



Mediterranean
Action Plan
Barcelona
Convention



**Priority Actions Programme
Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC)
Progress Report for 2020-2021**

Split, April 2021

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this report is to summarise the activities implemented by [PAP/RAC](#) in 2020-2021. Putting together this overview of the main achievements and challenges in implementing the Programme of Work (PoW) approved by COP21 (Naples, Italy, December 2019) for the current biennium will give PAP/RAC FPs a good insight into the progress made jointly by PAP/RAC, the Contracting Parties (CPs) and other partners in implementing ICZM in the Mediterranean Region.

The overview is structured according to the Main Themes and Outputs of the 2020-2021 PoW of UNEP/MAP.

In order not to overburden the report with too many details, direct links are provided to all major projects implemented, documents produced and events organised. We kindly invite you to have a look at them and to contact PAP/RAC for any additional information you may need.

Theme 1: GOVERNANCE

Output 1.6.1

The UN Environment/MAP communication strategy updated and implemented

Together with the colleagues from the Secretariat and other Components, PAP/RAC contributes to the implementation of the UNEP/MAP communication strategy adopted by COP21 (Naples, Italy, December 2019). Efforts are made in all PAP/RAC-led projects to increase the visibility not only of PAP/RAC but of the entire Barcelona Convention system, which are described in the chapters that follow. In this chapter the focus is put on the main awareness-raising campaign organised by PAP/RAC – the already traditional Mediterranean Coast Day celebration.

Mediterranean Coast Day

Originally, it was planned that the 2020 Mediterranean Coast Day celebration would be organized in Malta in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Action and

Development Planning. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, after several consultations with the Maltese authorities, it was decided to postpone the face-to-face event to the next year and to organize it on-line in 2020.

To this end, a dedicated website was prepared in collaboration with the colleagues from INFO/RAC and the Secretariat, which was launched on 25 September (<http://www.info-rac.org/coastday/>). It contained messages from UNEP/MAP, PAP/RAC and the 2020 Honorary Ambassador for the Coast; some facts on burning issues in the Mediterranean; a video library; information on and links to a number of tools and products of several UNEP/MAP Components (SECA Roadmap, SeaWatcher App; quiz for children; Istanbul Environment Friendly City award for Mediterranean Coastal Cities, and a Decalogue of a responsible coastal citizen).

Besides that, PAP/RAC supported local Coast Day celebrations organized in Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Italy (Sardinia), Malta, Montenegro, Morocco and Slovenia (Coast Week).

Theme 4: LAND AND SEA INTERACTIONS AND PROCESSES

Output 4.2.2

Marine Spatial Planning defined in the context of the Barcelona Convention and applied, as appropriate

GEF Adriatic

In this biennium, the GEF-funded project “Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Adriatic Sea through Marine Spatial Planning” (the so-called [GEF Adriatic](#)) was instrumental in contributing to the implementation and better understanding of the challenges of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Mediterranean.

This project, implemented in Albania and Montenegro with the support of PAP/RAC and SPA/RAC, has been progressing well and is approaching its end (in June 2021) although the activities have been somewhat slowed down due to the impossibility of meeting with partners in person and implementing on-the-ground testing since February 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to compensate for such a significant disadvantage (at least to some extent), activities have been organised through numerous online consultations with national experts and institutions, as well as with different stakeholder groups.

This has significantly impacted the dynamics of outputs delivery; nevertheless, this innovative project in terms of integration and linking IMAP indicators and MSP, has produced some extremely valuable outputs in Montenegro (where PAP/RAC is mostly involved), such as:

- A Diagnostic Analysis (DA) for the MSP of the marine waters under the jurisdiction of Montenegro, designed around two key elements: marine vulnerability assessment; and activity suitability assessment. This DA was prepared as an input for two official planning documents (Spatial Plan for Montenegro and General Regulation Plan). However, in 2020 a new Government was elected, which resulted in aborting national activities on the preparation of the Spatial Plan for Montenegro and the General Regulation Plan, into which draft MSP prepared under GEF-Adriatic is supposed to be integrated.
- A series of studies were conducted related to collecting, mapping and assessing environmental, ecological and human activities (with focus on maritime traffic, system of port infrastructure, maritime tourism and aquaculture). This resulted in the identification of marine vulnerable areas, where human activities need to be avoided or carefully planned, as well as areas suitable for development, all leading to the proposal of a marine spatial plan.

