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Tenth meeting of the Focal Points for SPAs

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**Information note on the implementation of the
Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation
of the Biological Diversity
in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO)**

*In the framework of a sustainable development approach, this document will be available only
in electronic format during the meeting*

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Mediterranean Action Plan
Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)
Boulevard du leader Yasser Arafat
B.P.337 - 1080 Tunis CEDEX
E-mail : car-asp@rac-spa.org

Recall

The RAC/SPA mandate include among others the following fields of action: Coordination of initiatives and regional activities to implement the Protocol; Assistance to Parties on that field; Reinforcement of Parties' capacities; Cooperation with national, regional and international organizations; Mobilisation of means.

Given the complexity and extension of pressures acting on coastal and marine biodiversity the Mediterranean countries considered necessary to have a common and integrated strategy to guide the above purposes. The GEF council approved on April 2000 the Strategic Action Programme to combat Pollution in the Mediterranean (SAP MED), but also a project to elaborate the Strategic Action Programme for the conservation of the biological diversity in the Mediterranean region (SAP BIO). Hence the SAP BIO was prepared by RAC/SPA and adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Catania, November 2003).

Methodology

A participative approach was adopted to elaborate the SAP BIO. An evaluation at national and regional levels of the marine and coastal biodiversity took place based in existing inventories and databases, having regard of all the projects and international agreements related to the subject. The identification of needs and priority actions by the riparian countries was then performed. The whole process included the implication and participation of a big number of actors at national and regional levels (Table1).

Results

The SAP BIO preparation yielded the following results:

- 30 RPAs
- 58 (+ 5) NAPs
- 247 actions
- Investment Portfolio: 155 mill \$ cost (estimated in 2003)
- Provisions for follow up

Table 1: Actors involved in SAP BIO, categories and number

<u>ACTORS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ACTORS/MEMBERS</u>
SAP/BIO ADVISORY COMMITTEE	11
RAC/SPA NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS	21
NATIONAL SAP/BIO CORRESPONDENTS	21
NATIONALSAP/BIO COMMITTEES OR BODIES	14
NATIONAL AUTHORITIES, INSTITUTIONS	10
INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL PROFESSIONALS, SCIENTISTS	61
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND BODIES	3
INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANTS	18
OTHER CONSULTANTS	19

Implementation

SAPBIO Priority action axes were integrated in the working routine of RAC/SPA since the biennium 2004-05 structured as follows:

1. Inventorying, mapping and monitoring Medit. marine and coastal biodiversity
2. Conservation of sensitive habitats, species and sites
3. Assessing and mitigating the impact of threats on biodiversity
4. Developing research to complete knowledge and fill in gaps on biodiversity
5. Capacity-building to ensure coordination and technical support
6. Information and participation
7. Awareness raising

Progress on SAP BIO after its adoption

After the adoption of SAP BIO in 2003, initial activities concerning SAP BIO were hindered by the fact that no budgetary allocations were made for its start. However, regular SPA/RAC activities related to SPAs and Biodiversity specific Action Plans are in fact contributing to it:

- Countries are assisted to implement some NAPs
- Transversal and external actions are boosted through Regional Action Plans
- Regional institutional arrangements are improved
- Countries are assisted to evaluate their biodiversity (current status, impact of climate change:
 - Compilation of National overviews on vulnerability and impacts of climate change on marine and coastal biological diversity in the Mediterranean region (2008-2009) and
 - Compilation of National overviews on state of biodiversity (2010-2011)

The following projects were achieved through complementary external fund raising:

Focused on Regional Action Plans:

- Finished sub-regional support by Total Foundation for setting up a network for monitoring of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows: a 3-year project performed on inventorying, mapping and monitoring of Posidonia meadows in four southern Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Turkey).

Focused on CBD 2012 goal to achieve an ecologically-coherent networks of marine protected areas including the High Seas:

- running on Regional support by the EC to the Barcelona Convention for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach, and the establishment of MPAs in open seas areas, including deep sea (2008-2011)
- running on Sub-regional support by EC AECID to the Project MedMPAnet: 'Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Biological Diversity of Vulnerable Coastal and Marine Resources of the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem' (2008-2012) in twelve southern and Adriatic Mediterranean countries.

