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Mid Term Review of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027)

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**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the
Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.61/9
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Sliema, Malta, 13-15 May 2025

Agenda Item 9: Introduction of non-indigenous species by shipping activities

Mid Term Review of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027)

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document will not be printed and is made available in electronic format only. Delegates are encouraged to consult the document in its electronic format and limit printing.

Note by the Secretariat

The Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) was adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”), in December 2021 (Decision IG.25/17).

This document presents the Mid Term Review of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), which assesses progress made, identified challenges, and provides recommendations to ensure the successful completion of its objectives by 2027.

INTRODUCTION

1 The Mediterranean Sea, a critical maritime corridor, faces significant environmental challenges due to the introduction of non-indigenous species (NIS) through ships' ballast water and biofouling. To address these challenges, the 22nd Meeting (COP 22) of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols adopted the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), aligning the region's Actions with the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention) adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

2 The UNEP/MAP 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report 2023 (MED QSR)¹ concluded that NIS are increasingly present in the Mediterranean Sea, generating significant changes in the fauna and flora composition, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean. The 2023 MED QSR points to shipping (ballast waters and hull fouling) as one of the four main NIS introduction pathways, representing 29% of the total new species introduced.

3 The Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) aims to enhance cooperation among Mediterranean coastal States to effectively implement Ballast Water Management (BWM) practices and protect marine biodiversity.

4 Strategic Priority 5 of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) emphasises the need for periodic reviews to account for emerging issues, research outcomes, and implementation experiences. The Strategy's progress is assessed at Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and Meetings of the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Focal Points, as appropriate.

5 To this end, the Mid-Term Review of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) assessed progress made, identified challenges, and provided recommendations to ensure the successful completion of its objectives by 2027.

6 The Mid-Term Review Report is contained in the Annex to the present document.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, AND ACTIONS OF THE BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (2022-2027)

7 While the scope of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) remains on ballast water, it has been expanded to include some preliminary Activities on biofouling. The overall objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) are to:

.1 establish a framework for a regional harmonised approach in the Mediterranean on ships' ballast water control and management that is consistent with the requirements and standards of the BWM Convention, as outlined in Article 13(3) thereof;

.2 initiate some preliminary Activities related to the management of ships' biofouling in the Mediterranean region; and

.3 contribute to the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) with respect to NIS as defined in the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria.²

¹ <https://www.unep.org/resources/annual-report/mediterranean-quality-status-report-2023-med-qsr>

² UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/7.

8 The scope and objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) are structured around six (6) Strategic Priorities, each supported by specific Actions and Activities:³

- .1 **Strategic Priority 1: Support Ratification and Implementation of the BWM Convention**
 - Encourage ratification of the BWM Convention by Mediterranean coastal States.
 - Develop national laws to incorporate the BWM Convention into national legislation.
 - Provide technical support for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention.
- .2 **Strategic Priority 2: Contribute to the Achievement of GES**
 - Align BWM measures with the objectives of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast.
 - Initiate preliminary Activities to address the threat of biofouling on ships.
- .3 **Strategic Priority 3: Enhance Expertise for the Management of BWM and Biofouling**
 - Develop and implement a capacity-building programme.
 - Promote e-learning opportunities to enhance expertise in BWM and biofouling management.
- .4 **Strategic Priority 4: Build Political Will for the Implementation of BWM and Biofouling Management Measures**
 - Raise awareness among decision-makers and the general public about the impacts of NIS and the need for effective BWM measures.
- .5 **Strategic Priority 5: Keep the Strategy Under Review and Assess Progress of Implementation on a Regular Basis**
 - Establish a mechanism to review and evaluate the ongoing relevance of the Strategy.
 - Undertake mid-term and final reviews of the Strategy.
- .6 **Identify and Secure Adequate Resources to Implement the Activities Under the Strategy**
 - Develop and implement a resource mobilisation plan to support the implementation of the Strategy.

9 To assess the progress made towards achieving the scope and objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), an assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Priorities and the twelve (12) main Actions and its thirty-nine (39) associated Activities was undertaken.

10 An assessment of relevant regional frameworks also found that by adopting the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agreed to accelerate the processes of ratification and to effectively implement relevant, legally binding instruments as well as policies to address marine biosafety in the Mediterranean. By implication, this includes, inter alia:

- .1 the acceleration of the process of ratification of the BWM Convention; and
- .2 effective implementation of the 2023 IMO Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimise the transfer of invasive aquatic species (Biofouling Guidelines).

³ Each of these Strategic Priorities is supported by twelve (12) main Actions to be taken as well as thirty-nine (39) associated activities to be carried out at the regional, sub-regional or national level. These Actions and Activities are included in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) Action Plan.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

11 Supporting the implementation of the BWM Convention by Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention features among the priority areas of work of the Secretariat (REMPEC and SPA/RAC), as set out by the UNEP/MAP Programmes of Work for the 2022-2023 biennium and the 2024-2025 biennium.

12 The updated Action Plan Concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea, as prepared by SPA/RAC and agreed upon by the Sixteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points in May 2023, as adopted by COP 23 in December 2023, is being implemented in tandem with the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), with some Activities being implemented. It should also be noted that 17 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention ratified the SPA/BD Protocol.

13 A Regional Workshop on Ballast Water Management was held in Malta on 20–21 March 2023, focusing on promoting coordinated action across the Mediterranean to prevent and control marine biological invasions through ships' ballast water.

14 Following this, a Regional Expert Meeting on the Harmonisation of Procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention took place in Malta from 22–23 March 2023. Organised by REMPEC, in close cooperation with the IMO, the principal objective of this meeting was to discuss the revised draft regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean, which has since been adopted by COP 23. To a certain extent, these regional BWM harmonised procedures cover elements.

15 Ongoing developments in the field – and particularly recent and forthcoming amendments to the BWM Convention through the Experience Building Phase (EBP) - has resulted in certain Activities not being of relevance anymore.

CHALLENGES AND GAPS

16 Despite the progress made, several key challenges and gaps remain:

.1 **Ratification and Implementation:** Further ratification of the BWM Convention by Mediterranean coastal States is needed. Additionally, the adoption of relevant national legislation to enforce the BWM Convention remains incomplete.

.2 **Technical Support and Capacity-Building:** There is a need for targeted technical support and capacity-building initiatives to assist Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in ratifying and implementing the BWM Convention.

.3 **Awareness and Knowledge:** A lack of awareness and knowledge about the benefits of ratifying the BWM Convention can hinder progress towards achieving the Strategy's objectives.

.4 **Biofouling Management:** The relevance of addressing the emerging issue of biofouling has increased, and it requires coordinated efforts and alignment with ongoing developments in the field.

.5 **Resource Mobilisation:** Financial constraints and resource limitations present significant challenges to the successful implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027). While the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) has been developed, it has yet to be approved. Additionally, certain Activities require substantial financial resources, further hindering progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17 The Mid-Term Review Report makes the following actionable recommendations:

.1 Encourage Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet ratified the BWM Convention to do so as soon as possible. This will ensure a unified approach to ballast water management across the Mediterranean region;

.2 Mediterranean coastal States should draft and implement national laws to incorporate the BWM Convention into their national legislation. This will provide a legal framework for enforcing ballast water management measures. To this end, existing IMO Guidelines exist and can be disseminated;⁴

.3 The Secretariat should continue to offer targeted technical support to Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention. This includes building on the momentum of recent regional workshops and expert meetings on ballast water management;

.4 Encourage Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet adopted the SPA/BP Protocol to do so as soon as possible;

.5 The Secretariat should prioritise establishing the regional online BWM Working Group to drive the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region. This group will play a crucial role in coordinating efforts and sharing best practices. Clear Terms of Reference must be drafted for the BWM Working Group. It is also essential that the BWM Working Group avoid duplicating efforts and continue to work within the framework of existing Harmonised Procedures, particularly those that support the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027);

.6 Ensure that related Activities and funding are included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027. This will provide the necessary resources for implementing the Mediterranean BWM Strategy;

.7 Place emphasis on the emerging issue of biofouling and coordinate with ongoing developments in the field, particularly the work done by the IMO Glofouling Partnerships project. It is important to disseminate existing information and guidelines to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. This includes the Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species⁵ and the Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.⁶ It is of the utmost importance to align all work with the recent REMPEC Study Analysing the Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean Sea region;

.8 During the final review and any updates or revisions undertaken in 2026 and 2027, consideration must be given to amendments to the BWM Convention developed during the review process and envisaged for adoption at MEPC 85 in 2026;

.9 The Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) should be considered and adopted during the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC in May 2025. This will assist in the allocation of funding for specific Activities and ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy;

⁴ https://mepseas.imo.org/site/assets/files/1327/mepseas_website_version_2019_ballast_water_management_convention.pdf

⁵ GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

⁶ GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

.10 Certain Activities, for example, the development of a regional ballast water reporting system, are major undertakings that will require substantial financial and human resources, including the appointment of an external consultant; and

.11 While minor sections of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027) may be outdated, a full revision is not recommended as it would be a time-consuming process. Instead, it is advised to revise the work plan and implementation timetable to address the identified challenges and adjust the timelines where necessary. This will ensure that Actions and associated Activities can still be implemented within the overall timeframe of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027).