During the entire duration of the project (2018-2021) particular importance has been given to capacity building and awareness-raising activities. To mention some of the most important ones implemented in this biennium:

- The Albanian Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro organised a series of events for the World Environment Day (5 June). In Albania those events took place in the Buna River-Velipoja Protected Landscape, an area extremely rich in biodiversity, and brought together local population, schools, NGOs, fishers and scientists to celebrate the recently approved law on maritime activities that will

support the sustainable development of blue economy for the country. The event included workshops on best practices for developing maritime activities while protecting the environment, as well as on how to develop a sustainable blue economy. There were also clean-up actions taking place in the Buna River delta.

- In Montenegro, a waste cleaning action was organized on the coast, sea and seabed in the Bay of Kotor on 12 June 2020. The partners included the Agency for Nature and Environment, the Institute of Marine Biology, the Maritime Safety and Port Authority, the private sector and NGOs. The Municipality of Kotor and the Public Enterprise for Management of Marine Assets of Montenegro also provided their support.

MSP Toolbox

Several internal meetings were held concerning the toolbox for the analytical phase of MSP: its basic concept was discussed as well as means to make it as attractive and interactive as possible.

The aim is to offer a toolbox that is in line with ICZM, as outlined in the Common Regional Framework (CRF) for ICZM. It should demonstrate the application of scientific and other tools for the preparation of MSP based on the ecosystem-based management principles and provide a rich source of information and advice, a forum for the exchange of experience, and for news to support the implementation of MSP within the specific context of the Mediterranean - a practical "go-to" source for Mediterranean practitioners, particularly in those states that lack highly developed spatial planning capacities.

The forum is meant to enable the interested stakeholders to access the tools and information required to build capacity, avoid "reinventing the wheel", and to foster new, innovative practices. It should not be prescriptive or be perceived as a "measure" of progress by individual states.

MSP in Slovenia

An activity which was not specified in the PoW came on scene: at the invitation of its FP for Slovenia, PAP/RAC first submitted comments on the National Spatial Development Strategy and the National MSP, and then participated in a coordination meeting held at the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 18 June 2020 (that was the only face-to-face meeting for PAP/RAC after the Covid-19 lockdown). The conclusion was that both documents had been well prepared and had a clear reference to those requirements of the ICZM Protocol that could be applied through spatial planning instruments, such as the provision of the coastal setback, use of the IMAP indicators and adaptation to the climate change.

Output 4.3.1

New generation of CAMPs prepared to promote land-sea interactions, also addressing transboundary aspects, as appropriate

CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina

After a series of interventions by UNEP/MAP and PAP/RAC FPs, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at their 6th ordinary meeting held on 28 May 2020, gave the green light to the implementation of the CAMP BH. Subsequently, the CAMP BH Agreement was finalized with inputs from all the participating UNEP/MAP Components and signed on 29 June by the PAP/RAC Director on behalf of UNEP/MAP and the Mayor of Neum on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Following the signing of the Agreement, the CAMP team was established and the Inception Meeting of the CAMP Steering Committee (SC) was organized on-line on 15 October 2020. The SC has seven members, representatives of different administrative levels and institutions of BH and PAP/RAC. This first meeting was honoured by the participation of the Prime Minister of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and the Mayor of the Neum Municipality. The status

and planning of activities for the following months were presented, and the SC welcomed the progress achieved since the signing of the Agreement i.e. launching of the activities related to sustainable tourism led by PAP/RAC and contingency plan led by REMPEC.

In April 2021 INFO/RAC has prepared a proposal for the CAMP web site.

Transboundary CAMP Cyprus-Israel

Using the Feasibility Studies prepared in 2019, in the first months of 2020 the Cypriot and Israeli colleagues (UNEP/MAP and PAP/RAC FPs) continued discussing possible CAMP activities with national stakeholders.

