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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

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Seventeenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points

Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025

Agenda Item 8: Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)

8.1. Mid-term assessment with focus on startup activities of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)

Main findings of the mid-term assessment focusing on the Post-2020 SAPBIO start-up activities

Note by the Secretariat

1. As provided for in the Post-2020 SAPBIO¹ (Decision IG.25/11 of CoP22²) and as requested by CoP23 (Decision IG.26/5³), SPA/RAC conducted the mid-term assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO to ensure the achievement of the Post-2020 SAPBIO objectives by 2030.
2. To undertake the mid-term assessment focusing on start-up activities, as listed in the Annex III of the Post-2020 SAPBIO (Decision IG.25/11 of CoP22), a simplified table, as provided for by Action 34 on Post-2020 SAPBIO Monitoring, was elaborated and disseminated to National correspondents and SPA/RAC partners including members of the advisory committee.
3. The findings of this mid-term assessment focusing on start-up activities with national scope, along with the findings on regional scope form the mid-term assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO focusing on start-up activities.
4. The main findings of the mid-term assessment given in this document, based on a quantitative analysis and are aggregated by Post-2020 SAPBIO Goals, was presented to the 11th meeting of the Post-2020 National correspondents (Athens, Greece - 9-10 April 2025)
5. The main findings of the mid-term assessment along with the conclusions and recommendation of the Post-2020 National correspondents are provided for review and to agree to their submission as appropriate to the meeting of MAP Focal Points and COP 24 for adoption.

¹ https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_spabio/post_2020_sapbio.pdf

² https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop22/decision_25.11_en.pdf

³ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44718/23ig26_22_2605_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

I. Introduction

1. This mid-term assessment evaluates the implementation progress of 42 actions outlined in Annex III of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for Biodiversity (Post-2020 SAPBIO). Specifically, it examines the status of the implementation of start-up activities.
2. The assessment is primarily based on responses provided by Partner organizations and countries through a tailored, simplified questionnaire. This questionnaire employed binary questions, supported by means of verification, along with targeted questions to identify gaps and challenges in implementation. Respondents selected from predefined options regarding progress and challenges, with some actions requiring multiple questions for comprehensive evaluation.
3. This methodology enables Partner organizations and countries to conduct self-assessments and provide indicative progress updates efficiently. However, certain limitations could be acknowledged. Most notably, the assessment remains sometimes subjective, as the predefined response options may lack quantitative benchmarks (e.g., what qualifies as sufficient progress for an action to be marked as "Yes"). Consequently, interpretations of progress may vary among respondents. This limitation stems from the absence of quantifiable indicators for the planned actions in Annex III of the Post-2020 SAPBIO. Therefore, the Means of verification section should be obligatory.
4. Despite these constraints, the collected data offers valuable insights into implementation trends, highlighting both advancements and obstacles. These findings inform actionable recommendations to enhance future implementation.
5. The main findings of the mid-term assessment given in this document are based on a quantitative analysis and are aggregated by Post-2020 SAPBIO Goals. For the start-up activities with national scope, the analysis is further developed following a sub-regional approach.

| WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN | IONIAN SEA AND CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN | ADRIATIC SEA | AEGEAN SEA AND LEVANTINE BASIN |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| Algeria | Greece | Albania, | Cyprus |
| Spain | Italy | Bosnia and Herzegovina, | Egypt |
| France | Libya | Croatia, | Greece |
| Italy | Malta | Italy, | Israel |
| Morocco | Tunisia | Montenegro | Lebanon |
| Monaco | | Slovenia | Türkiye |
| Tunisia | | | Syria |



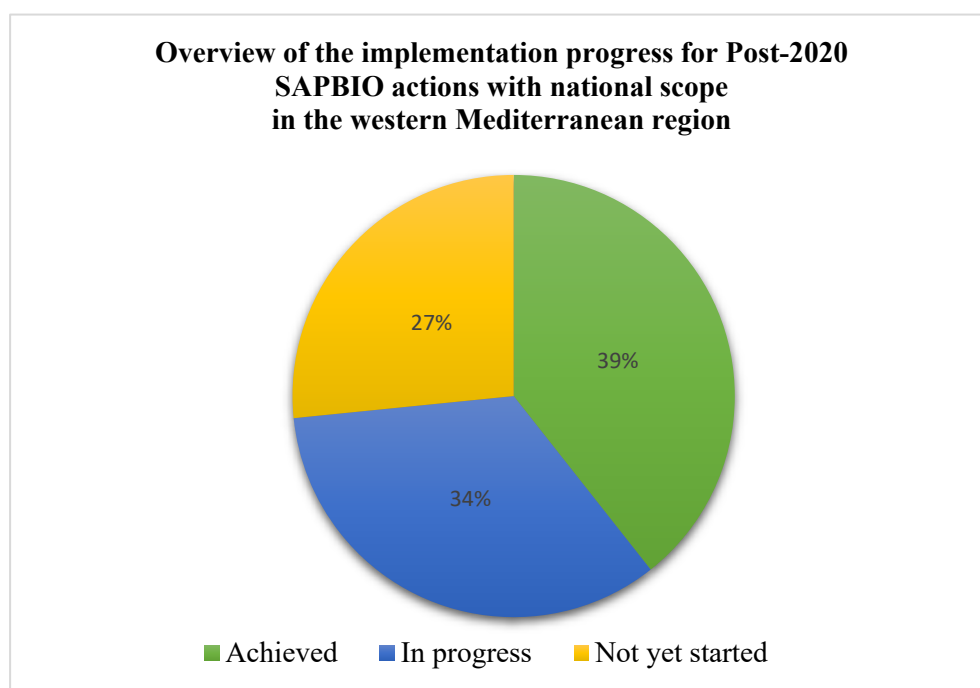
II. Mid-term assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO focusing on start-up activities

A. Actions implementation progress

1. Overview of the implementation progress for Post-2020 SAPBIO actions with national scope

Western Mediterranean

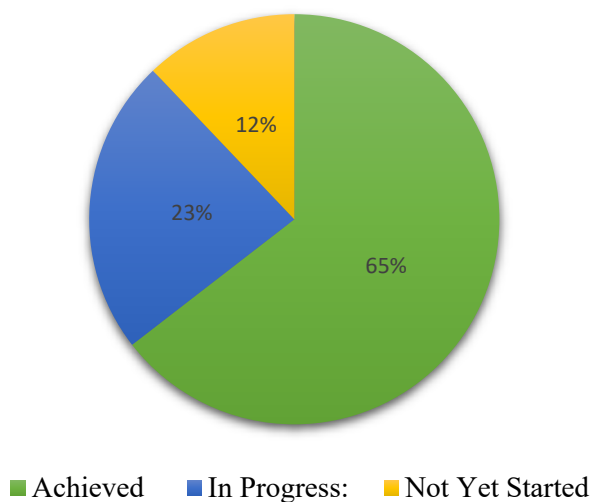
1. Western Mediterranean countries reported that the majority of actions were achieved (37%) or are still in progress (32%). On the other hand, 25% of the actions have not yet started.



Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean

2. The Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean sub-region reported that a substantial majority of actions (64.52%) have been successfully implemented or have reached a stage of significant progress. Ongoing efforts are evident in 23.39% of the actions, classified as "In Progress," reflecting a continued commitment to achieving the SAP BIO targets. However, a notable proportion (12.10%) of actions remain uninitiated ("Not Yet").

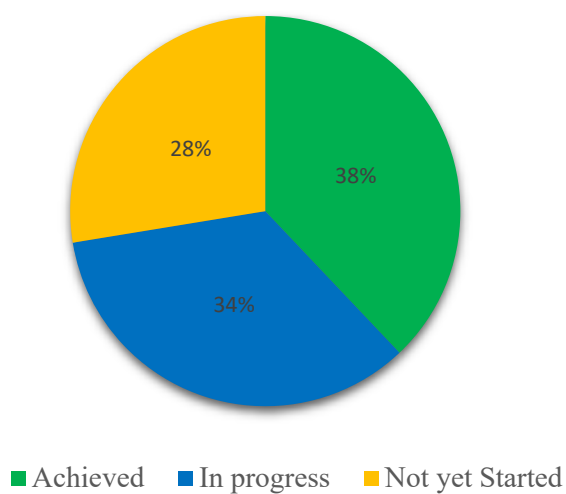
**Overview of the implementation progress for Post-2020
SAPBIO actions with national scope in the Ionian Sea and
Central Mediterranean sub-region.**



Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin

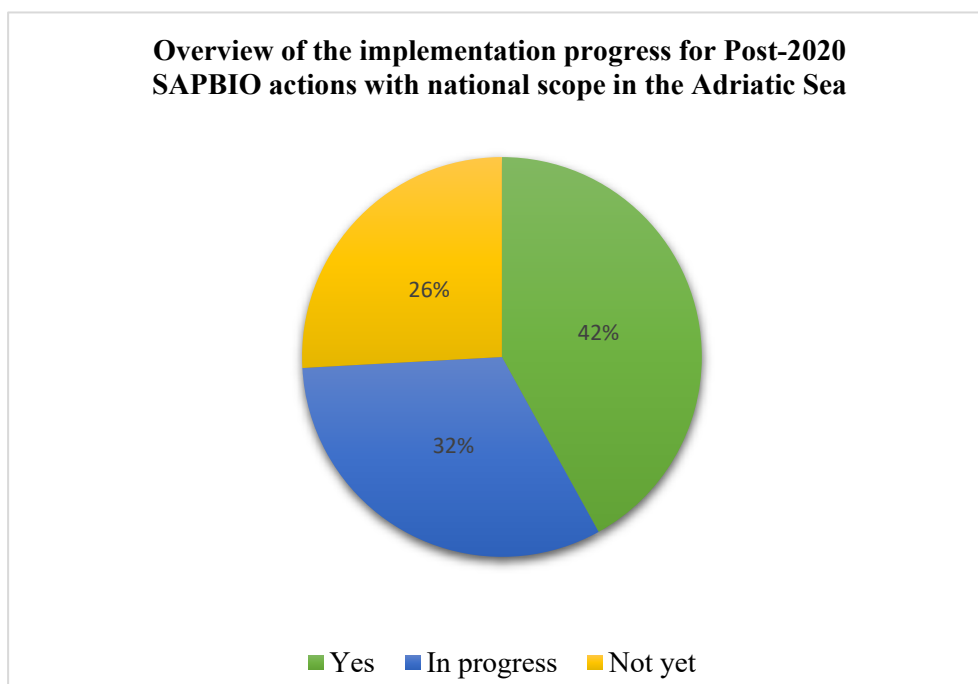
3. The Aegean and Levantine Basin countries reported that the majority of actions were successfully implemented (38%) or are still in progress (34%). On the other hand, implementation of approximately one-quarter of actions (28%) has not yet started

**Overview of the implementation progress for Post-2020
SAPBIO actions with national scope in Aegean Sea and
Levantine Basin**

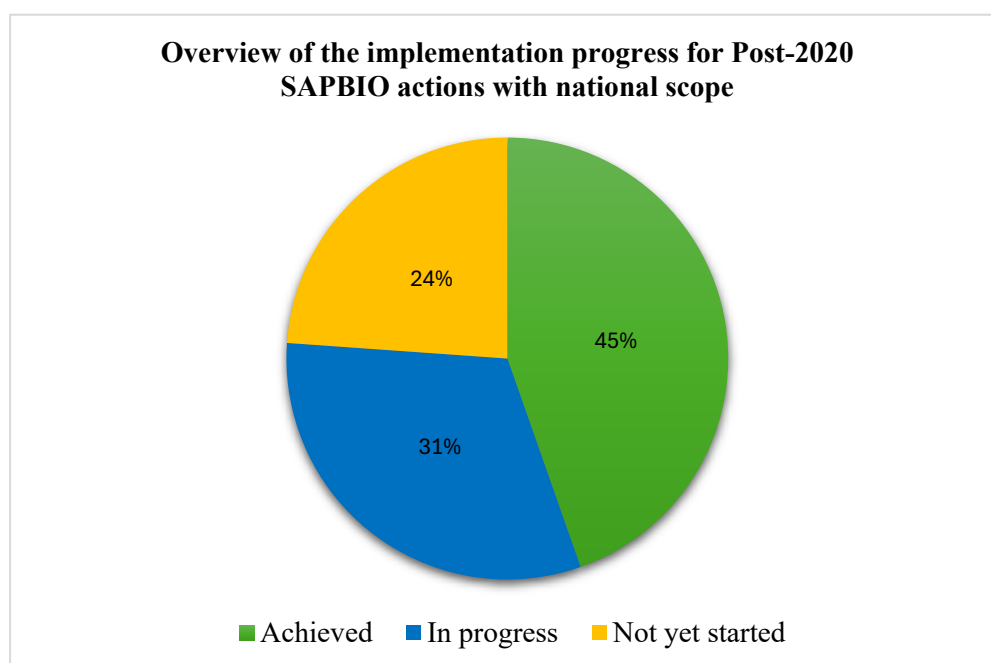


Adriatic Sea

4. Adriatic countries reported that most actions were successfully implemented (42%) or are still in progress (32%). On the other hand, implementation of approximately one-quarter of actions (26%) has not yet started.