CONCLUSION

18 The Mid Term Review found that a key barrier to implementation has been the lack of funding, which has significantly hindered progress. To address this, the adoption of the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) is crucial to securing the financial support necessary for effective implementation. Additionally, biofouling management has become increasingly relevant, requiring alignment with the REMPEC Biofouling Study and existing IMO Guidelines to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts. While most Activities remain feasible for implementation within the Strategy's timeline, the implementation timetable must be adjusted to prevent a bottleneck effect in the final years of the strategy. Moving forward, immediate action is required to initiate pending Activities and update the work plan to ensure the Strategy's successful implementation.

Actions requested by the Meeting

19 **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2 **comment** as deemed appropriate.

Annex

**Mid-Term Review of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea
(2022-2027)**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) is a Regional Activity Centre established within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), known as UNEP/MAP.

REMPEC coordinates the Activities of the Mediterranean coastal States related to the implementation of the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (the “2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol”) to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the “Barcelona Convention”).

Twenty-one (21) countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea and the European Union (EU) are the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

The Mediterranean Sea, a critical maritime corridor, faces significant environmental challenges due to the introduction of non-indigenous species (NIS) through ships' ballast water and biofouling. To address these challenges, the 22nd Meeting (COP 22) of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols adopted the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) (the “Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027)”), aligning the region's Actions with the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (the “BWM Convention”) adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) aims to enhance cooperation among Mediterranean coastal States to effectively implement Ballast Water Management (BWM) practices and protect marine biodiversity. The overall objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) are to establish a regional harmonised approach to ballast water control and management, initiate preliminary Activities related to the management of ships' biofouling, and contribute to achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) with respect to NIS. While the scope of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) remains on ballast water, it has been expanded to include some preliminary Activities on biofouling.

Strategic Priority 5 of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) emphasises the need for periodic reviews to account for emerging issues, research outcomes, and implementation experiences. The Strategy's progress is assessed at Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and Meetings of the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Focal Points, as appropriate.

Action 11 (Completion of regular reviews of this Strategy) of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) specifies that:

- .1 the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) should be coordinated by REMPEC in collaboration with the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) and should be a standing item on the agenda of the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and the Meetings of the SPA/BD Focal Points, as appropriate, with a view to evaluating the ongoing relevance of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) and assessing progress in the implementation thereof; and
- .2 in addition, given the ongoing developments in the field – and particularly amendments to the BWM Convention – there should be mid-term and final reviews of this Strategy. The process to update or revise the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) to cater for the amendments to the BWM Convention and, among others, clearly cover both ballast water and biofouling – should be initiated in time prior to the end of the implementation period.

To this end, this Mid-Term Review of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) (hereinafter referred to as the “Mid-Term Review”) assesses progress, identifies challenges, and provides recommendations to ensure the successful completion of its objectives by 2027.

The review evaluates the effectiveness of the Strategy's implementation, the relevance of its Strategic Priorities, Actions, and Activities, and the feasibility of the implementation timetable. It also considers recent and forthcoming amendments to the BWM Convention.

The review finds that while some Activities have been undertaken or initiated, the majority have not been implemented within the designated timeline. As a result, the impact of the Strategic Priorities has been negligible. A key barrier to implementation has been the lack of funding for relevant Activities, which has significantly hindered progress.

The review also determines that, in most cases, the implementation timetable can be adjusted, but it Ewarns of a potential bottleneck in the final three years of the Strategy. To address this, the adoption of the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) is of the utmost importance, as it would provide the necessary financial support to advance implementation effectively.

The significance of biofouling has increased, making this Activity more relevant than before. To avoid duplication of efforts, existing IMO Guidelines should be utilised, and Activities should be aligned with the recently released REMPEC Biofouling Report.

To overcome these challenges, the following recommendations are made:

- .1 Encourage Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet ratified the BWM Convention to do so as soon as possible. This will ensure a unified approach to ballast water management across the Mediterranean region.
- .2 Mediterranean coastal States should draft and implement national laws to incorporate the BWM Convention into their national legislation. This will provide a legal framework for enforcing ballast water management measures. To this end, existing IMO Guidelines can be disseminated.⁷
- .3 The Secretariat should continue to offer targeted technical support to Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention. This includes building on the momentum of recent regional workshops and expert meetings on ballast water management.
- .4 Encourage Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet adopted the SPA/BP Protocol to do so as soon as possible.
- .5 The Secretariat should prioritise establishing the regional online BWM Working Group to drive the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region. This group will play a crucial role in coordinating efforts and sharing best practices. Clear Terms of Reference must be drafted for the BWM Working Group. It is also essential that the BWM Working Group avoids duplicating efforts and continues to work within the framework of existing Harmonized Procedures, particularly those that support the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027).

⁷ https://mepseas.imo.org/site/assets/files/1327/mepseas_website_version_2019_ballast_water_management_convention.pdf

.6 Ensure that related Activities and funding are included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027. This will provide the necessary resources for implementing the Mediterranean BWM Strategy.

.7 Place emphasis on the emerging issue of biofouling and coordinate with ongoing developments in the field, particularly the work done by the IMO Glofouling Partnerships project. It is important to disseminate existing information and guidelines to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. This includes the Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species⁸ and the Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.⁹ It is of the utmost importance to align all work with the recent REMPEC Study Analysing the Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean Sea Region.

.8 During the final review and any updates or revisions undertaken in 2026 and 2027, consideration must be given to amendments to the BWM Convention developed during the review process and envisaged for adoption at the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) 85 in 2026.

.9 The Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) should be considered and adopted during the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC in May 2025. This will assist in the allocation of funding for specific Activities and ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027).

.10 Certain Activities, for example, the development of a regional ballast water reporting system, are major undertakings that will require substantial financial and human resources, including the appointment of an external consultant.

.11 While minor sections of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027) may be outdated, a full revision is not recommended as it would be a time-consuming process. Instead, it is advised to revise the work plan and implementation timetable to address the identified challenges and adjust the timelines where necessary. This will ensure that Actions and associated Activities can still be implemented within the overall timeframe of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027).

⁸ GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

⁹ GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

BACKGROUND

The Mediterranean Sea, a critical maritime corridor, faces significant environmental challenges related to the introduction of NIS through ships' ballast water and biofouling. To address this, COP 22¹⁰ adopted the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027)¹¹, hereinafter referred to as the "Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027)", aligning the Actions in the Mediterranean with the provisions of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention) adopted by the IMO, as well as contributing to regional efforts to mitigate marine environmental degradation.

The UNEP/MAP 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report 2023 (MED QSR)¹² concludes that NIS are increasingly present in the Mediterranean Sea, generating significant changes in the fauna and flora composition, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean. The 2023 MED QSR points to shipping (ballast water and hull fouling) as one of the four main NIS introduction pathways, representing 29% of the total new species introduced.

The Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) aims to enhance cooperation among Mediterranean coastal States to effectively implement BWM practices and protect marine biodiversity.

While the scope of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) remains on ballast water, it has been expanded to include some preliminary Activities on biofouling.

The overall objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) are to:

- .1 establish a framework for a regional harmonised approach in the Mediterranean on ships' ballast water control and management that is consistent with the requirements and standards of the BWM Convention, as outlined in Article 13(3) thereof;
- .2 initiate some preliminary Activities related to the management of ships' biofouling in the Mediterranean region; and
- .3 contribute to the achievement of GES with respect to NIS as defined in the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria.¹³

Strategic Priority 5 (Keep this Strategy under review and assess progress of implementation on a regular basis) of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) indicates that the Strategy should be subject to periodic review to take into account emerging issues, outcomes of research and development (R&D) Activities and experience gained from its operation and implementation. Particular attention should be given to the anticipated amendments to the BWM Convention, including those already adopted but yet to come into force, and those that might arise through the experience-building phase (EBP) associated with the BWM Convention. It also indicates that progress in terms of implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) should be assessed at Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and Meetings of the SPA/BD Focal Points, as appropriate.

Action 11 (Completion of regular reviews of this Strategy) of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) specifies that:

¹⁰ Twenty-second Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021).

¹¹ UNEP/MED IG.25/27, Decision IG.25/17.

¹² <https://www.unep.org/resources/annual-report/mediterranean-quality-status-report-2023-med-qsr>

¹³ UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/7.

.1 the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) should be coordinated by REMPEC in collaboration with the SPA/RAC and should be a standing item on the agenda of the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and the Meetings of the SPA/BD Focal Points, as appropriate, with a view to evaluating the ongoing relevance of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) and assessing progress in the implementation thereof; and

.2 in addition, given the ongoing developments in the field – and particularly amendments to the BWM Convention – there should be mid-term and final reviews of this Strategy. The process to update or revise the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) to cater for the amendments to the BWM Convention and, among others, clearly cover both ballast water and biofouling – should be initiated in time prior to the end of the implementation period.

In this context, under Strategic Priority 5, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention called for the establishment of a mechanism to review and evaluate the ongoing relevance of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), and to assess progress in the implementation thereof. More specifically, under Action 11, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agreed to:

.1 review the status of implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) at the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and the Meetings of the SPA/BD Focal Points, as appropriate;

.2 undertake mid-term and final reviews of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027); and

.3 update or revise the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) to consider any new developments, including amendments to the BWM Convention.

COP 23¹⁴ adopted the Updated Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea¹⁵ with one of its objectives being to support the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), and agreed to include the following expected deliverables in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025:¹⁶

- 2.4.1.h) “The Mid-Term Review undertaken; recommendations on the way forward elaborated.”

To this effect, given that the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) is now at its mid-point of implementation of this Mid-Term Review, inter alia assess progress, identify challenges and provide recommendations on the way forward to ensure the successful completion of its objectives by 2027.

¹⁴ Twenty-third Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023).