The Covid-19 lockdown slowed down the preparation of the agreement for a transboundary CAMP between those two countries. However, it was possible to organize a teleconference to discuss potential joint activities between the two countries and agree on the next steps. During this teleconference, held on 8 September 2020, the representatives of the two countries could comment and amend the Draft CAMP Agreement prepared by PAP/RAC. It was agreed that both countries would provide within a month-time the information about the budget they intended to mobilize for the project. While the Israeli colleagues did so by March 2021 no feedback was received from the Cypriot side.

In that situation, the Israeli part addressed a letter to UNEP/MAP suggesting to start the project as soon as possible, leaving door opened to Cyprus to join at a later stage. Following the positive feedback received from UNEP/MAP, PAP/RAC has been finalising the CAMP Agreement with the Israeli colleagues.

Transboundary CAMP Albania-Italy

On the other hand, significant progress has been made regarding the transboundary CAMP between Albania and Italy for the Otranto Channel area. The CAMP Agreement was drafted in December 2020 with the support of two

national consultants and shared with the relevant national authorities of both countries.

The Agreement was signed in March, allowing to start the implementation of the activities, the first one being the recruitment of the National CAMP Coordinators for Albania and Italy, and setting-up of the CAMP Steering Committee.

Output 4.4.1

Mapping of interaction mechanisms on coastal and marine environment at regional and local levels developed, including assessment of the risks of sea-level rise and coastal erosion, and their impact on coastal environment and communities

Agreement was reached with the Maltese Planning Authority and the Primorsko-Goranska County of Croatia about testing the Land-Sea Interaction (LSI) methodology developed by PAP/RAC in the previous biennium.

In line with this agreement, the Maltese colleagues have collected the available necessary data and started analysing the interactions, while the Croatian County has organized the working team and prepared a first concept of the LSI analysis to be used within the future County coastal plan. PAP/RAC has been assisting both exercises with the necessary external support.

Output 4.4.2

National coast and hydrography monitoring programmes developed and updated to include the relevant IMAP common indicators, interactions and processes

GEF Adriatic project

Within this project monitoring programmes for Albania and Montenegro related to coast and hydrography were prepared as a part of their Integrated Monitoring Programmes.

A field study of marine habitats was carried out in 2019 by the experts of the Institute of Marine

Biology (IMB) of Montenegro, under the general coordination of PAP/RAC and with the support of the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism. Based on this study, which highlighted the need to protect the habitats of the gold coral communities (*Gerardia savaglia*) significantly affected by human activities, the IMB and the Public Enterprise for Coastal Zone Management of Montenegro installed protecting buoys on two of the research sites and cleaned two underwater fields. Information boards were also set up with information about the coral fields and the ban on fishing and anchoring vessels in the fenced locations. As a part of the MSP process, these locations will be proposed to be declared marine protected areas.

In Albania, the field survey to assess the environmental status of the Bay of Patok-Rodoni was completed under the guidance of SPA/RAC, with the support of the National Agency for Protected Areas of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, and PAP/RAC.

Implementation of the "Coast and hydrography" cluster of IMAP

At the initiative of the European Environment Agency (EEA), a joint letter was drafted to elaborate the Feasibility Study for the implementation of the Candidate Common Indicator (CCI) 25 (Land cover change) in Morocco and Tunisia by using Copernicus data.

Like all the other UNEP/IMP Components, PAP/RAC participated in the joint CORMON meeting organized on-line on 1-3 December 2020. That was an opportunity to make presentations on two good practices of integration of IMAP clusters i.e. "Application of the Methodological Guidance of the Common Regional Framework (CRF) on ICZM for Reaching Good Environmental Status (GES)", and "IMAP Experience from the GEF Adriatic Project and Application of IMAP Indicators in MSP Process".

Output 4.5.1

Capacity building for the application of tools for assessing interactions and integrating them in planning/management of coastal and marine environment implemented

GEF Adriatic project

In collaboration with the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism of Montenegro, a capacity-building meeting with the Montenegrin national experts, INFO/RAC, PAP/RAC and SPA/RAC was organized in Podgorica, Montenegro, on 4-5 February 2020. The main objective of the meeting was to identify how national data on biodiversity, non-indigenous species, eutrophication, contaminants, marine litter, and hydrographic parameters would comply with the format of the INFO MAP system. INFO/RAC experts guided the national experts on how to properly fill the data standards needed for this task. In addition, discussions were held with the Montenegrin environmental agency on the current database system and potential for its improvement.