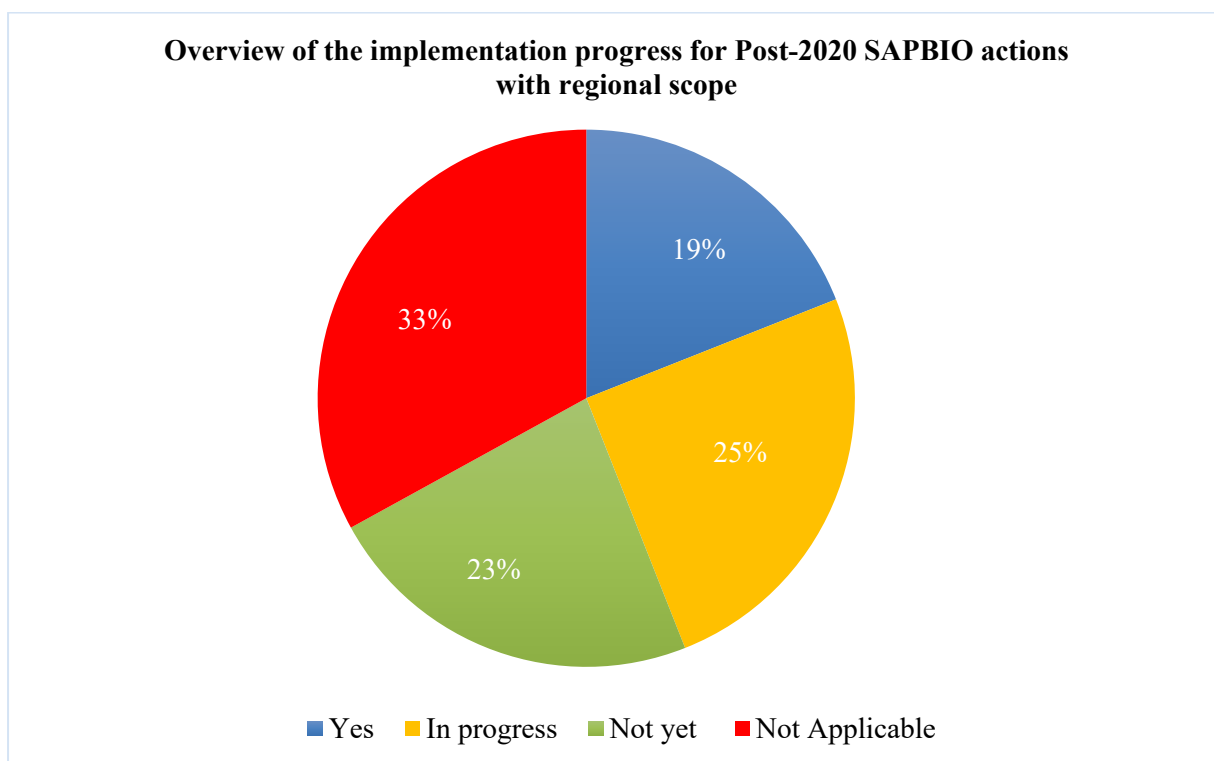
**Mediterranean**

5. In the Mediterranean region, 45% of actions have been successfully implemented, 31% are currently in progress, and 26% have not yet been initiated. It is the same pattern for all the 4 sub-regions, with minor differences in percentages.



2. Overview of the implementation progress for Post-2020 SAPBIO Actions with regional scope

6. The implementation progress of Post-2020 SAPBIO actions with regional scope reflects moderate progress, with nearly half of actions either completed (19%) or in progress (25%), though a notable proportion remains unimplemented or outside regional applicability.

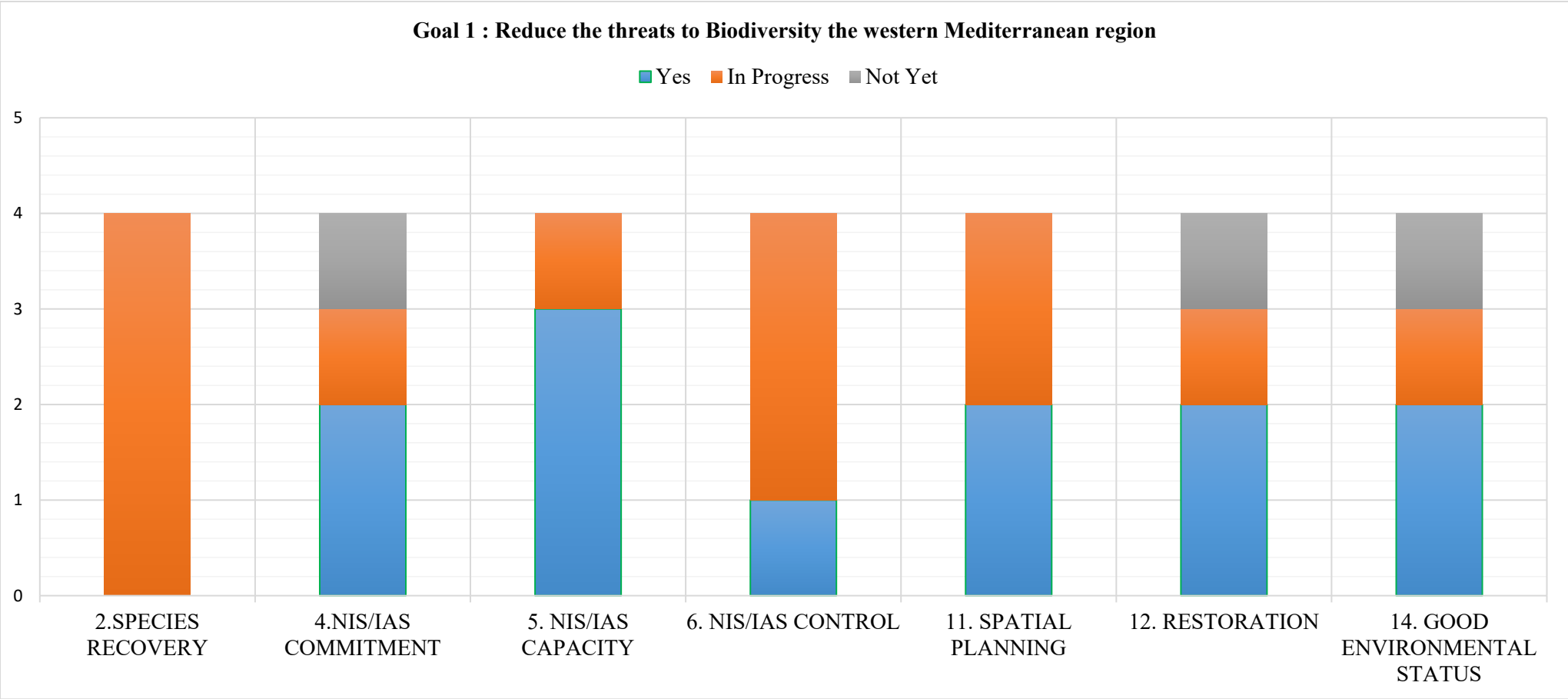


B. In-depth analysis of the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO Actions with national scope at the level of individual Post-2020 SAPBIO goals:

1. Goal 1: Reduce the threats to biodiversity

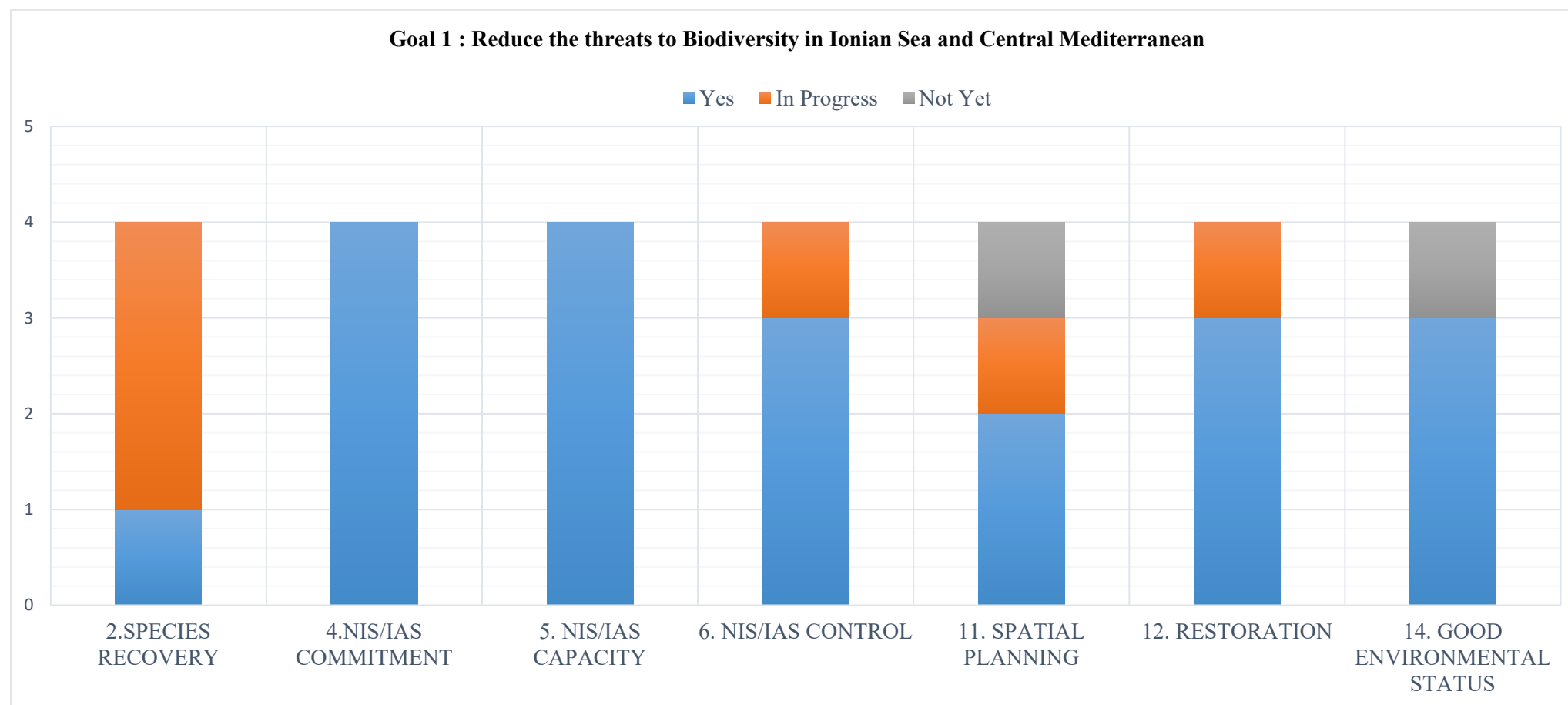
Western Mediterranean

7. A detailed analysis of Goal 1 in the western Mediterranean reveals uneven progress across its associated actions. Overall, NIS/IAS Control (Action 6) has the highest proportion of completed tasks, while Species Recovery (Action 2) has a large segment in the “not yet started” category. The remaining actions—NIS/IAS Commitment (Action 4), NI most(Action 5), Spatial Planning (Action 11), Restoration (Action 12), and Good Environmental Status (Action 14)—show a mix of completed and in-progress activities, with some elements still not initiated.