¹⁵ UNEP/MED IG.26/22, [Decision IG.26/5](#), Annex IV.

¹⁶ UNEP/MED IG.26/22, [Decision IG.26/14](#).

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this Mid-Term Review is to:

- .1 assess the progress made towards achieving the scope and objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027);
- .2 evaluate the effectiveness of its implementation, the ongoing relevance of its Strategic Priorities, Actions and Activities, the feasibility of the associated implementation timetable, as well as identify possible areas of improvement, as appropriate;
- .3 undertake a comprehensive review of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), taking into account ongoing developments in the field – and particularly recent and forthcoming amendments to the BWM Convention; and
- .4 provide actionable recommendations for any necessary adjustments, updates or revisions to improve its outcomes, address emerging issues, and align with any new developments, including amendments to the BWM Convention.

METHODOLOGY AND INFORMATION USED TO INFORM THE MID-TERM REVIEW

The following reference documents were analysed and considered through a desktop review:

- .1 Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027).¹⁷
- .2 Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the “Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)”).¹⁸
- .3 Report assessing the progress and effectiveness of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), identifying suggested areas for improvement.¹⁹
- .4 Final draft Resource Mobilisation Strategy to Implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027).
- .5 2017 Assessment of the level of implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships’ Ballast Water Management.
- .6 Relevant documents related to the Mid-Term Assessment of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (the “Post-2020 SAP BIO Mid-Term Assessment”).
- .7 Updated Action Plan concerning species introductions and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea.²⁰
- .8 Study Analysing the Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the GHG Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean Sea region.²¹

¹⁷ UNEP/MED IG.25/27, Decision IG.25/17.

¹⁸ UNEP/MED IG.25/27

¹⁹ REMPEC/WG.58/3

²⁰ UNEP/MED IG.26/22, [Decision IG.26/5](#), Annex IV.

²¹ REMPEC/WG.61/INF.16

- .9 Other relevant information that is publicly available.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BWM STRATEGY (2022-2027)

The scope and objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) are to be met through the implementation of the following six (6) Strategic Priorities:

- .1 Strategic Priority 1: Support ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention.
- .2 Strategic Priority 2: Contribute to the achievement of GES.
- .3 Strategic Priority 3: Enhance expertise for the management of BWM and biofouling in the Mediterranean region.
- .4 Strategic Priority 4: Build political will for the implementation of BWM and biofouling management measures in the Mediterranean.
- .5 Strategic Priority 5: Keep this Strategy under review and assess the progress of implementation on a regular basis.
- .6 Strategic Priority 6: Identify and secure adequate resources to implement the Activities under this Strategy.

Each of these Strategic Priorities is supported by twelve (12) main Actions to be taken as well as thirty-nine (39) associated Activities to be carried out at the regional, sub-regional or national level. These Actions and Activities are included in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) Action Plan.

To assess the progress made towards achieving the scope and objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), an assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Priorities and the twelve (12) main Actions and its thirty-nine (39) associated Activities was undertaken.

Table 1 provides a visual overview of the Actions and Activities undertaken and implemented to date. It considers Activities that were undertaken and completed, Activities that have not commenced and thus cannot be marked as completed, as well as Activities that have commenced and/or are partially underway. Table 1 also indicates Activities where the implementation deadlines have not yet been reached, and Activities for which information is not readily available. The following legend is used in Table 1 to provide information on the related state of play:






	Activity undertaken
	Activity not undertaken
	Activity commenced or partially underway
	Activity implementation deadline not yet reached
	Information not readily available

Table 1: Assessment of implementation

Strategic Priority 1: Support Ratification and Implementation of the BWM Convention		
The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention support the work for the minimisation of the introduction of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) carried out by the relevant organisations and fora, particularly the work of the IMO, and are committed to taking all appropriate Actions towards the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean		
Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
1. Ratification of the BWM Convention	i. Circulate a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to confirming the status of ratification of the BWM Convention – and its incorporation into national law – in each country;	×
	ii. Draft guidelines for the development of national law to give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement;	×
	iii. Establish national policy working groups to lead the process towards the ratification of the BWM Convention, including drafting of the instrument of ratification; and	①
	iv. Draft national law to give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement and submission through relevant governmental channels for endorsement.	①
Observations		
At the time of adoption of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) in December 2021, thirteen (13) of the twenty-one (21) Mediterranean coastal States that were Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention ratified the BWM Convention. Since then, there has been no further ratification of the BWM Convention by Mediterranean coastal States. ²²		
By adopting the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agreed to accelerate the processes of ratification and to effectively implement relevant legally binding instruments as well as policies to address marine biosafety in the Mediterranean, by implication this includes, inter alia: ²³		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the acceleration of the process of ratification of the BWM Convention; and - effective implementation of the 2023 IMO Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species (Biofouling Guidelines). 		

²² See the IMO Status Book - Comprehensive information on the status of multilateral conventions and instruments available at <https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/About/Conventions/StatusOfConventions/Status%202024.pdf>








²³ UNEP/MED IG.25/27 Common Strategic Objective 5.

Supporting the implementation of the BWM Convention by Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention features among the priority areas of work of the Secretariat (REMPEC and SPA/RAC), as set out by the UNEP/MAP Programmes of Work for the 2022-2023 biennium and the 2024-2025 biennium.

During the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC from 13 to 15 June 2023, convened in Kappara, Malta, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet ratified the BWM Convention, were encouraged to ratify and effectively implement the BWM Convention as soon as possible.²⁴

During the same meeting, the Secretariat were also called upon to provide targeted technical support to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so requested, for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention, as well as the implementation of the regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea once they were eventually adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.²⁵

It should be noted that no information is readily available as to whether new national law has been drafted or not. An assessment of the level of implementation of the 2012 Mediterranean BWM Strategy carried out in 2016 reported that only five (5) of the responding Mediterranean coastal States had developed national law.²⁶

Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
2. Harmonisation of BWM Measures in the Mediterranean Region	i. Establish a regional online BWM Working Group to drive the process towards harmonisation of BWM measures in the region coordinated by REMPEC in cooperation with SPA/RAC;	
	ii. Organise a regional workshop on Port State Control (PSC) in relation to the BWM Convention, in collaboration with existing PSC bodies (e.g. Mediterranean MoU on PSC, Paris MoU);	
	iii. Develop and implement a regionally harmonised, mandatory ballast water reporting system for ships arriving at Mediterranean ports;	
	iv. Establish and maintain a regional communication system to allow the exchange of data, experience, and tracking of violations for PSC purposes;	
	v. Develop and adopt a regional protocol for sampling of ballast water for purposes of PSC;	
	vi. Undertake an assessment of the status of BWM in the Mediterranean (including information on designated BWE areas in national waters);	
	vii. Develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive Regional Procedure for the Granting of Exemptions under the BWM Convention; ²⁷ and	

²⁴ REMPEC/WG.56/8 31 July 2023.

²⁵ REMPEC/WG.56/8 31 July 2023.

²⁶ REMPEC/WG.41/7.

²⁷ Activity partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23.

	viii. Develop a regional Action Plan for the provision of port reception facilities for sediments (to be informed by a study on shipping traffic).	×
Observations		
The updated Action Plan Concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea as prepared by SPA/RAC and agreed upon by the Sixteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points in May 2023 ²⁸ , as adopted by COP 23 in December 2023, is being implemented in tandem with the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027).		
Activity 5 and Activity 7 of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) are also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.		
A Regional Workshop on Ballast Water Management was held in Malta from 20 to 21 March 2023 with a focus on promoting the development of coordinated action throughout the Mediterranean Sea region to prevent and control marine biological invasions through ships' ballast water. ²⁹		
A Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention was held in Malta from 22 to 23 March 2023.		
.1 The principal objective of this Regional Expert Meeting, which was organised by REMPEC in close cooperation with the IMO, was to discuss the revised draft regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean. ³⁰		
On 1 June 2023, REMPEC prepared a brief overview of the status of harmonisation of BWM Measures. ³¹		
Between 13 and 15 June 2023, the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC was held in Malta. During the meeting:		
.1 the final draft of the regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention in the Mediterranean Sea, hereinafter referred to as “the regional BWM harmonised procedures”, was endorsed for submission to the next Meeting of the MAP Focal Points;		
.2 the Secretariat was requested to establish the regional online BWM Working Group referred to in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) with a view to driving the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region coordinated by REMPEC, in cooperation with SPA/RAC;		
.3 the regional online BWM Working Group, once established, was tasked to develop a harmonised procedure on Ballast Water Reporting, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (Kappara, Malta, 22 to 23 March 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate;		
.4 The regional online BWM Working Group could not be established since no related Activity or funding was included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025. To this end, it should be included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027;		

²⁸https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/action_plans/pa_alien_en.pdf

²⁹<https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/Pages/WhatsNew-1853.aspx>

³⁰ REMPEC/WG.54/4 17 April 2023.

³¹ REMPEC/WG.56/INF.8

- .5 During the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols held in Slovenia between 5 and 8 December 2023, Contracting Parties adopted the regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the regional BWM harmonised procedures³²; and
- .6 SPA/RAC is involved in the Iliad project and is implementing an Activity to develop an NIS Monitoring Plan with an NIS Early Warning System to be applied to the Port of Sagunto as a pilot.

The regional BWM harmonised procedures address aspects of the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention for which regional harmonisation in the Mediterranean region is essential, and contribute to Actions 2, 3, 4 and 5; however, they do not cover all elements (for instance on PSC, as per Activity 2.v.)