Virtual training on assessment of good environmental status regarding marine litter in Montenegro was held on 5 March 2021. The first ever attempt to assess the good environmental status (GES) for marine litter in Montenegro was introduced by an expert from the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor and shared with the interested country representatives from the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, the Environmental Protection Agency of Montenegro, the Public Enterprise "Morsko Dobro", the "Green Home" NGO, and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) project. The participants were provided with detailed information on: important policies on marine litter in Montenegro; pressures and impacts related to marine litter; methodology of GES assessment for all marine litter indicators; scales of assessment; the current state regarding marine litter in Montenegro (in comparison to threshold values); and proposed management

measures for tackling marine litter and needs for further development.

A training session on the same subject was organised online for the Albanian experts on 19 March 2021, while the training on Info System was held online on 8 April 2021, in collaboration with INFO RAC.

PORTODIMARE Project

In the frame of the PORTODIMARE project (Interreg ADRIION) the 2nd Training Workshop took place on 19-20 May 2020 by using the on-line EUSAIR Stakeholder platform. Some 45 participants followed the training with the main objective to learn about the experience of the partners that have been testing the Geoportal (GAIR) tools and modules related to MSP and ICZM. The partners demonstrated the planning issues related to the site, presented the data collected, how they used the GAIR, and what the results had been so far. The very rich exchange among the partners allowed to learn and share experiences so that in the following months they could successfully finalize their outputs.

As Coordinator of the testing activities PAP/RAC drafted the following reports: "Action Plan for the Use of Project Results in National MSP Processes"; and "Transferability and Maintenance Plan for the GAIR". These were presented and discussed at the Final Project Conference held on-line on 9-10 December 2020 using again the EUSAIR Stakeholder Platform.

PORTODIMARE's Geoportal (GAIR), a central product of the Project, will support the implementation of the ICZM Protocol, the Marine Spatial Planning in the area, and the Action Plan of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

<https://www.portodimare.eu/>

Output 4.7.1

Additional stress relevant to the Convention on water resources due to climate change assessed in cooperation with other regional interested stakeholders

The activity under this Output relates to the preparation of an integrated management plan for the Damour area of Lebanon. The activity will start only in the second half of 2021 as the contract (PCA) for this Child Project 2.1 of GEF MedProgramme (through which it will be funded) has been signed only recently.

Theme 5: INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

Output 5.3.1

National ICZM Strategies streamlining pollution, biodiversity, adaptation to climate change and SCP, land and sea interactions as well as sustainable cities, prepared and applied

The activities under this Output include the update of the National ICZM Strategy in Egypt and the preparation of the National ICZM Strategy in Lebanon, both funded by the Child Project 2.1. of the GEF MedProgramme. Immediately after the signing of the relative contract with GEF, PAP/RAC launched the preparatory activities and it is expected that the full implementation will start in the second half of 2021.

During this biennium PAP/RAC has supported the preparation of the National ICZM Strategy for Tunisia led by APAL with the support of UNDP. PAP/RAC has been involved in the meetings organised at different stages of the Strategy preparation and has provided working material, comments and suggestions that will hopefully make possible the adoption of the Strategy and the ratification of the ICZM Protocol.

Output 5.3.2

Countries assisted in carrying out gap analysis on national and institutional frameworks for ICZM in order to streamline as need be the ICZM Protocol provisions into national legislations

The activities under this Output include the analysis of the national legal frameworks in Algeria and Tunisia, in support of the ratification of the ICZM Protocol. As any other activity to be funded by the Child project 2.1 of the GEF MedProgramme, these activities had to be delayed due to the late signing of the contract with GEF. At this stage, the ToRs have been prepared and consultations with the FPs in both countries have started.

