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## Table of contents

I. General context.....	1
II. Priorities emerging from international processes .....	2
III. Mediterranean priorities for RAC/SPA's 2014-2015 Work Programme.....	2



## I. General context

The aim of this document is to present the main general directions to be followed when crafting the RAC/SPA Work Programme for the two-year period 2014-2015.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Paris, France, 8-10 February 2012) discussed the possibility of bringing the five-year strategic Work Programme into line with the two-year decision-making cycle of the Parties' Ordinary Meetings by reducing the Work Programme to four years, which would restrict the implementation time of the Work Programme, designed to take five years.

The 17<sup>th</sup> CoP also decided on a Functional review of UNEP/MAP System whose implications were unknown at the time of its adoption. It has become obvious that a period of transition will be necessary to decide on, and implement, the Functional review, and this is now making it difficult to carry out a planning exercise.

The recent decisions of the CoP (Marrakech Declaration, 2009) called on the MAP to increase synergy and consistency with other multilateral environmental processes. As part of the setting up of synergy and bringing the MAP's Work Programme into line with that of the pertinent international processes and the substantive processes of MAP such as the post-2015 Sustainable Development Objectives (SSO), the last years of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Action Plan (2016-2020) and the six-year cycle of the ecosystem approach and the process of the European Union's 'Strategy for the Marine Environment' Framework Directive, it is suggested that the five-year Work Programme be re-named and that its cycle be changed to a medium-term strategy with a six-year cycle starting in 2016.

The 76<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Office of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Algiers, Algeria, 26-28 February 2013) asked the Secretariat to prepare a new Work Programme for the two-year period 2014-2015 on the basis of the five-year Work Programme 2010-2015 adopted at the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Marrakech, November 2009), keeping the same planning code number as that of the current two-year period (2012-2013).

Also, as part of improving consistency, effectiveness, responsibility and transparency in the way UNEP/MAP and its components operate; the contribution of the appropriate international and regional partners is becoming vital due to the context of diminishing resources.

Future guidance for the suggested activities will be organised around the subjects and performance of the (2010-2014) five-year Work Programme adopted by the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Parties (Marrakech, 2009), and will take into account results obtained or, if these are still ongoing, certain actions that have been accomplished and the remaining lacunae for implementing the five-year Work Programme. They also take into consideration

the constantly-changing international context, an assessment of progress made during this two-year period, and emerging issues.

## II. Priorities emerging from international processes

New issues that concern RAC/SPA, identified as being particularly pertinent for MAP and its components in preparing the 2014-2015 Work Programme, are the three following recent international events:

- The inclusion, for the first time ever, in the 'The Future We Want' Declaration made by heads of state and of government, adopted at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012), of a section on Oceans (paragraphs 158-177) that includes references *inter alia* to ecosystem approaches, invasive species, the Aichi objectives (10% MAPs) and areas that do not come under any national jurisdiction
- The pertinent marine and coastal decisions adopted at the 11<sup>th</sup> CoP of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Hyderabad, India, 8-17 October 2012) that include *inter alia* decisions linked to areas of ecological or biological importance (AEBI), assessments of undersea noise, acidification of the oceans, planning of maritime space, impact of fishing in Marine Protected Areas, and assessment and monitoring
- Strategic directions (2013-2016) suggested by the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNEP Administrative Council (Nairobi, Kenya, 18-22 February 2013) such as applying the ecosystem approach when managing the marine and coastal environment, strengthening capacities to improve knowledge and world trends on the state of the marine environment, and enhancing collaboration and partnerships with the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and world and regional initiatives.

It transpires that there is consistency between development at international level and the priorities covered by the Barcelona Convention and its protocols, particularly the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol).

## III. Mediterranean priorities for RAC/SPA's 2014-2015 Work Programme

The activities suggested by RAC/SPA concern four out of the six subjects presented in the MAP five-year Work Programme, i.e. Governance, Integrated management of coastal areas, Biodiversity and Climate change.

Below appears an account of the activities suggested by RAC/SPA for 2014-2015.

In the context of Subject (I), Governance, the priorities are RAC/SPA's contribution to the following activities, coordinated by MAP:

- Developing an Integrated programme of Barcelona Convention measures based on a review of pertinent strategies such as SAP BIO
- Developing an Integrated programme of monitoring and assessment of the EcAp as required to round off the implementing of the Ecosystem Approach as agreed by the Contracting Parties.

In accordance with the procedure for reviewing the areas on the SPAMI List, adopted by the Contracting Parties, RAC/SPA will undertake an ordinary review of the **SPAMIs** that appeared on the List in 2001, 2003, 2008 and 2009.

Moreover, RAC/SPA will work further on improving and maintaining the tools of quality data collection and circulation (in preparation for the EcAp integrated monitoring and assessment programme) and on improving national capacities and the availability of data at national level.

In the context of Subject (II), Integrated Coastal zone Management (ICZM)

RAC/SPA's activities will be restricted to helping implement the biodiversity element of the **Coastal Development Programmes** piloted by RAC/PAP.

In the context of Subject (III), Biodiversity, RAC/SPA intends to develop its activities along the following main lines:

- Promoting **management, connectedness and representativeness** among the Marine and Coastal Protected Areas according to the priorities and directions of the 'Road map – Towards a Mediterranean network of **Marine Protected Areas** (MPAs) that are connected, ecologically representative and effectively and sustainably managed by 2020' (*MedMPAnet Project*)
- Implementing the third phase of the **MedOpenSeas** Project to propose SPAMIs in the areas already identified with the concerned countries and in collaboration with the pertinent partners
- Improving the status of **threatened species** and **key habitats** through helping the countries implement work programmes for the Action Plans adopted for the conservation of species and habitats (nine Action Plans, including an Action Plan being adopted in 2013 and a new strategy for the conservation of the monk seal in the Mediterranean)
- Completing the **inventorying** and **mapping** of key habitats in the Mediterranean, aimed at extending the SPAMI network
- Supporting actions in the context of assessing **services rendered by ecosystems** in the Marine Protected Areas
- Putting into effect the collaboration agreement with the GFCM especially as regards mitigating the impact of fishing activities on threatened species and vulnerable

habitats as well as improving consistency between SPAMIs and protected fishing areas

- Regional monitoring of, as well as awareness actions on, **introduced species**
- Strengthening the developing of **capacity-building** programmes in the context of implementing regional Action Plans.

In the context of Subject (VI), Climate change, priority will be given to:

- Assessing **climate change** impact indicators in the SPAs in the Mediterranean
- Implementing the project to restore and rehabilitate **wetlands** and degraded lagoons as a measure to mitigate climate change.