While none of the other specific Activities associated with Action 2 have been explicitly undertaken, Activity 7 (Develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive Regional Procedure for the Granting of Exemptions under the BWM Convention) is, to a certain extent, covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23.

Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
3. Development, adoption and implementation of a regional protocol for port baseline surveys and biological monitoring in Mediterranean ports	i. Circulate a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to obtaining up-to-date information on the status of port surveys in the region;	✗
	ii. Identify key ports to be surveyed based on the questionnaire and provide support to the relevant authorities to undertake such surveys to fill the gaps;	✗ ⌚
	iii. Develop a regional protocol for port surveys, taking into account the Guidance on Port Biological Baseline Surveys that was developed within the framework of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme, the regional guidance provided for standardisation of survey and monitoring approaches through SPA/RAC via the EcAp roadmap and IMAP, as well as the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonised Procedure for BWMC A-4 Exemptions that includes a Port Survey Protocol; ³³ and	↓
	iv. Review and adapt the IMAP Guidance Fact Sheet for Common Indicator 6 under EO 2, as well as define DSs and DDs to ensure integration of data in the IMAP Info System.	✓

Observations

Activity iii is also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea and was undertaken by SPA/RAC.

Activity iv is also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea and was undertaken by SPA/RAC.

³² Decision IG.26/11 UNEP/MED IG.26/L.2/Add.11.

³³ Activity partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Annex B – Port Survey Protocol).

Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
4. Promotion of the use of risk assessment as a tool to assist in ballast water (and, more generally, IAS) management and decision-making	i. Develop and adopt a regional protocol for risk assessment ³⁴ ; and	↓
	ii. Undertake a regional risk assessment of key ports in the Mediterranean Sea.	⌚
Observations		
Both Activities are also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.		
<p>To date the following Activities have been undertaken:</p> <p>.1 The development of a regional protocol for risk assessment, Activity i, is, to a certain extent, covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Harmonised Procedure: Regulation A-4 Exemptions as well as Appendix A – Protocol for Identifying Target Species)³⁵.</p> <p>.2 SPA/RAC is involved in the Iliad project and is implementing an Activity to develop an NIS Monitoring Plan with an NIS Early Warning System to be applied to the Port of Sagunto as a pilot.</p>		

³⁴ Activity partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Harmonised Procedure: Regulation A-4 Exemptions as well as Appendix A – Protocol for Identifying Target Species).

³⁵ Harmonised Procedure: Contingency Measures 5.1 Harmonised procedure for contingency measures in the Mediterranean Sea – “Ballast water reporting forms in such case would be used not only for potentially targeting ship for PSC inspection but also could be used to carry out biological risk assessment prior to granting a right to discharge; in line with the Action 4 of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027).”

Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
5. Alignment of BWM measures with neighbouring regions	i. Organise a joint conference on BWM with neighbouring regions to share experiences and promote further alignment.	↓
Observations		
While this Activity has not been completed yet, it has been included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025, and some funding was allocated accordingly. In addition, a concept note was prepared by REMPEC in cooperation with SPA/RAC, and liaison was made with the Secretariats of neighbouring Regional Seas Conventions.		
Strategic Priority 2: Contribute to the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES)		
The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention support the work for the minimisation of the introduction of IAS carried out within the framework of the Barcelona Convention through the SPA/BD Protocol, IMAP, and the updated NIS Action Plan; as well as the work on the control and management of ships' ballast water and biofouling carried out by the IMO, and are committed to take all appropriate Actions towards achieving the NIS-related objectives in the region		
Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
6. Ratification of SPA/BD Protocol	i. Circulate a questionnaire to those Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet ratified the SPA/BD Protocol to better understand the barriers or challenges to such ratification; and	×
	ii. Organise a workshop aimed at addressing these concerns.	×
Observations		
While these Activities have not been undertaken, 17 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention ratified the SPA/BD Protocol.		
Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
7. Initiation of preliminary Activities to address the threat of biofouling on ships	i. Organise a regional workshop to initiate biofouling-related Activities in the region;	×
	ii. Undertake national status assessments of biofouling; and	🕒
	iii. Develop National Strategies and Action Plans to manage biofouling.	×
Observations		
These Activities are also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.		

It is noted that an IMO Regional Workshop on the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships, 2001 (AFS Convention) and the then 2011 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimize the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species was organised by REMPEC, in cooperation with IMO, in Malta on 12 to 14 November 2019, prior to the adoption of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027). However, no further regional workshops have been held since then.

It is further noted that the 2011 Biofouling Guidelines were reviewed and revoked by the 2023 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimize the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species (IMO Biofouling Guidelines).³⁶ To this end, a regional workshop could be organised to cover the updated IMO Biofouling Guidelines.

While a regional workshop to initiate biofouling-related activities was not organised *per se*, activities related to the management of ships' biofouling in the Mediterranean within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNEP and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) were carried out by REMPEC, with the support from the Project Coordinating Unit of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project. Egypt, Libya, and Morocco benefitted from the following activities:

- .1 national consultants to support the development of their respective national status assessment on the current status of national biofouling management were engaged and initiated their work in October 2023.
- .2 the development and approval of national assessment reports of the respective national competent authorities in December 2023.
- .3 national awareness-raising workshops were subsequently held in each beneficiary country in 2024.

Various guidelines exist that are of importance, including: the Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species³⁷, and the Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.³⁸

³⁶ International Maritime Organization (IMO), Resolution MEPC.378(80): 2023 IMO Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimize the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species.

³⁷ GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

³⁸ GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

In 2025, REMPEC published a Study Analysing the Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the GHG Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean Sea region³⁹. The Study recommends a more coordinated international approach to biofouling management, including the need for:

- Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to align with the IMO Biofouling Guidelines, ensuring biofouling management consistency across the Mediterranean Sea region;
- Enhanced data collection on the impact of biofouling on shipping efficiency and GHG emissions to guide future policies; and
- Alignment with biofouling management practices, such as proactive (In-Water Cleaning) IWC that balances efficiency gains with environmental protection.

This study also includes an Action Plan that is of relevance.

Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
8. Establishment and maintenance of a web-based RIS	i. Undertake a study to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assess the specific information needs relative to various aspects of BWM; - identify existing websites, etc., which provide the type of information required (including national and sub-regional web-based or linked systems); and - develop a regional information and decision support system or tool, taking note of recent developments and focusing on areas identified to be of common regional priority to assist with a standardised approach to BWM. 	×
	ii. Establish and maintain the RIS based on the recommendations of the study.	🕒

Observations

To date, none of the specific Activities have been undertaken. While the Activity to undertake a study to develop a regional information and decision support system or tool is included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025, no funding has been allocated to that end thus far.

Strategic Priority 3: Enhance expertise for the management of ballast water and biofouling in the Mediterranean region

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention stress the need to continue efforts in the region to enhance capacity building, knowledge transfer and training of personnel and to involve relevant international and regional cooperation mechanisms, non-governmental organisations, and agencies as appropriate

³⁹ REMPEC/WG.61/INF.16

Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
9. Development and implementation of a capacity-building programme	i. Undertake a training needs assessment to determine what type of training is most required;	✗
	ii. Organise regional training workshops based on the outcomes of the needs assessment;	🕒
	iii. Replicate regional workshops at a national level, as necessary;	🕒
	iv. Disseminate protocols and tools for the standardisation of technical approaches that could be used to conduct regional and national Activities; and	🕒
	v. Promote e-learning opportunities.	🕒
Strategic Priority 4: Build political will for the implementation of ballast water and biofouling management measures in the Mediterranean region The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agree to promote, individually or through regional cooperation, efforts to raise awareness among decision-makers and the general public of the impacts of and need to effectively manage NIS in the Mediterranean		
Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
10. Enhancement of awareness of NIS among decision-makers and the general public	i. Organise a high-level seminar on ballast water and biofouling for decision-makers in the region, e.g. at a COP;	✗
	ii. Create and/or circulate relevant materials, including those from IMO projects, and translate these into local languages for dissemination at a national level;	🕒
	iii. Organise national seminars and workshops to raise awareness about the issue among various stakeholders; and	🕒
	iv. Develop local case studies for use in awareness campaigns and for leveraging support within the Mediterranean region and its sub-regions.	🕒
Strategic Priority 5: Keep this Strategy under review and assess the progress of implementation on a regular basis The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention call for the establishment of a mechanism to review and evaluate the ongoing relevance of this Strategy, and to assess progress in the implementation thereof		
Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
11. Completion of regular reviews of this strategy	i. Review the status of implementation of this Strategy at the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and the Meetings of the SPA/BD Focal Points, as appropriate;	✓
	ii. Undertake mid-term and final reviews of this Strategy; and	⬇

	iii. Update or revise this Strategy to consider any new developments, including amendments to the BWM Convention.	↓
Observations		
This Mid-Term Review is the first review of the Strategy and, together with the associated set of recommendations, it will enable the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be held in Malta from 13 to 15 May 2025 to consider whether the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) should be updated or revised during the biennium 2026-2027.		
Strategic Priority 6: Identify and secure adequate resources to implement the Activities under this Strategy		
The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agree to work towards ensuring the sustainability and continuity of Activities from self-financing sources within the region in the longer term		
Action	Activity	Assessment of implementation
12. Development and implementation of a resource mobilisation plan to support the implementation of this Strategy	i. Develop and implement a resource mobilisation plan, including an estimation of costs, analysis of funding opportunities, and identification of potential sources of technical expertise within the region which could be made available as in-kind contributions.	✓ ↓
Observations		
COP 22 specifically requested the Secretariat to provide technical support for the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), in synergy with the IMO, through technical cooperation and capacity-building Activities, including resource mobilisation (internal and external). COP 22 agreed to include the following Activity in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023 ⁴⁰ : “Measures to control and manage ships’ ballast water and biofouling to minimise the transfer of IAS be implemented; assistance provided, and a resource mobilisation Strategy developed.”		
To that purpose, the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), was developed in 2023 and will be referred to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be held in Malta from 13 to 15 May 2025, for consideration.		

