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Malta, 22-24 May 2023

**Agenda Item 4: Progress report on the activities carried out to implement SPA/RAC activities under the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2022-2023**

**The GEF FishEBM MED project “Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean”**

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

## **Note by the Secretariat**

- 1- This report includes a summary description of the new project “Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean” (FishEBM MED) for 2023-2026 funded by GEF.
- 2- This report is hereby presented to the Sixteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points for information and to take note of the upcoming outcomes of the project which implementation will start in the upcoming period.

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## **“Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean” project (Fish EBM MED), funded by GEF, (2023-2026)**

### **A. Project background**

The Mediterranean Sea has been home to a diverse range of fisheries, including industrial, semi-industrial, and small-scale fisheries for thousands of years. These fisheries rely on a vast array of fishing gear to harvest a rich, multi-species marine environment abundant in biodiversity. Given that the Mediterranean is a semi-enclosed sea, shared fishing stocks are primarily exploited by the littoral states, making it crucial to have strong cooperation and coordination among them in developing and implementing measures to ensure sustainable management of these fisheries. Adopting a sound ecosystem-based management approach is essential to unlock the potential for stronger productivity in a sustainable manner.

With a budget of over \$7 million, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has endorsed the Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean (FishEBM MED) Project, which aims to reverse the over-exploitation of select commercial living marine resources. The project's objective is to enhance the capacity of Mediterranean countries to manage fisheries, including the use of ecosystem-based management tools, in their blue economy development pathway.

The beneficiary countries are the following: Countries: Mediterranean Sea riparian countries (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, Türkiye)

The project will be implemented by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and UN Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and Specially Protected Areas/Regional Activity Center (SPA/RAC), with oversight from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNEP as the GEF Implementing Agencies.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be composed of two representatives from each beneficiary country, one representing the environment-related administration (MAP FPs or SPA/BD FPs) and one representing the fisheries-related administration. The PSC will act as an advisory and decision-making mechanism to maximize synergies and ensure the successful design and implementation of the proposed project. The main role of the PSC will be to review and approve the annual project's work plans and budgets, provide a coordination forum and a monitoring platform during the implementation phase of the proposed project. It will also provide an overall, high-level, coordination of the technical alignment and synergy between the proposed project components

### **B. Project Objectives, structure and activities**

The Fish EBM MED project is a GEF-funded initiative that aims to promote sustainable fisheries and ecosystem-based management for the blue economy in the Mediterranean region from 2023 to 2026. The project is composed of five components, each with its set of outputs and activities as summarized in the table as follows:

<u>Project Components/ Programs</u>	<u>Project Outcomes</u>	<u>Project Outputs</u>	<u>Responsible</u>
<p>Component 1 – Strengthened capacity to manage commercial fisheries, with particular focus on SSF</p>	<p><u>Outcome 1: Fisheries managers and stakeholders use sound information generated on the status of key commercial fisheries to support improved management and selected value chain interventions, particularly for SSF, in view of maximizing production sustainability</u></p>	<p><u>Output 1.1: Regional data collection for fisheries, including SSF and recreational fisheries, processed in support to socioeconomic analysis and fisheries management</u></p> <p>Output 1.2: Investments in management plans and measures promoted, including for SSF and recreational fisheries</p> <p>Output 1.3: Value chains modelled in view of identifying best practices and entry points for innovation, including the certification of select fisheries.</p> <p>Output 1.4: Reinforced synergies with the private sector to support market-driven opportunities in the fisheries sector</p> <p>Output 1.5: Participation in the regional network of SSF platforms reinforced in order to provide social protection support to its members.</p>	<p><u>GFCM</u></p>
<p>Component 2 – Enhanced integration of emerging monitoring, control and surveillance technologies in the fight against IUU fishing</p>	<p><u>Outcome 2: Fisheries management better accounts for the quantity and magnitude of IUU fishing in the Mediterranean Sea and incorporates control measures, including through the use of emerging technologies</u></p>	<p>Output 2.1: Losses in national economies generated by IUU fishing activities assessed through the application of an ad hoc methodology at the country level.</p> <p>Output 2.2: Impacts of IUU fishing on main commercial marine living resources incorporated in stock assessments.</p> <p>Output 2.3: Information on legal frameworks relating to IUU fishing and fisheries crimes collected, analyzed and disseminated, including through a regional repository</p> <p>Output 2.4: Application of technology in the field of control and surveillance, including small-scale fishing, tested and tailored to the capacity of countries.</p> <p>Output 2.5: International Plan of Action to fight IUU and Regional Plan of Action to fight IUU implemented through national plans of action, including measures to reduce bycatch and abandoned fishing gear</p>	<p><u>GFCM</u></p>