Outcome 5.5.1

MedOpen Training Programme on ICZM regularly updated and implemented, in coordination with relevant NFPs

MedOpen

Over the years the [MedOpen](#) virtual training course has become one of the main instruments for enhancing the constituency of the state-of-the-art expertise needed for the implementation of ICZM. The interest for it is growing to the extent that PAP/RAC has to constantly update the material and develop additional modules. In the current biennium the following has been done:

- The MedOpen Basic has been updated and is continuously running in English, French and Italian languages.
- Technical infrastructure was upgraded and training material updated for the MedOpen Advanced run in French.

- A new technical platform – easier to use and allowing greater fluidity in the communication – was prepared and launched. This was very much appreciated by both lecturers and students.
- A special session of the MedOpen Advanced was delivered during September-December 2020 for the Masters' degree students of two universities: Faculty of Science and Technique Al Hoceima (FSTH), Morocco, and Faculty of Science, Bizerte (FSB), Tunisia, as a part of their academic curricula.
- Preparatory activities for the next run of the MedOpen Advanced have started in order to be able to deliver it in the second half of 2021 for the students of two Algerian and one Moroccan faculties.
- Moreover, as a part of the GEF Adriatic project, material has been assembled for a module on MSP to be included in MedOpen.

Syrian Virtual University

We are particularly happy to announce that PAP/RAC was approached by the Syrian Virtual University (SVU) with a request to support their master's degree on integrated management of natural resources. The agreement was reached for delivering up to 7 lectures on ICZM and MSP by PAP/RAC officers for some 30-40 students. The teaching is supposed to start in September 2021.

Strategic Outcome 5.6.1

ICZM coordination enhanced through: (i) Mediterranean ICZM Platform; (ii) national ICZM coordination bodies

ICZM Platform

The [ICZM Platform](#) launched in 2018 as a hub for all ICZM-related information, has been regularly populated with new material. Nowadays, it contains a bulk of information, publications and

other outputs accumulated over more than 40 years of PAP/RAC existence, as well as several interactive tools to facilitate exchanges including the Network of CAMP and other ICZM projects tool.

Once finalised, the Interactive MSP Toolbox and the relevant forum will be uploaded to the Platform, too

Coordination mechanisms

Besides the work on the general governance platform, PAP/RAC has been providing support to the CPs with the creation and functioning of national and sub-national coordination mechanisms which are of utmost importance for the implementation of ICZM, such as:

- the Inter-sectoral Committee for ICZM of the Sibenik-Knin County of Croatia, which continues meeting and following the implementation of the recommendations of the County Coastal Plan prepared with the support of the GEF MedPartnership;
- the coordination bodies established in the previous biennium within the projects in which PAP/RAC was a partner, such as the projects implemented with the MAVA support for the Buna Delta (Albania), Oristano (Italy) and Gar el-Melh (Tunisia), as well as the pilot project for the Kastela Bay (Croatia) within the InterregMed project Co-Evolve, continue to operate with PAP/RAC providing support, as needed;
- a coordination body is also being established within the CAMP BH so as to ensure the shared responsibility for the management of the coastal and marine space covered by the ICZM Protocol;
- several other coordination mechanisms will be established with the support of the Child Project 2.1. of the GEF MedProgramme to support the preparation and implementation of the National ICZM Strategies and costal plans.

Theme 7: CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Output 7.2.1

Climate change adaptation, including related vulnerabilities and risks, key activities mainstreamed into the development of new/updated regional strategies, regional action plans and measures addressing biodiversity, pollution and land-sea interactions

ADRIADAPT Project

Two guiding documents have been drafted within ADRIADAPT, an EU Interreg Italy-Croatia project: "Guidelines for Mainstreaming Adaptation into Coastal Management" and "Coastal Resilience Handbook" - both for the Adriatic coastal zones. The documents have been prepared in English, Croatian and Italian languages. The latter serves as a source of information for the description of adaptation options (see Output 7.3.1).

In the case study focusing on the Sibenik-Knin County of Croatia, a methodology of assessing the vulnerability of the narrow coastal zone to sea-level rise with specific reference to marine environment has been developed and tested. The results will serve to update the Action Plan for the implementation of the Sibenik-Knin County Coastal Plan prepared within the GEF MedPartnership.