⁴⁰ UNEP/MED IG.25/27, Decision IG.25/19.

EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BWM STRATEGY (2022-2027)

The following table evaluates the effectiveness of the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027), the ongoing relevance of its Strategic Priorities, Actions and Activities, as well as the feasibility of the associated implementation timetable.

Table 2: Evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027)

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
S P 1	1. Ratification of the BWM Convention	i. Circulate a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to confirming the status of ratification of the BWM Convention – and its incorporation into national law – in each country;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline.
		ii. Draft guidelines for the development of national law to give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement;	REMPEC has indicated that no request for guidance on drafting of national laws has been received. This Activity appears no longer relevant.	Not relevant

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		iii. Establish national policy working groups to lead the process towards the ratification of the BWM Convention, including drafting of the instrument of ratification; and	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022–2024. However, information is not readily available to confirm whether it was undertaken at the national level. Given the lack of further ratifications of the BWM Convention by Contracting Parties, it is assumed that this Activity was not carried out within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		iv. Draft national law to give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement and submission through relevant governmental channels for endorsement.	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022–2024. However, information is not readily available to confirm whether it was undertaken at the national level. Given the lack of further ratifications of the BWM Convention by Contracting Parties, it is assumed that this Activity was not carried out within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible for

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
				implementation within the remaining timeline.
	2. Harmonisation of BWM Measures in the Mediterranean Region⁴¹	i. Establish a regional online BWM Working Group to drive the process towards harmonisation of BWM measures in the region coordinated by REMPEC in cooperation with SPA/RAC;	<p>Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Kappara, Malta, 13-15 June 2023):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requested the Secretariat (REMPEC and SPA/RAC) to establish the regional online BWM Working 	<p>The Activity was scheduled to begin in 2022 but has not yet been undertaken. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.</p>

⁴¹ The regional BWM harmonised procedures address certain aspects of the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention, where regional harmonisation in the Mediterranean is essential. They contribute to Actions 2, 3, 4, and 5; however, they do not cover all Activities. For example, Activity 2.v is not included within the scope of the BWM harmonised procedures.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
			<p>Group referred to in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) with a view to driving the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region coordinated by REMPEC, in cooperation with SPA/RAC;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tasked the regional online BWM Working Group to develop a harmonised procedure on Ballast Water Reporting, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (Kappara, Malta, 22-23 March 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate. 	<p>In 2023, the Secretariat was requested to establish the regional online BWM Working Group. However, this has not been undertaken, as no related Activity or funding was allocated in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2024–2025. Despite this, the implementation timeline allows for the Activity to be completed by 2027, and it remains feasible within the associated timetable.</p>

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		ii. Organise a regional workshop on PSC in relation to the BWM Convention, in collaboration with existing PSC bodies (e.g. Mediterranean MoU on PSC, Paris MoU);	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2023 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		iii. Develop and implement a regionally harmonised, mandatory ballast water reporting system for ships arriving at Mediterranean ports;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to begin in 2022 but has not yet been undertaken. Despite this, the implementation timeline allows for the Activity to be completed by 2027, and it remains feasible within the associated timetable
		iv. Establish and maintain a regional communication system to allow the exchange of data, experience, and tracking of violations for PSC purposes;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to begin in 2023 but has not yet been undertaken. Despite this, the implementation timeline allows for the Activity to be completed by 2027, and it remains feasible within the associated timetable.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		v. Develop and adopt a regional protocol for sampling of ballast water for purposes of PSC; ⁴²	<p>Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy. This Activity is not covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures.</p> <p>It should be further noted that SPA/RAC is involved in the Iliad project and is implementing an Activity to develop an NIS Monitoring Plan with an NIS Early Warning System to be applied to the Port of Sagunto as a pilot.</p>	The Activity was scheduled for 2022-2023 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		vi. Undertake an assessment of the status of BWE in the Mediterranean (including information on designated BWE areas in national waters);	<p>The MEPC's schedule for implementation, which allowed for the phasing in of compliance with the D-2 standard over time for individual ships, now requires all ships to meet the D-2 standard as of 8 September 2024 unless they were granted an exemption in terms of regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention. BWE areas will only be designated for contingency measures or in case of exemptions.</p> <p>For this reason, the Activity is no longer relevant.</p>	The Activity was scheduled for 2022-2023 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. However, this Activity is no longer relevant.

⁴² This Activity also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		vii. Develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive Regional Procedure for the Granting of Exemptions under the BWM Convention; and ⁴³	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	This Activity is partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23.
		viii. Develop a regional Action Plan for the provision of port reception facilities for sediments (to be informed by a study on shipping traffic).	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to begin in 2023 and to be completed by 2025 but has not yet been undertaken. The Activity does not remain feasible within the associated timetable.
	3. Development, adoption, and implementation of a regional protocol for port baseline surveys and biological monitoring in Mediterranean ports	i. Circulate a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to obtaining up-to-date information on the status of port surveys in the region;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.

⁴³ This Activity also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		ii. Identify key ports to be surveyed based on the questionnaire and provide support to the relevant authorities to undertake such surveys to fill the gaps;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2023-2024 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		iii. Develop a regional protocol for port surveys, taking into account the Guidance on Port Biological Baseline Surveys that was developed within the framework of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme, the regional guidance provided for standardisation of survey and monitoring approaches through SPA/RAC via the EcAp roadmap and IMAP, as well as the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonised Procedure for BWMC	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	This Activity is partially covered by the regional BWM harmonized procedures adopted by COP 23 (Annex B – Port Survey Protocol).

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		A-4 Exemptions that includes a Port Survey Protocol ⁴⁴ ; and ⁴⁵		
		iv. Review and adapt the IMAP Guidance Fact Sheet for Common Indicator 6 under EO 2, as well as define DSs and DDs to ensure integration of data in the IMAP Info System. ⁴⁶	This Activity was undertaken.	This Activity was undertaken.
	4. Promotion of the use of risk assessment as a tool to assist in ballast water (and, more generally, IAS) management and decision-making	i. Develop and adopt a regional protocol for risk assessment ⁴⁷ ; and	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	This Activity is partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Harmonized Procedure: Regulation A-4 Exemptions and Appendix A – Protocol for Identifying Target Species).
		ii. Undertake a regional risk assessment of key	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2023-2025 but has not commenced. However, it

⁴⁴ Activity partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Annex B – Port Survey Protocol).

⁴⁵ This Activity also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁶ This Activity also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁷ Activity partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Harmonised Procedure: Regulation A-4 Exemptions as well as Appendix A – Protocol for Identifying Target Species); This Activity also included in the SPA/RAC Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		ports in the Mediterranean Sea.		remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
	5. Alignment of BWM measures with neighbouring regions	iii. Organise a joint conference on BWM with neighbouring regions to share experiences and promote further alignment.	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2023 but has not been completed within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible. for implementation within the remaining timeline.
S P 2	6. Ratification of SPA/BD Protocol	i. Circulate a questionnaire to those Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet ratified the SPA/BD Protocol to better understand the barriers or challenges to such ratification; and	Strategic Priority 2 also aims to avoid the duplication of efforts. To this end, ratification of the SPA/BD Protocol, which is complemented by the updated NIS Action Plan, is important. While Activities 5.i and 5.ii were not undertaken, 17 of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention ratified the SPA/BD Protocol, which was the aim of Action 6. For this reason, this Activity is no longer relevant.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. However, the aim of the Action has been achieved.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		ii. Organise a workshop aimed at addressing these concerns.	Activity is no longer relevant.	The Activity was scheduled for 2023 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. However, the aim of the Action has been achieved.
	7. Initiation of preliminary Activities to address the threat of biofouling on ships	i. Organise a regional workshop to initiate biofouling-related Activities in the region;	The relevance of this Activity has increased. This Activity continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022 but was not been completed within the implementation deadline. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		ii. Undertake national status assessments of biofouling; and	The relevance of this Activity has increased. This Activity continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2023 - 2025 but has not commenced. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		iii. Develop national strategies and action plans to manage biofouling.	The relevance of this Activity has increased. This Activity continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to commence in 2025, but it cannot start before the completion of Activity ii.
	8. Establishment and maintenance of a web-based RIS	i. Undertake a study to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the specific information needs 	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022-2023 but has not been completed within the implementation deadline.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		<p>relative to various aspects of BWM;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify existing websites, etc., which provide the type of information required (including national and sub-regional web-based or linked systems); and • develop a regional information and decision support system or tool, taking note of recent developments and focusing on areas identified to be of common regional priority to assist with a standardised approach to BWM. 		However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		iv. Establish and maintain the RIS based on the recommendations of the study.	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to commence in 2023 but has not been undertaken within the implementation deadline. It is unlikely that it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
S P 3	9. Development and implementation of a capacity-building programme	i. Undertake a training needs' assessment to determine what type of training is most required;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022 but was not undertaken. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		ii. Organise regional training workshops based on the outcomes of the needs assessment;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to take place between 2022 and 2027 but could not commence as the preceding Activity was not implemented.
		iii. Replicate regional workshops at a national level, as necessary;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to take place between 2023 and 2026 but could not commence as the preceding Activity was not implemented.
		iv. Disseminate protocols and tools for the standardisation of technical approaches that could be used to conduct regional and national Activities; and	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022–2027 but has not taken place. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		v. Promote e-learning opportunities.	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2022–2027 but has not taken place. However, it