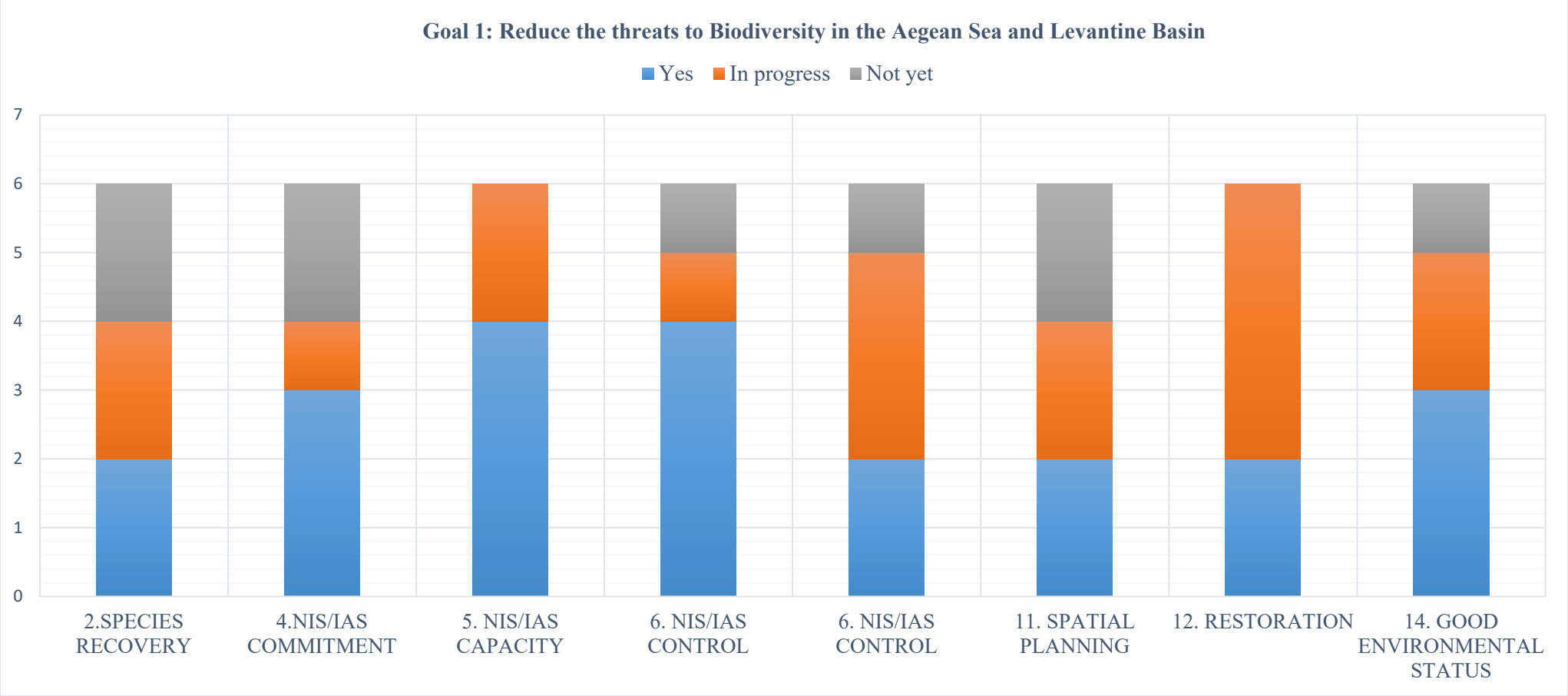
Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean

8. A detailed analysis of Goal 1 in the Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean, indicates varied progress across the actions. NIS/IAS Control (Action 6) features the largest portion of completed tasks, while other actions such as Spatial Planning (Action 11) and Restoration (Action 12) still include a notable share of “not yet started” elements. Species Recovery (Action 2) shows a mix of completed and in-progress segments, reflecting partial advancement but room for further action. Overall, the chart underscores a stronger focus on invasive species management compared to more limited progress in other conservation areas.



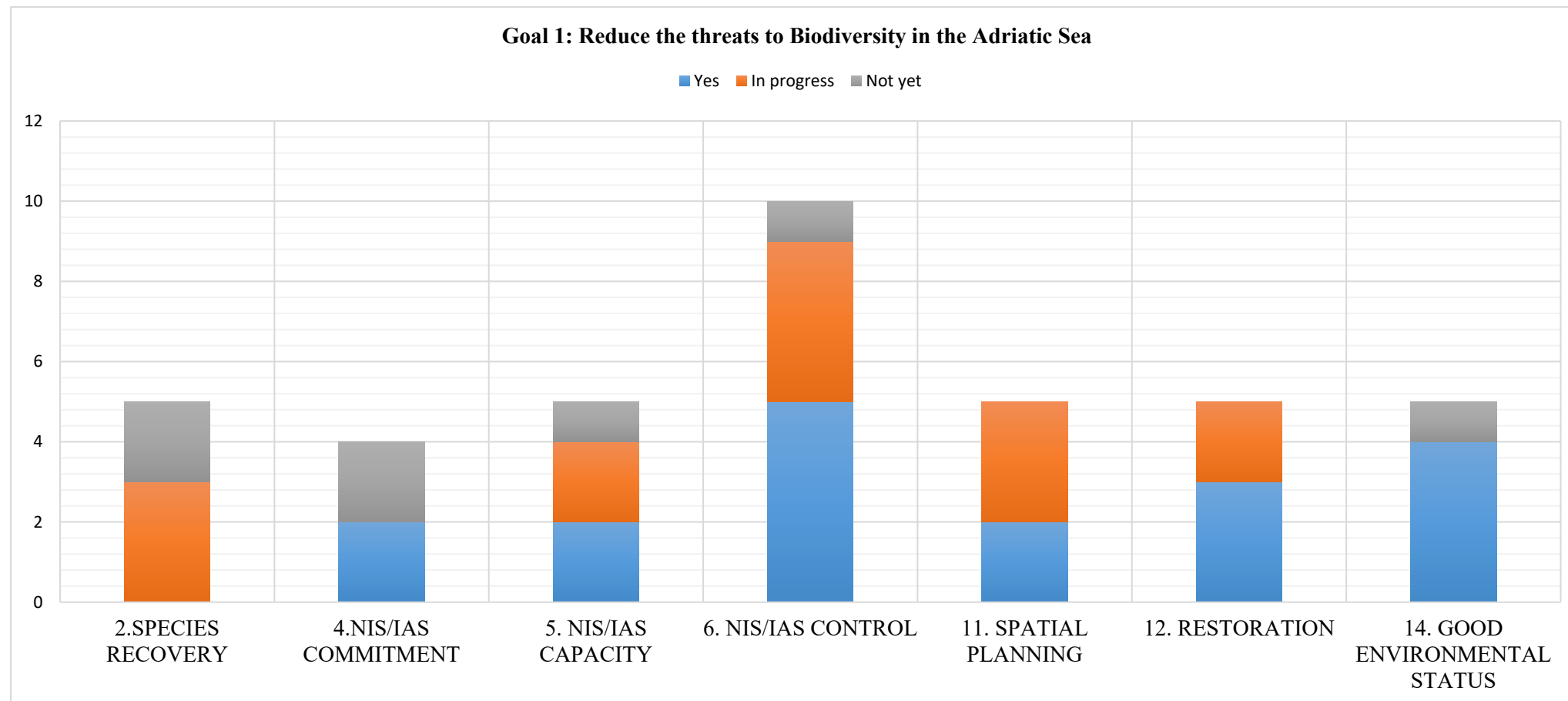
Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin

9. A detailed analysis of Goal 1 in the Aegean and Levantine Basin reveals striking progress in invasive species management, with NIS/IAS Commitment (Action 4) and NIS/IAS Capacity (Action 5) showing complete implementation across all measures. NIS/IAS Control (Action 6) and Restoration (Action 12) demonstrate strong advancement with significant completed actions, while Species Recovery (Action 2) lags considerably with minimal completed work. Spatial Planning (Action 11) and Good Environmental Status (Action 14) show moderate progress but retain substantial portions of unaddressed components, indicating areas requiring immediate attention.



Adriatic Sea

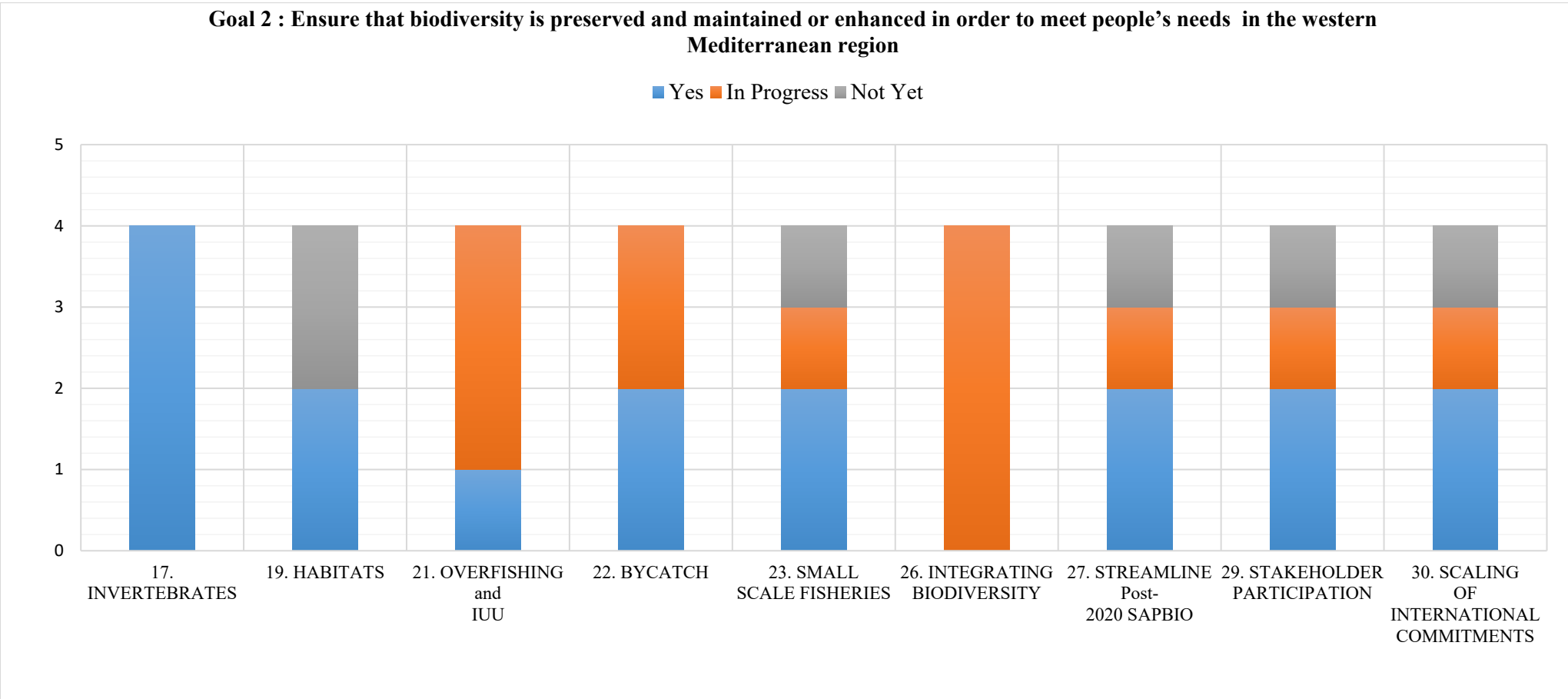
10. A detailed analysis of Goal 1 in the context of the Adriatic Sea reveals that the most significant progress is done in Restoration actions (Action 12) and NIS/IAS control (Action 6), while the least progress has been made in NIS/IAS commitment (Action 4) and Species recovery (Action 2).