<https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/adriadapt>

Output 7.3.1

Climate change adaptation priority fields identified and mainstreamed into the relevant MAP policies, as appropriate

ADRIADAPT Project

Within the ADRIADAPT project a catalogue of options has been developed. Around 50 adaptation options have been identified and will be uploaded on the ADRIADAPT platform. By now, 20 of them have been finalized and 10 more drafted.

Ten case studies have been identified, out of which 6 have been finalized. All materials will be available in English, Croatian and Italian languages.

Moreover, several working meetings with the experts and technicians of the Town of Vodice, Croatia, (local partners in the Project) took place aimed at identifying the most appropriate adaptation options with regard to the impacts of urban heat and flash floods.

These adaptation options and good practices, although intended for the Adriatic Region, can easily be adapted to wider Mediterranean conditions.

GEF SCCF Project

The activities related to the preparation of the coastal plans for Boka Kotorska in Montenegro and Tangiers-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region in Morocco, with the focus on climate change issues, are pending on the signing of the contract with GEF for the project "Enhancing regional climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas" (so called GEF SCCF project) that provides funding for these two plans and complements the Child Project 2.1 of the GEF MedProgramme.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

The Mediterranean Region, UNEP/MAP and PAP/RAC are undoubtedly at the forefront of ICZM, not only because of the unique legally binding instrument adopted to deal with ICZM issues but also because of the knowledge and expertise accumulated over the years of the ICZM implementation. That is why PAP/RAC and its collaborators are often consulted and invited to intervene. It would take pages to list all the occasions of the kind; hereafter are some of them for illustration:

- Two rounds of lecturing on ICZM and Climate Change challenges were delivered for the students of the Faculty of Marine Sciences of Split, Croatia, on 20 January 2020 (at the PAP/RAC's premises), and on 9 November 2020 (online).
- On 12 and 13 February, PAP/RAC participated in the meeting of the European and Mediterranean Coastal Agencies EMCA 2020 in Budva, Montenegro, organized by the French *Conservatoire du littoral* and the Public Enterprise for Coastal Zone Management of Montenegro. This was the second meeting of the network of Agencies established in 2015 during the Coast Day celebration in Antibes, this time dedicated to exchanging the experiences in adaptation to the climate change, starting from the national strategies for coastal adaptation through different projects, approaches, practices and solutions. The meeting was attended by representatives of the institutions dealing with coastal management from Albania, Algeria, France, Italy, Montenegro, Morocco, Senegal, Spain, Tunisia and the UK. It was endorsed by the French Ambassador to Montenegro.
- On 6 November 2020, during his official stay in Split, the Italian Ambassador to Croatia, paid visit to PAP/RAC. That was an occasion to brief him on the activities of PAP/RAC in the Mediterranean, and in particular on the long and fruitful cooperation with the Italian institutions and experts in the field of

environmental protection, coastal governance, climate change and other themes of relevance for sustainable development of the Mediterranean sea and coast. Also, some interesting ideas were put forward on possible joint events once the Covid-19 pandemic allows it.

- On 19-20 March 2021, the Montenegro Secretary of State for Land-use Planning paid visit to PAP/RAC together with the MAP NFP and another colleague from the Ministry, That was an occasion to make an overview of the long-lasting cooperation between Montenegro and PAP/RAC, and to discuss the finalisation of the GEF Adriatic project and the launching of the activities within the new GEF-funded projects: MedProgramme and SCCF.

Besides these face-to-face meetings, PAP/RAC Officers have contributed to a series of online workshops, panels, webinars, organised by its partner institutions, such as:

- Meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the "Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean" (Post-2020 SAP BIO) organised by SPA/RAC on 2 April 2020;
- Task Force SEABED organised by the European Commission on MSFD descriptors on 16-17 June 2020;
- Workshop „Paving the way for collective Ocean Literacy Initiatives in the Mediterranean Sea“, organised by EU4Ocean on 25 September 2020, with the presentation of "MedOpen";
- *Climate Europe Webstival* on the theme of „Climate services and European green deal“ organised by Met Office on 15 October 2020;
- Green Week“ event of the EU, organised by the University of Malaga on 22 October 2020 (with a presentation of the „Mediterranean Coastal Wetlands Governance Handbook“);
- Technical workshop on "Land-sea interactions in MSP" organised by MSPMED on 27 October 2020;

- Online lectures on ICZM and the Climate Change for the students of environmental engineering of the University of Zagreb and of civil engineering of the University of Varazdin (both in Croatia), on 27 November 2020;
- Webinar on "Climate change effects in coastal areas - vulnerability and adaptation", organised by the Israeli Coastal Authorities Forum on 16 December 2020;
- Several online meetings organised by DG MARE on the theme of Ecosystem-based Management and MSP in 2021;
- and many more...