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
				remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
S P 4	10. Enhancement of awareness of NIS among decision-makers and the general public	i. Organise a high-level seminar on ballast water and biofouling for decision-makers in the region, e.g. at a COP;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled for 2023 but has not been undertaken. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		ii. Produce and/or circulate relevant materials, including those from IMO projects, and translate these into local languages for dissemination at a national level;	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to commence in 2022 but has not been undertaken. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		iii. Organise national seminars and workshops to raise awareness about the issue among various stakeholders; and	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The activity was scheduled for 2023-2026 but has commenced. However, it remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
		iv. Develop local case studies for use in awareness campaigns and for leveraging	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity was scheduled to be undertaken between 2023-2026 but has commenced. However, it

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		support within the Mediterranean region and its sub-regions.		remains feasible for implementation within the remaining timeline.
S P 5	11. Completion of regular reviews of this strategy	i. Review the status of implementation of this Strategy at the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and the Meetings of the SPA/BD Focal Points, as appropriate;	Activity is being undertaken.	Activity is being undertaken.
		ii. Undertake mid-term and final reviews of this Strategy; and	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The mid-term review was scheduled to be undertaken in 2024 and is currently being undertaken.
		iii. Update or revise this Strategy to consider any new developments, including amendments to the BWM Convention.	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	The Activity is scheduled to take place in 2026–2027.
S P 6	12. Development and implementation of a resource mobilisation plan to support the implementation of this Strategy	i. Develop and implement a resource mobilisation plan including an estimation of costs, analysis of funding opportunities, and	Activity remains relevant and continues to align with the objectives of the Strategy.	Activity was undertaken in 2023.

S P	Action	Activity	Relevance	Feasibility of associated timetable
		identification of potential sources of technical expertise within the region which could be made available as in-kind contributions.		

REVIEW OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BWM STRATEGY (2022-2027)

Following the assessment of the progress made towards achieving the scope and objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) and the evaluation of the effectiveness of its implementation, it is important to review the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), taking into account:

- .1 Ongoing developments in the field – and particularly recent and forthcoming amendments to the BWM Convention through the EBP.
- .2 Any other relevant developments, for example, the adoption of the 2023 IMO Biofouling Guidelines.
- .3 Evaluation of the effectiveness of the institutional, legal, and technical frameworks adopted by Mediterranean coastal States for implementing BWM measures at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels.
- .4 Reviewing the level of compliance with the BWM Convention and other relevant regional, national, and international regulations.
- .5 Examination of the extent of regional cooperation and capacity-building initiatives, including information exchange, technical assistance, and awareness-raising Activities currently implemented in the Mediterranean region.

In 2017, the MEPC adopted Resolution MEPC.290(71), establishing the experience-building phase (EBP) which includes a systematic and evidence-based process for reviewing and improving the BWM Convention and which process is likely to lead to amendments to the BWM Convention, as it has already done. The EBP consists of a data gathering stage, a data analysis stage, and a Convention Review stage. The EBP began with the entry into force of the Convention and ended with the entry into force of a package of priority amendments.⁴⁸

In July 2023 and at MEPC 80, the Convention Review Plan (CRP) under the EBP was approved, including the list of priority issues to be considered in the Convention Review stage. This will guide the comprehensive review of the BWM Convention until 2026 and the corresponding development of a package of amendments to the Convention.

The CRP was disseminated as an IMO circular⁴⁹ and envisages that the amendments developed during this comprehensive process could be adopted at MEPC 85 in Autumn 2026.

Amendments adopted in November 2020, prior to the adoption of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), at MEPC 75 through resolution MEPC.325(75) include:⁵⁰

- .1 amendments to regulation E-1 of the BWM Convention to make the commissioning testing of ballast water management systems mandatory; and

⁴⁸ RESOLUTION MEPC.290(71).

⁴⁹ BWM.2/Circ.79 C Convention Review Plan for the experience-building phase associated with the BWM Convention.

⁵⁰ MEPC 75 also approved the 2020 Guidance for the commissioning testing of ballast water management systems (BWM.2/Circ.70/Rev.1) and the 2020 Guidance on ballast water sampling and analysis for trial use in accordance with the BWM Convention and Guidelines (G2) (BWM.2/Circ.42/Rev.2).

.2 amendments to appendix I of the BWM Convention, concerning the form of the International Ballast Water Management Certificate.

These amendments entered into force in June 2022.

Since the adoption of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), the following amendments to the BWM Convention were adopted:

.1 at its 80th session in July 2023, MEPC adopted, through resolution MEPC.369(80), amendments to appendix II of the BWM Convention concerning the form of the Ballast Water Record Book. These amendments entered into force in February 2025.

.2 at its 81st session in March 2024, MEPC adopted, through resolution MEPC.383(81), amendments to regulations A-1 and B-2 of the BWM Convention concerning the use of electronic record books. These amendments are expected to enter into force in October 2025.

Recent resolutions and guidelines related to the implementation of the BWM Convention include:⁵¹

.1 Resolution MEPC.387(81) adopted 22 March 2024: Interim guidance on the application of the BWM Convention to ships operating in challenging water quality conditions.

.2 Resolution MEPC.372(80) adopted on 7 July 2023: Guidelines for the use of electronic record books under the BWM Convention.

.3 BWM.2/Circ.82 (14 July 2023): Guidance for the temporary storage of treated sewage and/or grey water in ballast water tanks.

Other important developments include that as of 8 September 2024, all ships are required to comply with the D2 standard of the BWM Convention unless granted an exemption.⁵² As such, the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) had as its target date for completion of ratification of the BWM Convention and its incorporation into national law, August 2024.

In 2023, the 2011 IMO Biofouling Guidelines were reviewed and revoked by the 2023 IMO Biofouling Guidelines. These guidelines are voluntary and are meant to provide a globally consistent approach to the management of biofouling. It serves as the baseline for the management of IAS associated with shipping, and it applies to all ships. The 2023 revision is aimed at improving the uptake and effectiveness of the voluntary Guidelines. The update also recognises the additional benefits of a clean hull in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from global shipping, and it further supports the 2023 IMO Strategy for the reduction of greenhouse gases from ships.⁵³ The GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships project⁵⁴ has been designed to support the uptake of these guidelines and to build capacity in developing countries for implementing the IMO Biofouling Guidelines.

It is also important to briefly evaluate the effectiveness of the legal, institutional, and technical frameworks adopted by Mediterranean coastal States for implementing BWM measures at the national, regional, and sub-regional levels.

⁵¹ For exhaustive list see <https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Environment/Documents/Biofouling%20pages/Compilation%20of%20relevant%20Guidelines%20and%20guidance%20documents%20-%20May%202024.pdf>

⁵² The D2 standard specifies the maximum amount of viable organisms allowed to be discharged, including specified indicator microbes harmful to human health. Usually involves installing ballast water management system. https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/BWM%20infographic_FINAL.pdf

⁵³ Resolution MEPC.377(80).

⁵⁴ <https://www.glofouling.imo.org/>

.1 Insufficient information is available to effectively evaluate the legal, institutional, and technical frameworks adopted by Mediterranean coastal States at the national level. Although some States have implemented BWM legislation, the exact provisions remain unclear. For legal frameworks to be effective, they must include specific measures, such as management and control requirements for ships, clear standards for ballast water management, and robust survey and certification processes to ensure compliance.

.2 It should also be noted that the number of Mediterranean coastal States that have ratified the BWM Convention is still the same as prior to the adoption of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027). The Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) had August 2024 as its target date for the completion of ratification of the BWM Convention and its incorporation into national law. This target date was not met.

.3 At the sub-regional level, certain bilateral agreements include provisions for coordinating ballast water management measures and monitoring programmes in shared maritime areas. Additionally, other bilateral agreements exist that, while not exclusively focused on ballast water management, aim to prevent marine pollution and manage NIS. Harmonisation initiatives also exist at the sub-regional level, further supporting coordinated efforts in implementing ballast water management measures. Insufficient information is readably available to evaluate the effectiveness of sub-regional BWM agreements.

.4 Other frameworks adopted by Mediterranean coastal States for implementing BWM measures at a regional level are depicted in the table below:

Table 3: Other frameworks adopted by Mediterranean coastal States for implementing BWM measures at a regional level

Framework	Objective
SPA/BD Protocol	One of seven Protocols under the Barcelona Convention, serving as the primary regional tool for implementing the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. It mandates Mediterranean coastal States to prevent and control the introduction of invasive species.
	Article 13.1 of the SPA/BD Protocol requires Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to regulate the intentional or accidental introduction of non-indigenous or genetically modified species, prohibiting those that may negatively impact ecosystems, habitats, or species in the Mediterranean.
Updated NIS Action Plan	Complements the SPA/BD Protocol by promoting coordinated efforts to prevent, minimise, monitor, and control biological invasions. It focuses on capacity-building, regional information-sharing, Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species (MAMIAS) development ⁵⁵ , legal framework strengthening, baseline studies, monitoring programmes, and guideline development.
Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) ⁵⁶	Adopted at COP 19 ⁵⁷ to assess GES using 27 common indicators. Under Ecological Objective (EO) 2, non-indigenous species introduced by human activities should not adversely alter the ecosystem. Common Indicator 6 monitors trends in abundance, occurrence, and spatial distribution of NIS, particularly in high-risk areas.
The Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (Post-2020 SAPBIO) ⁵⁸	Aims to protect biodiversity and reduce marine threats, including invasive species, making NIS a high priority.
The Updated Action Plan Concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea	Serves as an implementation tool for the Post-2020 SAPBIO which aims to prevent the introduction of NIS, including those transported via ballast water and biofouling.
Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)	Common Strategic Objective (CSO) 5: Eliminate the introduction of non-indigenous species by shipping activities.
	It's associated Action Plan includes numerous Activities under CSO5 which directly overlaps with the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) including targeted technical support for the ratification of the BWM Convention as well as for the implementation of the Biofouling Guidelines.