Component 3 – Integrated ecosystem-based management tools and ecosystem approach to biodiversity protection and sustainable fisheries	<u>Outcome 3: Healthier marine ecosystems with more productive fisheries in place, through the synergistic application of ecosystem-based conservation/management tools and improvements in fisheries tenure governance.</u>	<u>Output 3.1: Area based, and innovative management tools identified and applied to reduce overexploitation of fisheries and enhance ecosystem productivity</u>	<u>GFCM</u>
		<u>Output 3.2: Monitoring of good environmental status of Mediterranean ecosystems and biodiversity ensured, with established link to pollution impacts and sustainable use of marine ecosystem services; adaptation strategies to climate change formulated.</u>	<u>MAP-SPA/RAC</u>
		<u>Output 3.3: Measures identified to cope with the negative effects of non-indigenous species on biodiversity as well as those of other potential stressors.</u>	
		<u>Output 3.4: Training programmes and case studies to strengthen national capacity towards the development of fisheries tenure interventions.</u>	<u>GFCM</u>
Component 4 – Innovative blue economy solutions accounting for the fishery sector	<u>Outcome 4: Blue economy at the regional and country level promoted through the identification of existing hurdles via a concerted approach among relevant stakeholders.</u>	<u>Output 4.1: Analysis carried out on how the fishery sector can mobilize investments, including in diversification of livelihoods (e.g.aquaculture planning, pescaturism), against the background of marine spatial planning</u>	<u>GFCM</u>
		<u>Output 4.2: Factsheets on successful innovative solutions for the fishery sector and sustainable use of marine ecosystem services prepared in view of attracting blue economy related investments.</u>	
		<u>Output 4.3: Endorsed pilot NAP+ with investment plan(s) tested in at least one country.</u>	<u>MAP-SPA/RAC</u>
		<u>Output 4.4: New partnerships implemented through the NAP+, enabling the participation of the private sector in the blue economy.</u>	
Component 5 – Knowledge management and out scaling	<u>Outcome 5: Integrated pathways conducive of conservation and sustainable management promoted at the regional and global level.</u>	<u>Output 5.1: Initiatives promoted to support countries in encouraging strategic investment enabling, among others, public and private partnerships</u>	<u>MAP-SPA/RAC</u>
		<u>Output 5.2: Lessons learnt, and best practices disseminated to showcase the benefits of the concerted GFCM-MAP approach in aligning different national and regional priorities.</u>	<u>GFCM</u>
		<u>Output 5.3: Outreach &amp; Communication Strategy developed and implemented, including coordination and awareness-raising meetings with co-financing partners and participation in relevant global GEF related fora</u>	<u>GFCM &amp; MAP-SPA/RAC</u>

### **C. Steps undertaken so far and to come**

The project officially launched in February 2023 with an inception workshop and first Project Steering Committee meeting held in hybrid modality at the FAO headquarters and online. These meetings provided an overview of the project objectives, components, and activities, reviewed the project knowledge management and gender strategies, and endorsed the first-year work plan, budget, and monitoring plan. During the meetings, it was underlined that the activities foreseen within the first-year work plan are primarily preparatory and with regional level background work to lay the groundwork for more targeted interventions and national-level pilot actions in the subsequent years of implementation.

UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC will contact the environment-related administration (MAP FPs and/or SPA/BD FPs) to present the project objective and outline the activities foreseen in each concerned country to identify the most effective ways and means to implement these activities.