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Almost all the activities have suffered a slight delay due to the Covid-19 lockdown. All the on-going externally-funded projects have been systematically prolonged by the donors by up to 6 months. This caused some reshuffling in the workplan and time schedule but it will allow us to implement all the planned activities.

Significant delays occurred with regard to the approval of the GEF-funded projects (the signature of the PCA for the MedProgramme Child Project 2.1 was delayed until the last days of 2020, while the PCA for the complementary project on climate change has not yet been signed), thus making impossible the launching of an important package of activities envisaged by the PoW (e.g. ICZM National Strategies, coastal plans, trainings...).

A major delay was registered with the GEF Adriatic project, which was delayed by almost a year because of its late approval and the consecutive delay in transferring funds. Long and complex procurement procedures for some of the major activities, combined with the Covid-19 pandemic, made it necessary to prolong the project, as it was done with all GEF-funded projects.

The main awareness raising campaign – Mediterranean Coast Day – took a different shape this year. Following the decision taken together with the host-country (Malta) it was

transformed into a virtual event, which got lots of visibility and provoked a series of local events, which can be considered as a great communication success.

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown the progress with the major PAP/RAC activity – CAMPs – could not be fully achieved. However, despite the complex political situation in the country and the Covid-19 pandemic, it was possible to launch the activities of the CAMP project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the finalization of the agreements for the transboundary CAMPs is stuck because of the impossibility to organize proper consultations at the level of the countries. For that reason, significant reshuffling will be needed at the level of activities and respective budgets.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Besides the resources made available to PAP/RAC through the projects already included in the PoW and described in the previous chapters (i.e. GEF Adriatic, ADRIADAPT and PORTODIMARE), other two GEF projects (MedProgramme signed in December 2020 and the complementary project on Climate Change Adaptation approved but not yet signed) will boost the implementation of the ICZM Protocol by the end of 2021 and in the next biennia.

Two other funding opportunities came to complement the regular MTF budget. These are:

- the 2nd phase of the MAVA project on wetland governance implemented in the Buna river area (Albania) and Ghar el-Melh (Tunisia); and
- the EcAp MED III for the "Coast and Hydrography" cluster (for which the contract is still to be provided by UNEP/MAP).

The original MTF budget for activities being modest, significant resources have to be secured from external sources.

To fill the gaps PAP/RAC will continue to closely collaborate with the CPs and to assist them in

mobilising external resources for the implementation of ICZM. To be fully prepared for opportunities that will arise and to be able to react quickly, we reiterate our invitation to the CPs to share with us their priorities and preferences for action.

CONCLUSION

ICZM and MSP are extremely dynamic and interactive processes, which require constant and active involvement of a variety of stakeholders, enough time and opportunities for consultations, and good knowledge of and adaptation to local conditions. For this, physical presence and possibility to interact in real time are key ingredients of success. One becomes even more aware of it in a situation where such interaction is impossible or difficult to organize.

Even in the challenging conditions in which the entire world has been functioning, the support to the CPs was provided through methodological work, application of tools in practice and training. All available virtual means were used to compensate for non-travelling, although video conferences and written exchanges cannot fully replace face-to-face discussions and working together at the same table. Therefore, slight modification of some of the activities was also needed in order to adapt to the on-line working conditions.

Although the implementation of the ICZM Protocol and its Common Regional Framework has been quite a challenge for all – CPs, PAP/RAC and the entire UNEP/MAP, a good progress has been made despite various difficulties encountered in this biennium. With some adjustments and some delays to catch up, the general progress can be estimated as good and in line with the approved PoW.

The challenge remain for the biennia to come and, as always, we count on the close collaboration with our FPs and their support to continue reaching good results.