⁵⁵ <https://spa-rac.org/en/sig/show/id/14/label/marine-mediterranean-invasive-alien-species-mamias>

⁵⁶ UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/7.

⁵⁷ Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016).

⁵⁸ The Post – 2020 SAP BIO is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the CBD.

	The Report assessing the progress and effectiveness of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) ⁵⁹ notes that the Intersessional Working Group on Non-Indigenous Species (IWG-NIS) could not be operationalised, preventing discussions on the implementation progress of the Activities associated with CSO 5.
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⁵⁹ REMPEC/WG.58/3

.5 Most Mediterranean coastal States have established institutional frameworks at the national level, including the appointment of REMPEC Governmental Focal Points, REMPEC Prevention Focal Points, and SPA/BD Focal Points to oversee relevant Activities and coordinate efforts. Additionally, national legislation designates competent authorities responsible for ensuring compliance with BWM provisions.

.6 The main institutional framework, at a regional level, for implementing Ballast Water Management measures in the Mediterranean region is coordinated by the Secretariat, REMPEC and SPA/RAC. The Secretariat has effectively supported the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in implementing the BWM Convention and the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027). The Secretariat has commenced several Activities set out in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) and has created sufficient momentum.

In addition, it is important to review the level of compliance with the BWM Convention and other relevant international, national, and regional regulations.

.1 At the international level, compliance with the BWM Convention is assessed based on whether Mediterranean coastal States have ratified the convention and incorporated its provisions into national legislation. Most Mediterranean coastal States have ratified the BWM Convention and have taken steps to align their national laws with its requirements. However, some countries still face delays in full implementation due to legal, financial, and institutional constraints.

.2 A Port State Control (PSC) regime is also a key aspect of compliance. PSC regimes allow authorities to inspect vessels to verify adherence to national BWM requirements. While some countries have implemented regular PSC inspections, others struggle with enforcement due to a lack of trained personnel, insufficient ballast water sampling infrastructure, or limited inter-agency coordination. Additionally, disparities in national enforcement frameworks create inconsistencies in how the convention is applied across the Mediterranean.

While some capacity-building initiatives, such as workshops and seminars organised by the Secretariat and IMO to provide training and technical assistance for the ratification and effective implementation of the BWM Convention, have been implemented in the Mediterranean region, none of the Activities outlined in Action 9 have commenced.

In summary, when assessing progress toward the objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027), the effectiveness of its implementation, ongoing developments, and legal, institutional, and technical evaluations, as well as compliance with the BWM Convention and relevant regional cooperation and capacity-building initiatives, it has been found that the impact of the Strategic Priorities have been limited.

KEY CHALLENGES, GAPS, AND BARRIERS

This section of the Mid-Term Review provides a brief analysis identifying key challenges, gaps, and barriers to the effective implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027).

.1 One of the primary barriers to the effective implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) is the further lack of ratification of the BWM Convention by the remaining Mediterranean coastal States. Additionally, the adoption of relevant national legislation to enforce the BWM Convention remains incomplete. The evaluation of the effectiveness of Strategic Priority 1 highlights these challenges, emphasising the need for accelerated ratification and legislative action to ensure comprehensive implementation across the region.

.2 While the harmonised procedures have addressed some aspects of the Activities provided for in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), further efforts are required to enhance coordination and harmonisation across the region. Establishing a regional online BWM Working Group is essential to drive progress toward achieving full harmonisation and effective implementation of BWM measures.

.3 The evaluation of the effectiveness of Strategic Priority 2 found that while 17 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have ratified the SPA/BD Protocol, there are still Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not. Activities such as circulating a questionnaire to understand the barriers to ratification and organising workshops to address these concerns have not been undertaken. The evaluation also found that while preliminary Activities to address the threat of biofouling on ships have been initiated, there are gaps in organising regional workshops, undertaking national status assessments, and developing national strategies and action plans to manage biofouling. Although some progress has been made, such as national consultants supporting the development of national status assessments and national awareness workshops, further efforts are needed. The evaluation also found that the establishment and maintenance of a web-based RIS to support BWM have not been fully implemented. Activities such as assessing specific information needs, identifying existing websites, and developing a regional information and decision support system have not been completed. This gap hinders the standardisation and sharing of information related to BWM. In addition, the evaluation found that one of the key considerations in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of Strategic Priority 2 is to ensure that all vectors associated with shipping – as well as all other pathways, including biofouling – are effectively managed. This underscores the urgency of the associated Activities.

.4 There is a need for targeted technical support and capacity-building initiatives to assist Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in ratifying and implementing the BWM Convention. This includes providing training, technical assistance, and resources to build the necessary infrastructure and expertise. The evaluation of the effectiveness of Strategic Priority 3 underscores these needs, highlighting the importance of sustained efforts to enhance technical capabilities and ensure the effective implementation of the Convention across the region.

.5 There is a lack of awareness and knowledge about the benefits of ratifying the BWM Convention. This lack of understanding can hinder progress toward achieving the Strategy's objectives. The evaluation of the effectiveness of Strategic Priority 4 highlights this challenge, emphasising the need for enhanced awareness campaigns, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge-sharing initiatives to facilitate informed decision-making and promote broader adoption of the Convention.

.6 Addressing emerging issues such as biofouling is crucial. Coordinating with ongoing developments in the field, particularly the work done by the IMO Glofouling Partnerships project, is necessary to manage biofouling effectively.

.7 Financial constraints and the lack of resources pose significant challenges to the successful implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027). A robust Resource Mobilisation Strategy is essential to ensure the sustainability and continuity of Activities through self-financing sources within the region. While the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), has been drafted, it has yet to be approved. The evaluation of the effectiveness of Strategic Priority 6 indicates that the BWM Resource Mobilisation Strategy has been completed; however, it must still be referred to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, scheduled to be held in Malta on 13–15 May 2025, for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While some progress has been made towards achieving the scope and objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), the assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Priorities and the twelve (12) main Actions and its thirty-nine (39) associated Activities has found that majority of the Activities have either not commenced within the implementation deadline or was not undertaken at all.

While implementation of most of the Activities still remains feasible within the timeline, the timetable should be adjusted as set out in Section 9 of this review.

There is a risk of Activities becoming bottlenecked toward the end of the implementation timeline. To this end, it is important that Activities commence without further delay.

The following actionable recommendations are made:

.1 Encourage Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet ratified the BWM Convention to do so as soon as possible. This will ensure a unified approach to ballast water management across the Mediterranean region.

.2 Mediterranean coastal States should draft and implement national laws to incorporate the BWM Convention into their national legislation. This will provide a legal framework for enforcing ballast water management measures. To this end, existing IMO Guidelines exist and can be disseminated.⁶⁰

.3 The Secretariat should continue to offer targeted technical support to Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention. This includes building on the momentum of recent regional workshops and expert meetings on ballast water management.

.4 Encourage Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet adopted the SPA/BP Protocol to do so as soon as possible.

.5 The Secretariat should prioritise establishing the regional online BWM Working Group to drive the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region. This group

⁶⁰https://mepseas.imo.org/site/assets/files/1327/mepseas_website_version_2019_ballast_water_management_convention.pdf

will play a crucial role in coordinating efforts and sharing best practices. Clear Terms of Reference must be drafted for the BWM Working Group. It is also essential that the BWM Working Group avoid duplicating efforts and continue to work within the framework of existing Harmonized Procedures, particularly those that support the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027).

.6 Ensure that related Activities and funding are included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027. This will provide the necessary resources for implementing the Mediterranean BWM Strategy.

.7 Place emphasis on the emerging issue of biofouling and coordinate with ongoing developments in the field, particularly the work done by the IMO Glofouling Partnerships project. It is important to disseminate existing information and guidelines to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, including the Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species⁶¹ and the Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.⁶² It is of the utmost importance to align all work with the recent REMPEC Study Analysing the Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the GHG Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean Sea region.

.8 During the final review and any updates or revisions undertaken in 2026 and 2027, consideration must be given to amendments to the BWM Convention developed during the review process and envisaged for adoption at MEPC 85 in 2026.

.9 The Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), should be considered and adopted during the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC in May 2025. This will assist in the allocation of funding for specific Activities and ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy.

.10 Certain Activities, for example, the development of a regional ballast water reporting system, are major undertakings that will require substantial financial and human resources, including the appointment of an external consultant.

.11 While minor sections of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027) may be outdated, a full revision is not recommended, as it would be a time-consuming process. Instead, it is advised to revise the work plan and implementation timetable to address the identified challenges and adjust the timelines where necessary. This will ensure that Actions and associated Activities can still be implemented within the overall timeframe of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027).

⁶¹ GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Status Assessments of Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

⁶² GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project, 2022. Guide to Developing National Biofouling Strategies on Biofouling Management to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Aquatic Species.