2. Goal 2: Ensure that biodiversity is preserved and maintained or enhanced in order to meet people’s needs

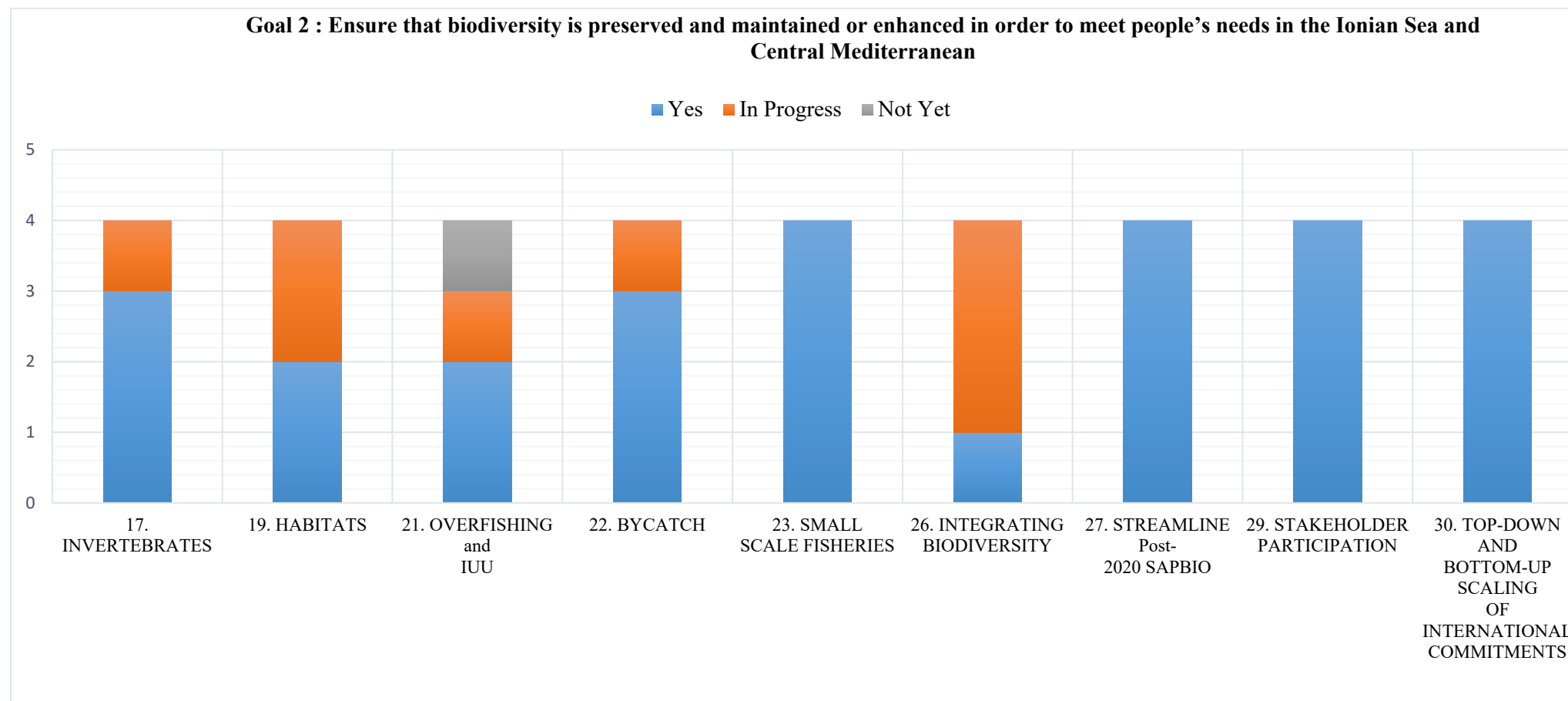
Western Mediterranean

11. A detailed analysis of Goal 2 in the western Mediterranean region reveals varied progress. Action 17 (Invertebrates) shows significant advancement with nearly all measures completed. Action 26 (Integrating Biodiversity) has the majority of its efforts still in progress. Actions 19 (Habitats), 21 (Overfishing and IUU), 27 (Streamline Post-2020 SAPBIO), and 29 (Stakeholder Participation) require more attention, as indicated by their larger "Not Yet" segments. Actions 22 (Bycatch) and 23 (Small-Scale Fisheries) demonstrate balanced progress with a mix of completed and ongoing efforts.



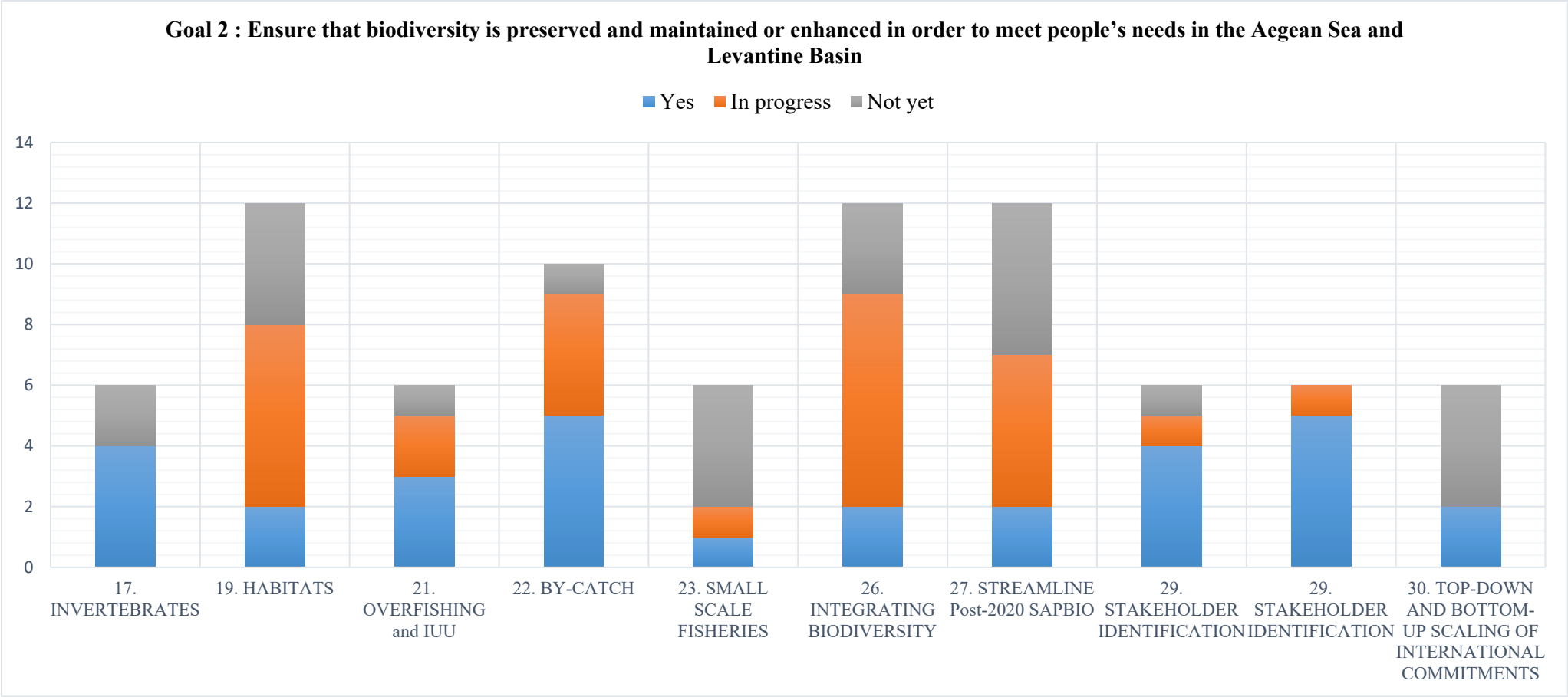
Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean

12. A detailed analysis of Goal 2 in the Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean region reveals strong advancement in small scale fisheries (**Action 23**), streamline Post-2020 SAPBIO (**Action 26**) and Scaling of International Commitments (**Action 30**), with the majority of measures fully implemented. Invertebrates (**Action 17**) Habitats (**Action 19**) Bycatch (**Action 23**) and Integrating Biodiversity (**Action 26**) show moderate progress, indicating ongoing but incomplete initiatives.



