranean Sea to identify the foraging area of nesting females.
 - e. Assess the abundance of turtles in the Alboran Sea, Algerian Basin, the southern Ionian Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Levantine Sea through aerial surveys combined with satellite tracking of juveniles in the Aegean Sea and the Levantine Sea. Recent aerial surveys have been conducted elsewhere and suitable satellite tracking data already exist except for the Ionian Sea.
 - f. Update bycatch figures at the Adriatic Sea, Aegean Sea, Levantine Sea, Northern Ionian Sea, Southern Ionian Sea and channel of Sicily, Tyrrhenian Sea, Liguro-Provençal basin, Balearic Sea, Alboran Sea and the Algerian basin.
 - g. Assess the post-release mortality rate of long-line bycaught turtles at the Northern Ionian Sea and the Southern Ionian Sea and channel of Sicily and the post-release mortality rate of bottom-trawl bycaught turtles at the Adriatic Sea, the southern Ionian Sea and channel of Sicily and Balearic Sea.
 - h. Assess the age at first maturity of turtles foraging at the Aegean Sea, Levantine Sea, Southern Ionian Sea and channel of Sicily, Tyrrhenian Sea, Liguro-Provençal basin, Balearic Sea, Alboran Sea and the Algerian basin.
 - i. Assess the size of the turtles stranding at the Aegean Sea, Levantine Sea, Southern Ionian Sea and channel of Sicily, Tyrrhenian Sea, Liguro-Provençal basin, Balearic Sea, Alboran Sea and the Algerian basin and assess their origin through genetic marker.
3. Create a database that allows managers fast and easy access to available information about sea turtles in order to allow them to take timely decisions. MEDPAN may assist in the creation of such a database.