DRAFT ROADMAP

The roadmap below provides the revision of the work plan and implementation timetable to address the challenges identified and to adjust the timelines, where necessary, to allow for the implementation of the Actions and associated Activities.

Table 4: Draft roadmap for the revision of the work plan and implementation timetable

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Ratification of the BWM Convention	i. Circulate a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to confirming the status of ratification of the BWM Convention – and its incorporation into national law – in each country;	Implementation remains feasible within the remaining timeline. The timetable should be adjusted to allow for implementation in 2025–2026, ensuring the Activity remains achievable within the overall timeframe.	REMPEC	2025-2026
		A brief questionnaire is circulated to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. It is recommended that the questionnaire include a section on the status of national legislation to determine whether it is already in place, currently being drafted, or not yet established.		
	ii. Draft guidelines for the development of national law to give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement;	Amend the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) to remove this Activity from the work plan and implementation timetable.	N/A	N/A
	iii. Establish national policy working groups to lead the process towards the ratification of the BWM Convention, including drafting of the instrument of ratification; and	The timetable should be adjusted to allow for implementation in 2025–2026, ensuring the Activity remains achievable within the overall timeframe.	CPs	2025-2026
	iv. Draft national law to give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary	The timetable should be adjusted to allow for implementation in 2025–2027,	Contracting Parties to the	2025-2027

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
	regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement and submission through relevant governmental channels for endorsement.	ensuring the Activity remains achievable within the overall timeframe.	Barcelona Convention	
2. Harmonisation of BWM Measures in the Mediterranean Region	i. Establish a regional online BWM Working Group to drive the process towards harmonisation of BWM measures in the region coordinated by REMPEC in cooperation with SPA/RAC;	To include in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027. Specific Terms of Reference (TORs) to be added.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2027
	ii. Organise a regional workshop on PSC in relation to the BWM Convention, in collaboration with existing PSC bodies (e.g. Mediterranean MoU on PSC, Paris MoU);	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025-2026, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2026
	iii. Develop and implement a regionally harmonised, mandatory ballast water reporting system for ships arriving at Mediterranean ports;	Include in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2026
	iv. Establish and maintain a regional communication system to allow the exchange of data, experience, and tracking of violations for PSC purposes;	It is recommended that the secretariat commence this Activity in 2025 Q3	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2027
	v. Develop and adopt a regional protocol for sampling of ballast water for purposes of PSC;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025-2026, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2026
		Any lessons learned from the Iliad project must be applied.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	
	vi. Undertake an assessment of the status of BWE in the Mediterranean (including information on designated BWE areas in national waters);	Amend the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) to remove this Activity from the work plan and implementation timetable.	N/A	N/A

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
	vii. Develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive Regional Procedure for the Granting of Exemptions under the BWM Convention;	This is a task to be added to the TORs of the Regional Working Group.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2026
	viii. New Activity: Study on shipping traffic to inform a regional action plan for the provision of port reception facilities for sediments; and	This is a proposed new Activity.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025
	ix. Develop a regional action plan for the provision of port reception facilities for sediments (to be informed by a study on shipping traffic).	It is noted that this Activity must be informed by a study on shipping traffic. A specific Activity should be included to make provision for the study to be done in 2026. See new Activity iii.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026-2027
3. Development, adoption, and implementation of a regional protocol for port baseline surveys and biological monitoring in Mediterranean ports	i. Circulate a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to obtaining up-to-date information on the status of port surveys in the region;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025-2026, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2026
	ii. Identify key ports to be surveyed based on the questionnaire and provide support to the relevant authorities to undertake such surveys to fill the gaps;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026-2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2026
	iii. Develop a regional protocol for port surveys, taking into account the Guidance on Port Biological Baseline Surveys that was developed within the framework of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme, the regional guidance provided for standardisation of survey and monitoring approaches through SPA/RAC via the EcAp roadmap and IMAP, as well as the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonised Procedure for BWMC A-4 Exemptions that includes a Port Survey Protocol ⁶³ ,	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026-2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline. This Activity must be included in the TORs of the Working Group (WG).	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026–2027

⁶³ Activity partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Annex B – Port Survey Protocol).

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
	and			
	iv. Review and adapt the IMAP Guidance Fact Sheet for Common Indicator 6 under EO 2, as well as define DSs and DDs to ensure integration of data in the IMAP Info System.	This Activity was undertaken.	N/A	N/A
4. Promotion of the use of risk assessment as a tool to assist in ballast water (and, more generally, IAS) management and decision-making	i. Develop and adopt a regional protocol for risk assessment ⁶⁴ ; and	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026-2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026-2027
		This Activity must be included in the TORs of the WG.		
		Typo in Strategy. The number “3” appears twice. This Action must be “4”.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025
	ii. Undertake a regional risk assessment of key ports in the Mediterranean Sea.	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026
5. Alignment of BWM measures with neighbouring regions	i. Organise a joint conference on BWM with neighbouring regions to share experiences and promote further alignment.	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026
		Future work must consider the concept note that was prepared by REMPEC in cooperation with SPA/RAC.		

⁶⁴ Activity partially covered by the regional BWM harmonised procedures adopted by COP 23 (Harmonised Procedure: Regulation A-4 Exemptions as well as Appendix A – Protocol for Identifying Target Species).

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
		Any meeting minutes recorded during liaison with the Secretariats of neighbouring Regional Seas Conventions on this matter must be taken into account.		
6. Ratification of SPA/BD Protocol	i. Circulate a questionnaire to those Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have not yet ratified the SPA/BD Protocol to better understand the barriers or challenges to such ratification; and	Activity is no longer relevant. To encourage the remaining four (4) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to ratify the SPA/BD Protocol.	SPA/RAC	N/A
	ii. Organise a workshop aimed at addressing these concerns.	Activity is no longer relevant. To encourage the remaining four (4) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to ratify the SPA/BD Protocol. Any concerns are to be discussed with SPA/RAC.	SPA/RAC	N/A
7. Initiation of preliminary Activities to address the threat of biofouling on ships	i. Organise a regional workshop to initiate biofouling-related Activities in the region;	The timetable should be adjusted.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025
	ii. Undertake national status assessments of biofouling; and	The timetable should be adjusted.	Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	2025-2026
	iii. Develop national strategies and action plans to manage biofouling.	The timetable should be adjusted to make provision for the completion of Activity vi.	Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	2027
8. Establishment and maintenance of a web-based RIS	i. Undertake a study to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the specific information needs relative to various aspects of BWM; • identify existing websites, etc. which provide the type of information required (including national and sub-regional web-based or linked systems); and 	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025-2026, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2027

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a regional information and decision support system or tool, taking note of recent developments and focusing on areas identified to be of common regional priority to assist with a standardised approach to BWB. 			
	ii. Establish and maintain the RIS based on the recommendations of the study.	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2027
9. Development and implementation of a capacity-building programme	i. Undertake a training needs' assessment to determine what type of training is most required;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025
	ii. Organise regional training workshops based on the outcomes of the needs' assessment;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026, ensuring the activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026
	iii. Replicate regional workshops at a national level, as necessary;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2027
	iv. Disseminate protocols and tools for the standardisation of technical approaches that could be used to conduct regional and national Activities; and	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025-2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2027
	v. Promote e-learning opportunities.	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025-	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025-2027

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
		2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.		
10. Enhancement of awareness of NIS among decision-makers and the general public	i. Organise a high-level seminar on ballast water and biofouling for decision-makers in the region, e.g. at a COP;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026
	ii. Produce and/or circulate relevant materials, including those from IMO projects, and translate these into local languages for dissemination at a national level;	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2025, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025
	iii. Organise national seminars and workshops to raise awareness about the issue among various stakeholders; and	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026-2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026-2027
	iv. Develop local case studies for use in awareness campaigns and for leveraging support within the Mediterranean region and its sub-regions.	The timetable should be adjusted to accommodate implementation in 2026-2027, ensuring the Activity remains feasible within the overall timeline.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026-2027
11. Completion of regular reviews of this Strategy	i. Review the status of implementation of this Strategy at the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC and the Meetings of the SPA/BD Focal Points, as appropriate;	Activity is being undertaken.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2025
	ii. Undertake mid-term and final reviews of this Strategy; and	The final review is scheduled to be undertaken in 2026.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	2026
	iii. Update or revise this Strategy to consider any new developments, including amendments to the BWM Convention.	To take amendments adopted during 2026 into consideration.	REMPEC & SPA/RAC	
12. Development and	i. Develop and implement a resource mobilisation plan, including an estimation of costs, analysis of funding opportunities, and identification of potential sources	Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) to be referred to the	REMPEC	2025

Action	Activity	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeline
implementation of a resource mobilisation plan to support the implementation of this Strategy	of technical expertise within the region which could be made available as in-kind contributions.	Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be held in Malta from 13 to 15 May 2025, for consideration.		

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Mid-Term Review of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027) highlights both the progress made, and the challenges faced in implementing the Strategy. While some Activities have been initiated, the majority have not been completed within the designated timeline, primarily due to funding constraints and the lack of ratification of the BWM Convention by all Mediterranean coastal States. The review emphasises the importance of accelerating ratification, enhancing regional cooperation, and addressing emerging issues such as biofouling. The recommendations provided aim to ensure the successful completion of the Strategy's objectives by 2027, with a focus on harmonising BWM measures, providing targeted technical support, and securing adequate resources by adopting the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027).

Moving forward, it is crucial to prioritise these Actions to protect marine biodiversity and achieve GES in the Mediterranean Sea.

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