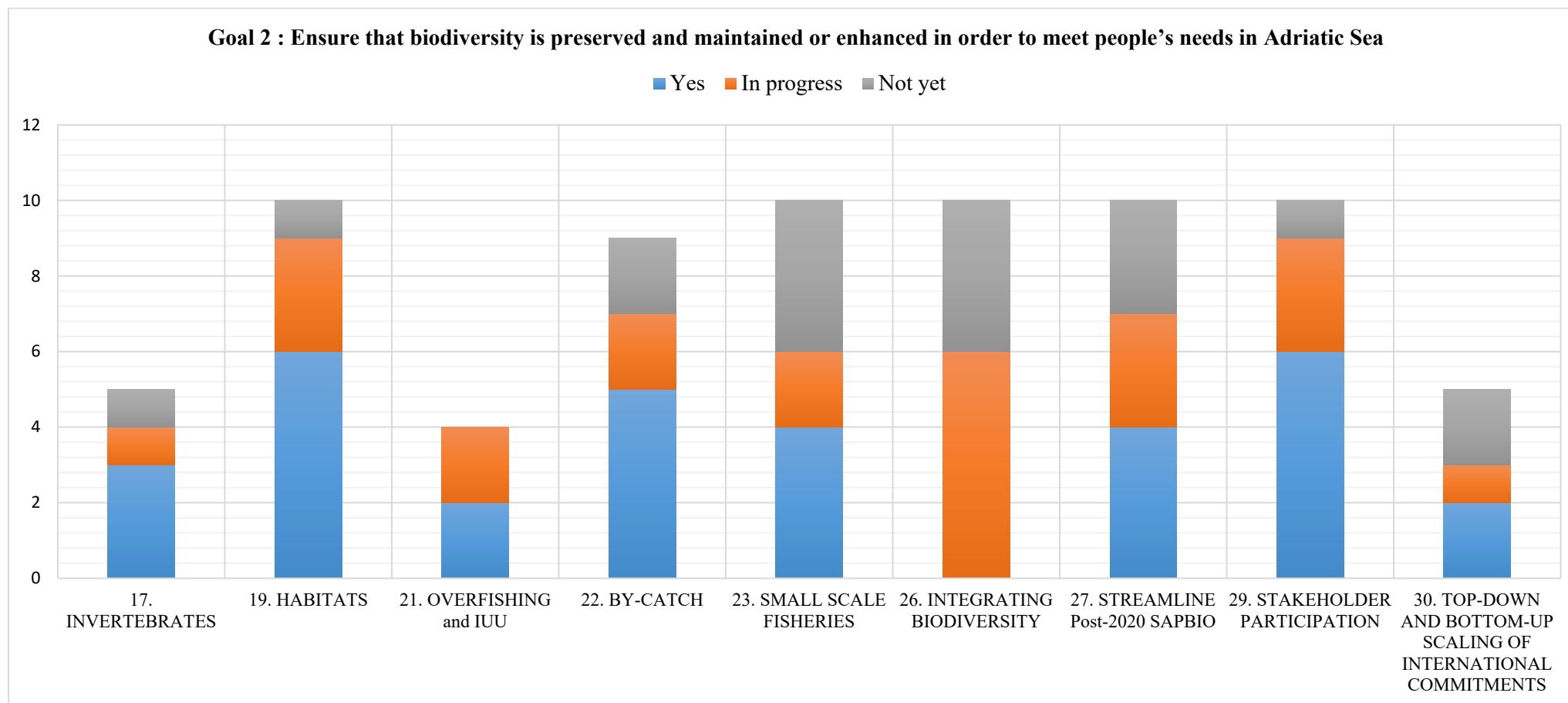
Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin

13. A detailed analysis of Goal 2 in the Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin shows that the most significant progress has been done in Stakeholders participation (**Action 29**), followed by Habitats (**Action 19**) and Bycatch (**Action 22**). Implementation of other action shows equally positive progress, with the least positive progress reported in actions related to Small Scale Fisheries (**Action 23**) .



Adriatic Sea

14. A detailed analysis of Goal 2 in the Adriatic Sea reveals notable achievements include "17. Invertebrates" and "23. Small Scale Fisheries," which show considerable advancement. On the other hand, "19. Habitats" and "26. Integrating Biodiversity" indicating ongoing efforts. Actions such as "21. Overfishing and IUU" and "22. By-catch" still requiring attention as indicated by the "Not Yet" status.



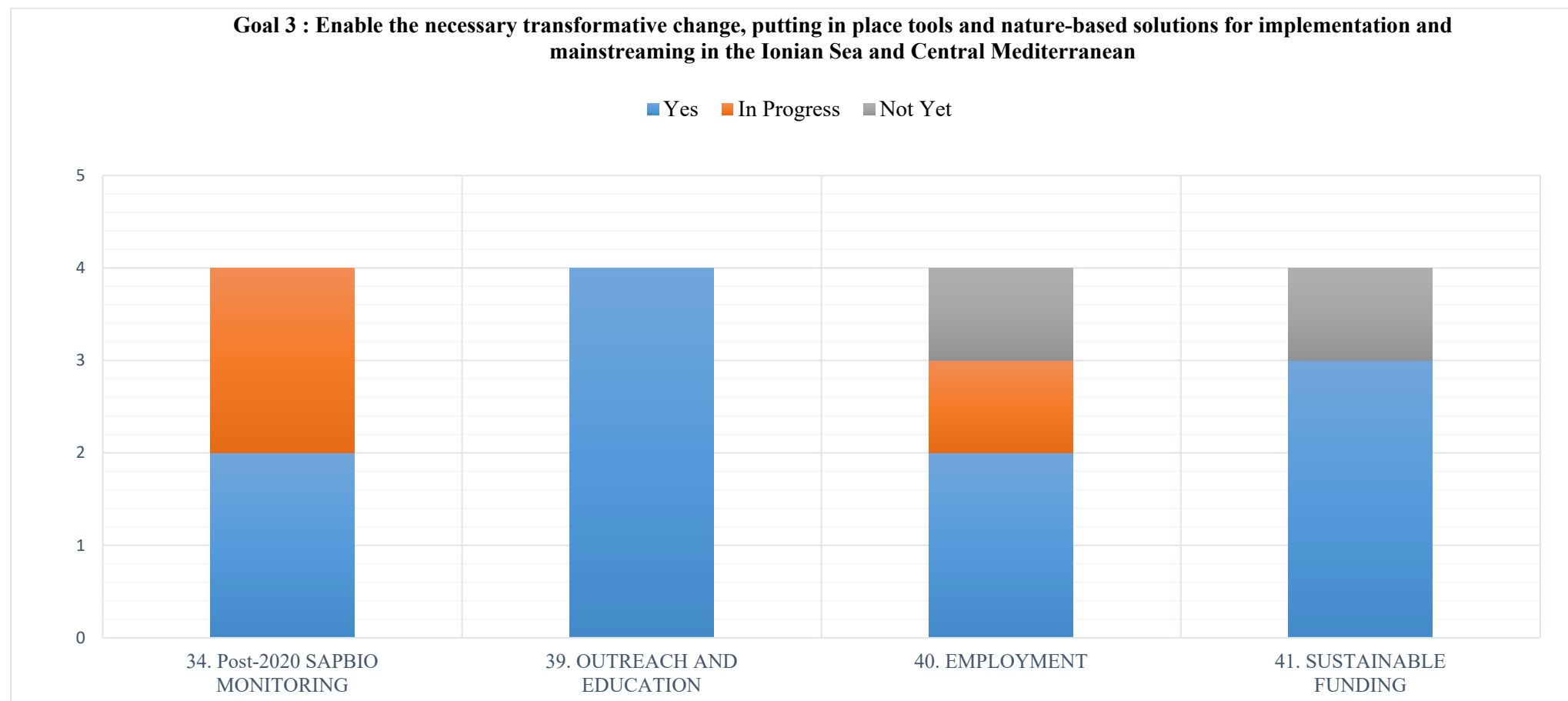
3. Goal 3 : Enable the necessary transformative change, putting in place tools and nature-based solutions for implementation and mainstreaming
Western Mediterranean

15. A detailed analysis of Goal 3 in the Western Mediterranean region highlights that "Outreach and Education" demonstrates the most advancement towards completion. Conversely, "Post-2020 SAPBIO Monitoring" shows a substantial amount of work still in progress or yet to be initiated. "Employment" and "Sustainable Funding" indicate a balanced state of completed and ongoing efforts.



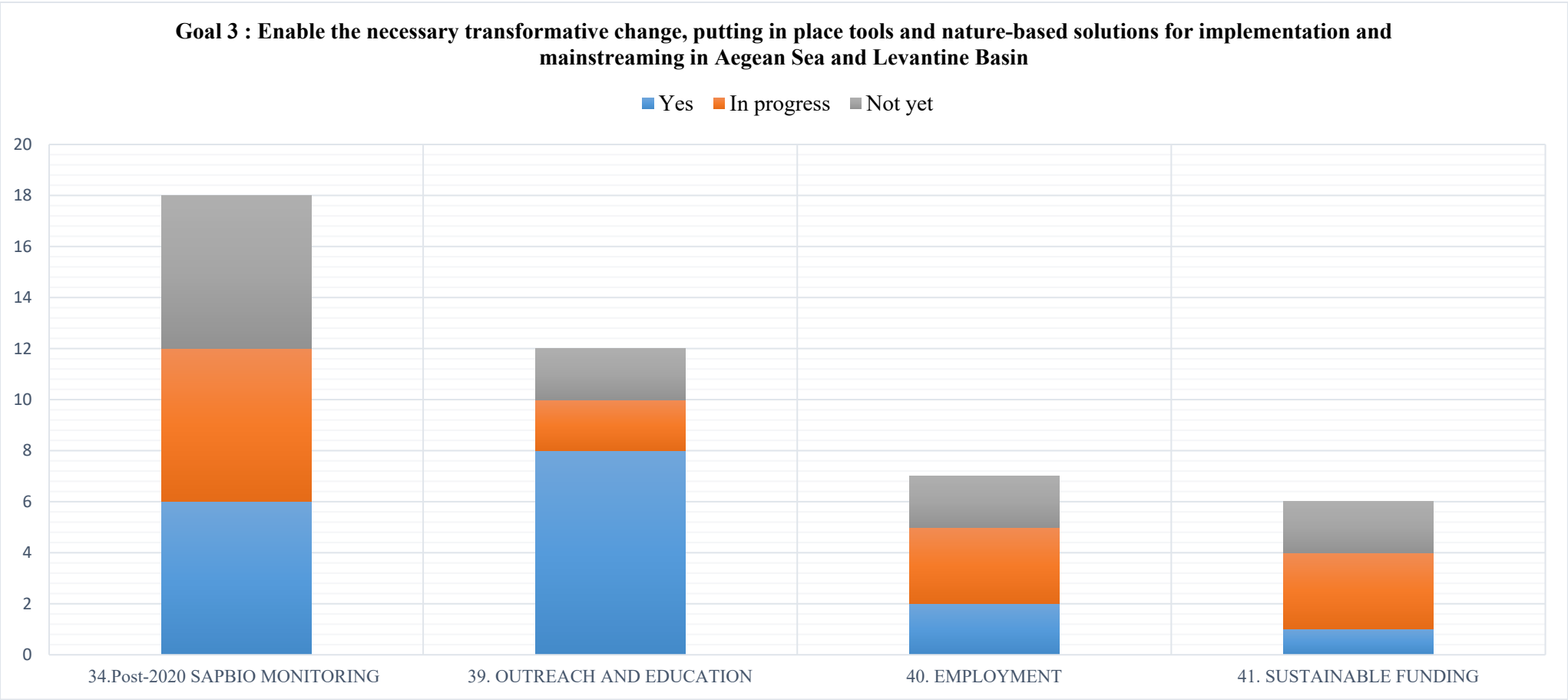
Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean

16. A detailed analysis of Goal 3 in the Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean shows distinct progress levels across different sectors. "Outreach and Education" has achieved full implementation. "Post-2020 sapbio monitoring" indicates a balance between completed and ongoing activities. "Employment" presents a mix of completed, in-progress, and yet-to-start initiatives. "Sustainable Funding" shows a significant portion completed, with some areas still pending.