Current problems and challenges

The following main issues may be mentioned:

-SAP BIO is a complex, multi-faceted and long-term oriented strategic programme, requesting a comprehensive approach, heavy investments with sustainability of funding and inventive approach to donors, full involvement of national and regional bodies, capacity for implementation, careful and adaptive programming and phasing, involvement of and harmonisation with a large number of partners and stakeholders. Therefore, detailed Provisions for follow up were elaborated for its preparation and launching. Due to reasons predominantly outside SPA/RAC influence, the SAP BIO Provisions for follow up were not implemented.

-Integration of SAP BIO activities in the regular SPA/RAC programme, as mentioned above, has taken place. But such integration, in addition to the programming and implementation aspects, presupposes adequate funding by the SPA/RAC budget, which is so far weak compared to the overall cost of implementing SAP BIO.

-Integration/harmonisation with other relevant bodies. Other relevant bodies and institutions provided a significant contribution with collateral or directly or indirectly supporting activities but mostly independently planned and implemented, although much improvement in synergy has been achieved with IUCN, ACCOBAMS and GFCM.

-National challenges. Regarding national scale the following main obstacles exist: SAP BIO not yet being recognised as national priority; chronic under-funding and unpredictable fluctuations for funding and marked sub-regional disparity in allocation of funds (above sub-regional projects) all confirming the heavy dependency of SAP BIO implementation on international funding and donors and not on the Parties as a whole

-The present SPA/RAC capacity for implementation of SAP BIO. the full involvement of only one staff person (presently the SAP BIO Programme Officer) while an ad-hoc team making use of the full activity of a RAC is needed, will not suffice for its implementation. Therefore, the staffing needs for the subsequent implementation periods should be subject of analysis during the updating, to identify measures to be adopted.

-The approach to donors and funding should be considered as one of immediate key issues, as well as for the long-term period and that need conspicuous human effort.

Need to update SAPBIO after the adoption of the CBD Aichi Strategic Plan

After the 10 COP of the CBD (Nagoya , October 2010) SAP BIO, as a long-term operation, needs to be adapted to catch up the new set of priorities adopted by the CBD to the horizon 2020. The adaptation should be done into a comprehensive, realistic and flexible programme structured in phases, each phase elaborated at respective planning level. Integration of elements of National Programmes, and of a number of regional issues are both needed.

The following should be undertaken to achieve an updated SAPBIO to the horizon 2020, harmonized with CBD Aichi Strategic Plan,

1. Review, refine, prioritise Regional, National APs and Investment Portfolio with regard to Aichi goals
2. Create National SAP BIO Strategic Action Plans integrated in national policies (promoting the integration of SAP BIO priorities within the country's environmental ones)
3. Adapt National, Regional institutional arrangements to address the Aichi CBD goals through the updated SAP BIO
4. Formulate/adopt programmes:
 1. Preparatory phase
 2. Operational phase
5. Interactive Participatory Programme: Partners: sharing responsibilities, joint planning, identification/definition of opportunities and needs for involvement of other MAP components,
6. Define funding strategy, sources and sustainability
7. regional funding strategy, identification of potential sources/partners, sustainability. Donors approach and Donors Conference

Among others the updated SAP BIO should include:

- Timetables and costing estimates
- Phasing:
 - Phase I: updating in 2012-2013
 - Phase II: priority actions to be implemented in 2013-2014
 - Phase III: the 2015-2020 period

- Measures and actions related to co-ordination, harmonisation and management,
- Appropriate progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, National SAP BIO Strategies and Programmes have to be the basis for concerted national short- and long-term plans and actions, integrated into national planning and funding systems. National Programmes should define: actions, phasing, responsibilities, funding, prerequisites, deadlines and reporting/monitoring/evaluation.

In addition, National Strategies should focus on sustainability by applying economic instruments and or other regular sources, and on defining and establishing provisions for implementation of national actions. National Strategies should also provide inputs for establishment of National institutional arrangements