

Terms of Reference

Evaluation and updating of the Mediterranean Action Plans for the conservation of threatened species and marine key habitats

BACKGROUND

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan, give priority to the conservation of the marine environment and to the components of its biological diversity. This was confirmed by the adoption of the new 1995 Barcelona Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) and of its annexes, among them a list of endangered or threatened species.

The Protocol sets out very detailed requirements for endangered or threatened species listed in Annex II and III to the Protocol.

Elaborating and implementing action plans to conserve one species or group of species is an effective way of guiding, coordinating and strengthening the efforts of the Mediterranean countries are making to safeguard the natural heritage of the region.

Although they do not have a binding legal character, these action plans were adopted by the Contracting Parties as regional strategies setting priorities and activities to be undertaken. In particular, they call for greater solidarity between the States of the region, and for co-ordination of efforts to protect the species in question. This approach has been proved to be necessary to ensure conservation and sustainable management of the concerned species in every Mediterranean area of their distribution.

The Mediterranean Countries adopted 8 regional Action Plans and Strategy:

1. Action Plan for the management of the Monk Seal
2. Regional strategy for the conservation of monk seal in the Mediterranean
3. Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles
4. Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans
5. Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation
6. Action Plan for the conservation of bird species listed to annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol
7. Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea
8. Action Plan concerning species introduction and invasive species
9. Action Plan for the conservation of the coralligenous and other calcareous bio-concretions in the Mediterranean Sea
10. Action Plan for the conservation of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea (Dark habitats Action Plan)

These Action Plans constitute mi-term regional strategies that should be updated each five-year based on an evaluation of their implementation at regional and national levels.

For the biennium 2018-2019, the Contracting Parties to Barcelona Convention requested SPA/RAC during the CoP 20 (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017) to update the following Action Plans and Strategy:

1. The Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in the Mediterranean
2. The Regional strategy for the conservation of monk seal in the Mediterranean
3. The Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean
4. The Action Plan for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) in the Mediterranean Sea

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The objectives of the consultancy are to:

1. Conduct an assessment of the implementation of each Action Plan and Strategy at regional and national levels. Provide for each Action Plan/Strategy a report on the Status of its implementation, that will be presented as information documents to the next SPA thematic Focal Points meeting (June 2019)
2. Propose a draft updating for each Action Plan/Strategy to be presented as working documents to the next SPA thematic Focal Points meeting (June 2019) to be finalized and endorsed in view to be submitted to the governing body of the Barcelona Convention (MAP Focal Points meeting and CoP 21) for adoption. The updating should consider the MAP ecological objectives and associated Good Environmental Status and targets, as well as the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP).

METHODOLOGY

The updating of the Action Plans/strategy should be carried out in participatory and consultative way. The consultants should conduct the needed assessment using a methodology to be developed in collaboration with SPA/RAC programme officers in charges of these Action Plans and strategy. It is expected that the assessment will be built around self-assessment processes as well as broad consultation with the concerned stakeholders/organisms to help collecting and validation of information.

To this end, the consultants must finalise an evaluation questionnaire for posting online, considering the updated online reporting format of the Barcelona Convention (IG.23 / 1, CoP 20, 2017). The questionnaire will be disseminated to SPA Focal Points, regional institutions and Convention's Secretariats, Associates and Partners of Action Plans and network of experts available at SPA/RAC for each theme.

SPA/RAC will provide the consultants with the progress reports presented at SPA/RAC Focal Points meetings (2013, 2015 and 2017) to report on the activities carried out by SPA/RAC to implement the concerned Action Plans/Strategy, as well as the outputs of the EcAp Med II project (Factsheets, National Monitoring Programmes for biodiversity and NIS, Decisions) to develop the chapter related to monitoring.

KEY DELIVERABLES

1. An inception report including a work plan, detailed methodology and timeline, to be submitted within 7 days from the commencement of the assignment for each Action Plan/Strategy.
2. A report on the Status of implementation for each Action Plan/Strategy
3. A Draft updating for each Action Plan/Strategy

The applicants should be aware that the work could be conducted in both languages English and French (consultation, survey, online meetings, etc.). The final assessments and draft updating of each Action Plan/Strategy should be presented in one of these languages.

SUPERVISION AND COLLABORATION

The Consultants will work under the supervision of SPA/RAC Director, and in collaboration with SPA/RAC programme officers (Species and ecosystems conservation Programme officers) to finalize the methodology, to collect the data and to facilitate interviews and contacts with the concerned stakeholders.

This is mainly a desk-based assignment. No missions are envisaged. His/her participation to the next SPA thematic Focal Points meeting (June 2019) will be decided if necessary. His/her participation to this meeting will be paid by SPA/RAC. The consultant will be expected to make imaginative use of online networking, questionnaires, surveys, etc. to obtain the required information and conduct consultations.

TIME SCHEDULE

The Assignment shall be expected to be completed within a maximum of 20 work days with the following tentative schedule:

May-June 2018	Finalisation of the questionnaires and their dissemination
October 2018	Elaboration of the drafts reports on the Status of implementation for each Action Plans/Strategy
November -December 2018	elaboration of the draft updating for each Action Plan/Strategy
January-February 2019	Dissemination to the Focal Points
June 2019	Presentation of the draft updating of Action Plans /Strategy for endorsement to the Focal Point Meeting and review of the draft updating of Action Plans /Strategy considering the Focal points comments.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF CONSULTANTS

The consultants are expected to have the following skills and expertise:

- Advanced degrees in environmental marine sciences, conservation of threatened and endangered species and habitats; particularly the following species: Monk seal, sea turtles and cartilaginous fishes.
- A minimum of five (5) years' experience in conducting conservation activities in marine environment of threatened and endangered species and habitats
- Excellent knowledge of global, regional and national requirements for the conservation of species and habitats, notably in the Mediterranean
- Excellent writing and communication skills in English or in French; Arabic would be an advantage;
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate and work well with diverse people.

APPLICATION

For each of the Action Plan/Strategy to be updated, applicants should submit the following by email to: car-asp@spa-rac.org by July 2nd 2018 the latest.

1. A curriculum vitae including highlighted references to previous relevant work and publications.
2. A covering letter outlining their suitability for the job, providing initial observations on the ToRs and an outline of the methodology they would use.
3. A financial offer in Euros for completion of the required tasks, including the daily rate used for calculations.

EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- (i) Profile and experience of the consultant in relation to subject of the present mission (40 pts),
- (ii) The methodology proposed for the conduction of the mission, and (40 pts)
- (iii) The financial offer (20pts).