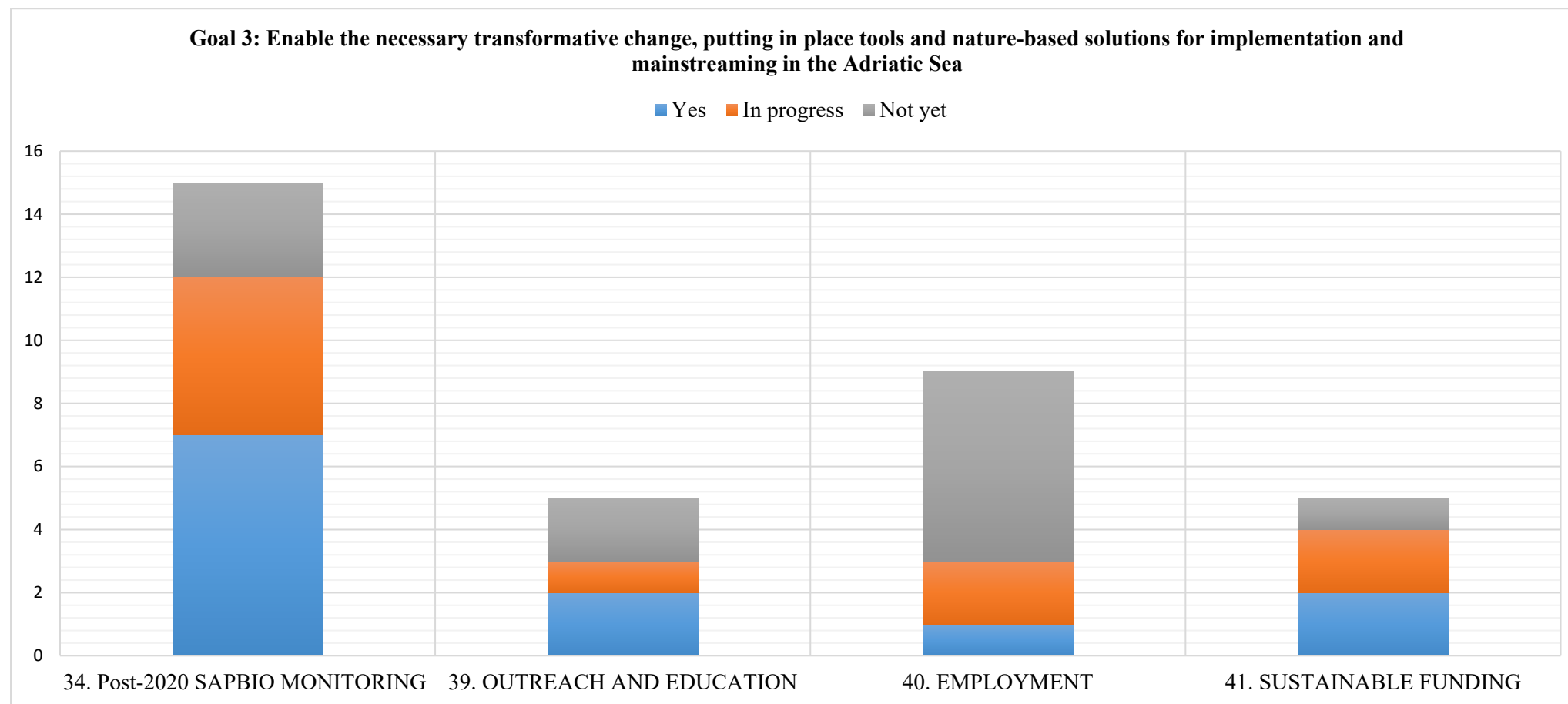
Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin

17. A detailed analysis of Goal 3 in the Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin presents a diverse landscape of progress. "Post-2020 SAPBIO MONITORING" shows a relatively even distribution across all three stages. "Outreach and Education" has a significant portion marked as completed ("Yes"), with fewer initiatives in progress or not yet started. "Employment" indicates a higher number of activities in progress compared to those completed or not yet initiated. "Sustainable Funding" has the fewest completed initiatives, with more in progress and a notable number not yet started.



Adriatic Sea

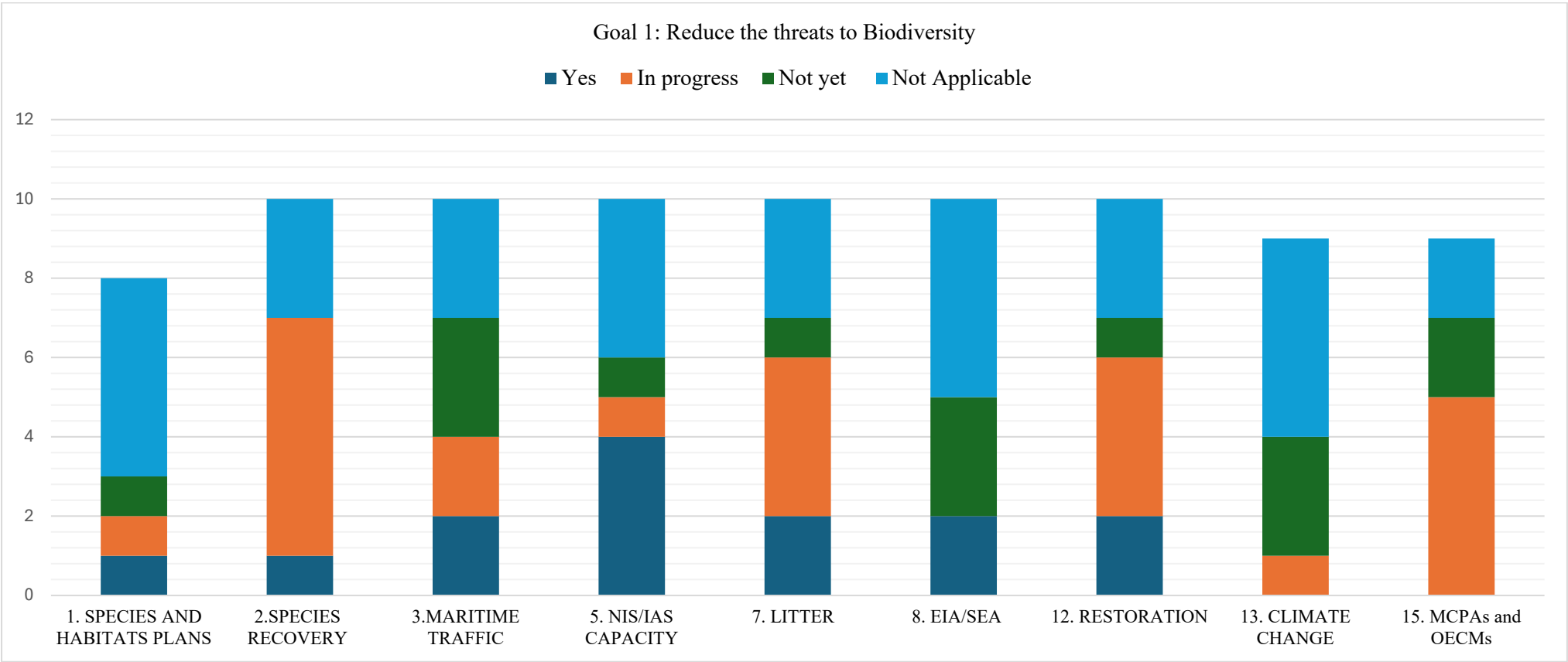
18. A detailed analysis of Goal 3 in the Adriatic Sea demonstrates varying degrees of advancement across sectors. "Post-2020 SAPBIO MONITORING" shows considerable progress with a significant portion completed or in progress. "Outreach and Education" exhibits a comparatively lower level of activity across all stages. "Employment" is characterized by a notable number of initiatives yet to commence. "Sustainable Funding" presents a more even distribution of activities across the "Yes", "In Progress", and "Not Yet" categories



C. In-depth analysis of the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO Action with regional scope at the level of individual Post-2020 SAPBIO goals

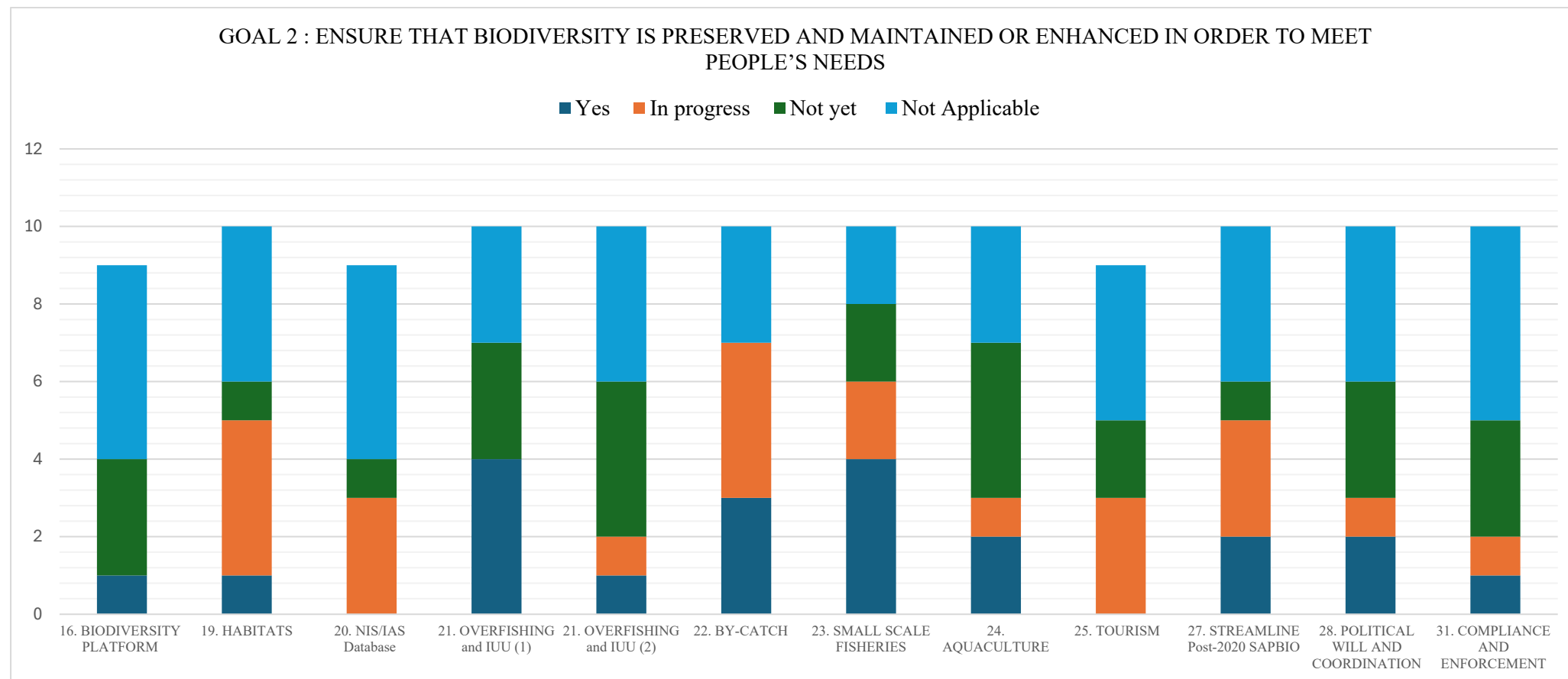
Goal 1: Reduce the threats to Biodiversity

19. The majority of actions show either "Yes" (fully implemented) or "In progress" status. This indicates a positive trend in working towards reducing threats to biodiversity.



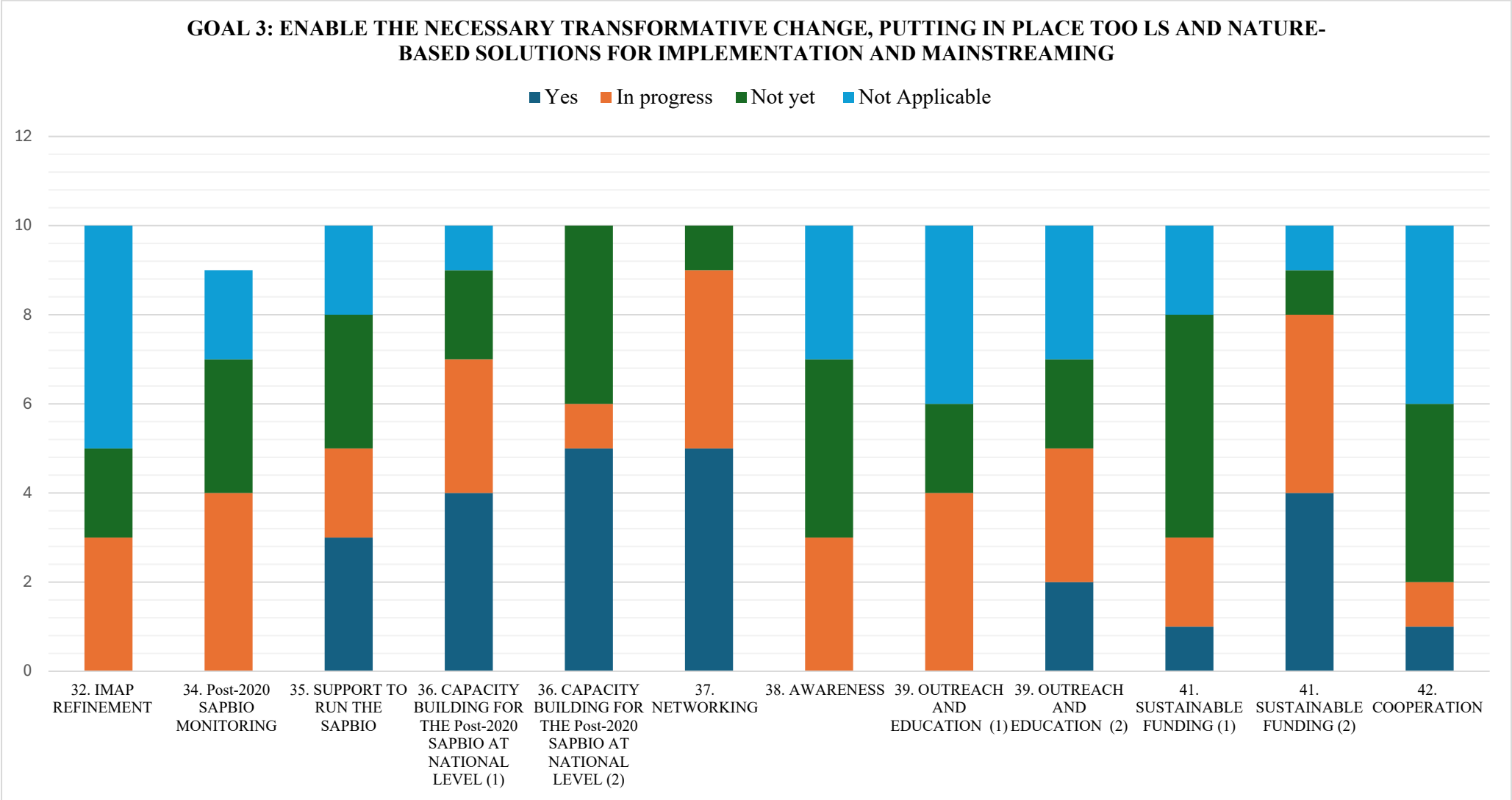
Goal 2 Ensure that biodiversity is preserved and maintained or enhanced in order to meet people's needs

20. A significant portion of actions are marked "No" or "Not applicable," indicating substantial delays or exclusions in implementation.



Goal 3: Enable the necessary transformative change, putting in place too ls and nature-based solutions for implementation and mainstreaming

21. Most actions show at least partial implementation ("Yes" or "In progress"), demonstrating a positive trend in enabling transformative change



D. Conclusions of In-depth analysis at the level of individual Post-2020 SAPBIO goals

1. Goal 1: Reduce the threats to Biodiversity

National scope

- "SPECIES RECOVERY" consistently shows a large proportion of initiatives "In Progress" across all regions, indicating that this is a long-term and ongoing effort requiring sustained action.
- Across all four regions, there is a noticeable focus on addressing non-indigenous and invasive alien species. Categories related to commitment, capacity, and control of NIS/IAS show significant activity, although the stage of progress varies by region
- The progress in "SPATIAL PLANNING" and "RESTORATION" varies considerably among the regions, suggesting different priorities or stages of implementation in these areas
- While the progress towards achieving "GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS" varies, it is consistently represented as a category being addressed across all regions, indicating its importance as an overarching goal

Regional Scope

- There's a positive trend in action implementation, but financial and systemic hurdles need to be overcome for more effective progress.

2. Goal 2 : Ensure that biodiversity is preserved and maintained or enhanced in order to meet people's needs

National Scope

- Across the four regions, "STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION" and "HABITATS" generally show significant progress with a high number of initiatives marked as "Yes" or completed
- The progress in addressing "OVERFISHING and IUU" is less consistent across the regions, with some showing more "In Progress" or "Not Yet" statuses, indicating this remains a challenging area
- "INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY" shows a good level of progress, particularly in the Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea
- The "STREAMLINE Post-2020 SAPBIO" category shows a mix of progress across regions, indicating that efforts to align with the new strategic action plan for biodiversity are in various stages of implementation

Regional Scope

- The trend here is concerning, with significant implementation gaps. Urgent attention is needed to address the identified challenges and get actions back on track

3. Goal 3: Enable the necessary transformative change, putting in place tools and nature-based solutions for implementation and mainstreaming

National Scope

- "Outreach and Education" generally shows the most significant progress, with a high proportion of initiatives marked as "Yes" or completed.
- The progress in "Post-2020 SAPBIO Monitoring" is quite varied across the regions, indicating different stages of implementation or challenges specific to each area.
- Compared to "Outreach and Education", the categories of "Employment" and "Sustainable Funding" tend to have a higher proportion of initiatives still "In Progress" or "Not Yet" started across the regions.

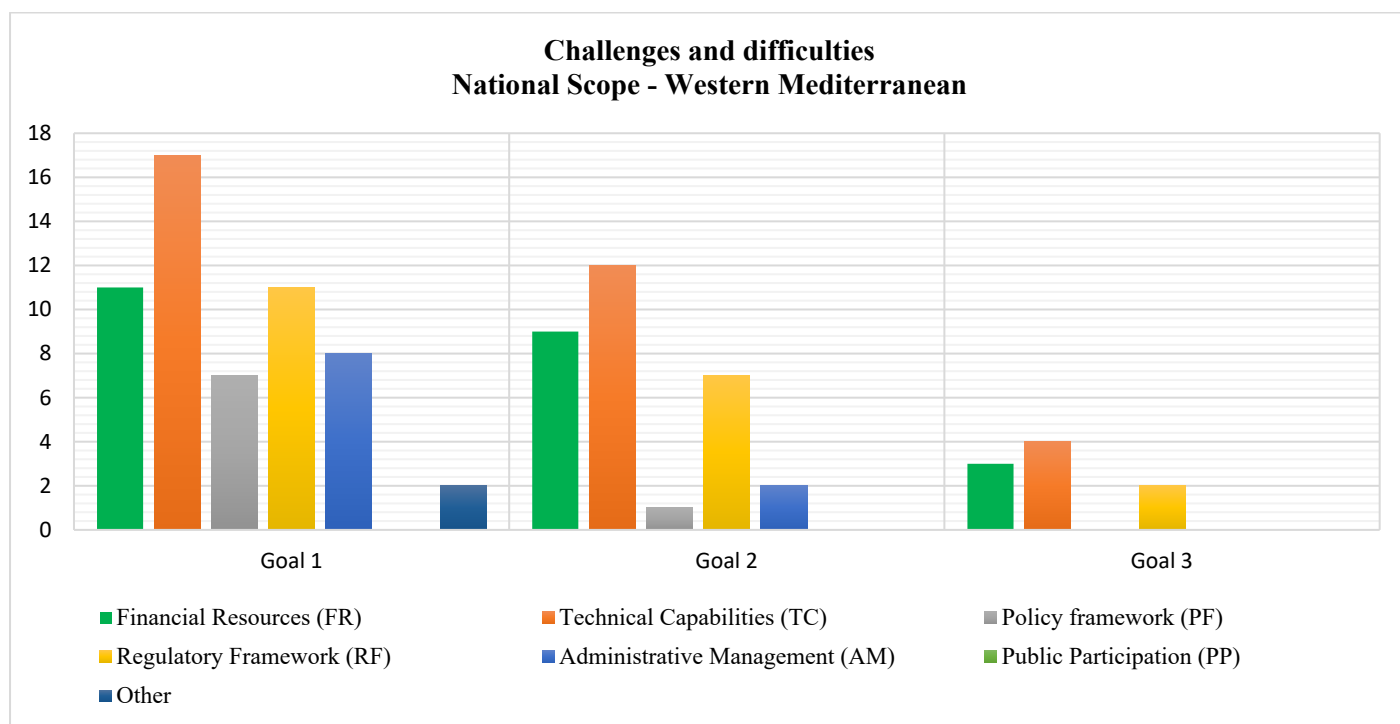
Regional Scope

- Most actions show at least partial implementation ("Yes" or "In progress"), demonstrating a positive trend in enabling transformative change

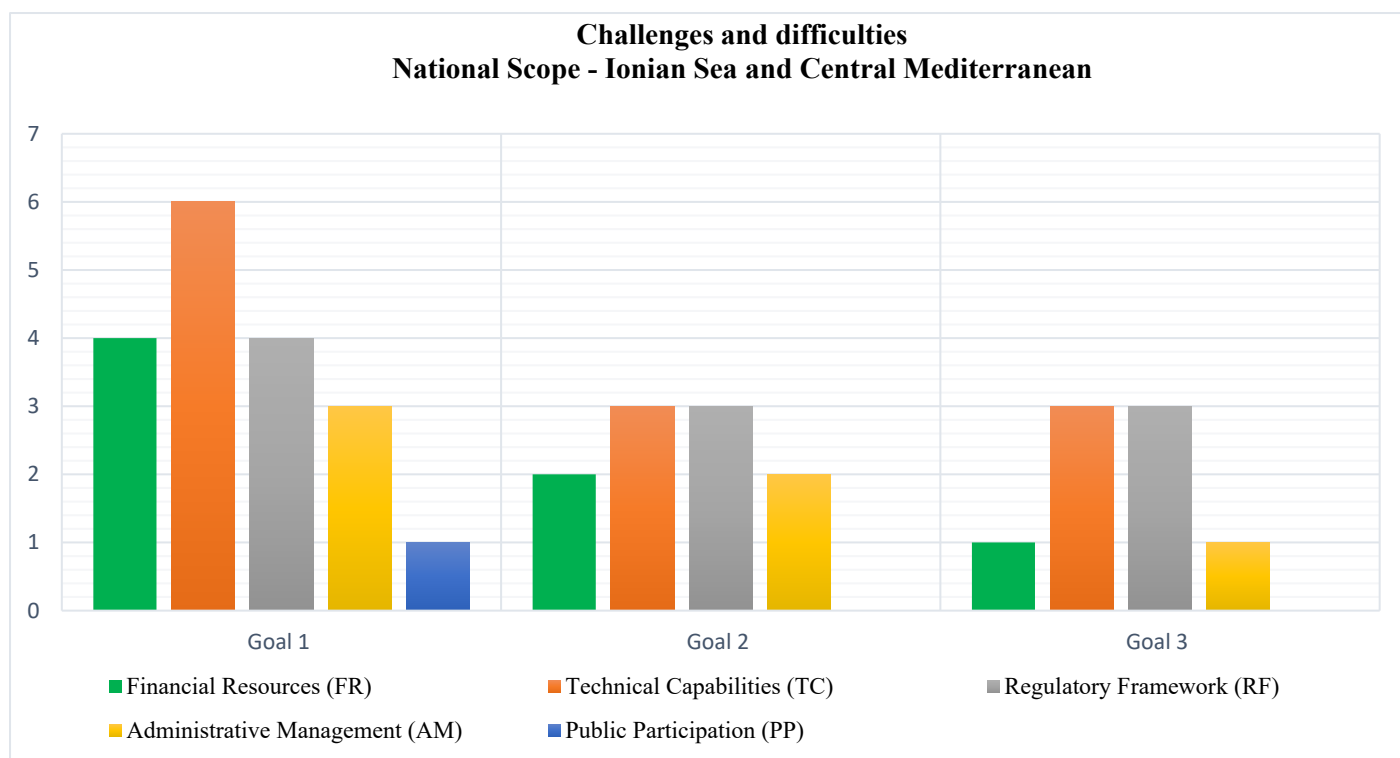
III. Challenges and difficulties

1. National Scope Actions

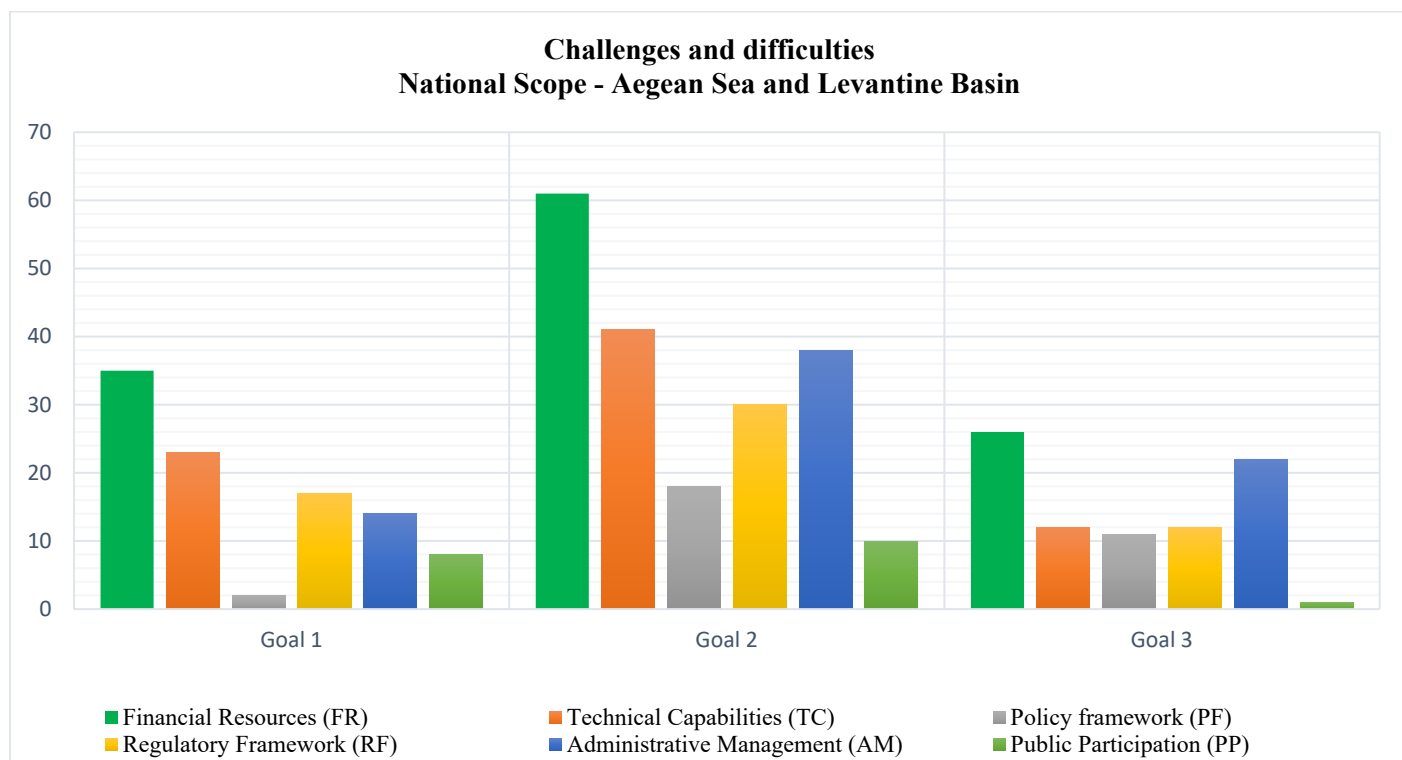
Western Mediterranean



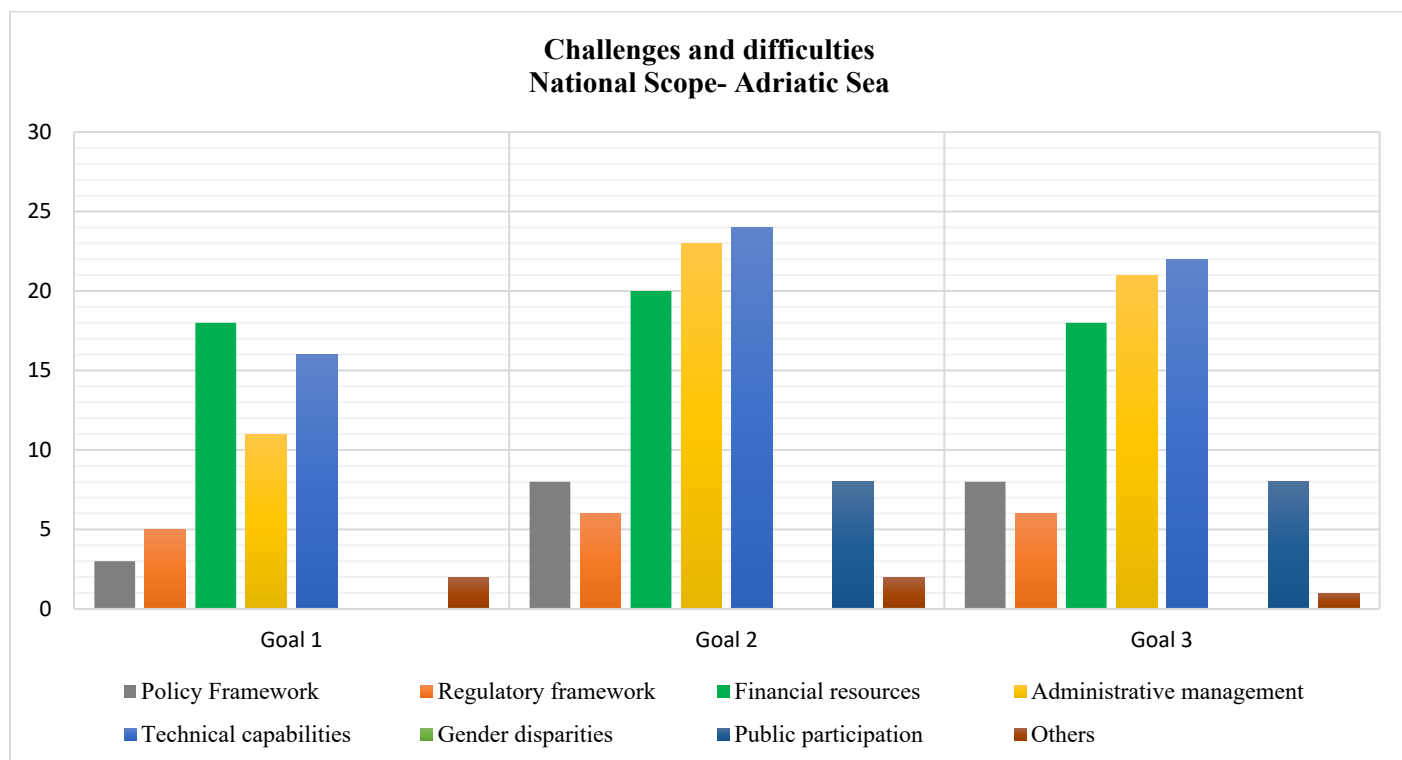
Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean



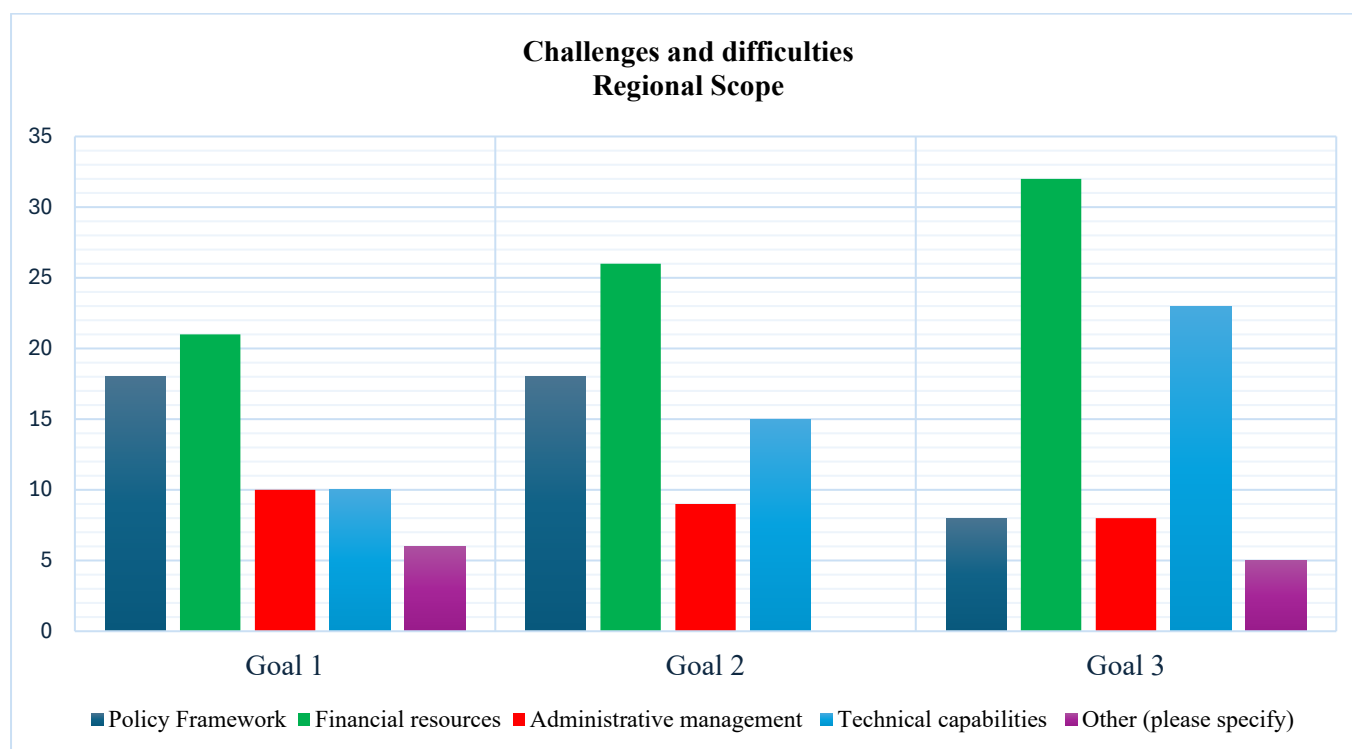
Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin



Adriatic Sea



2. Regional Scope Actions



3. Conclusions

22. The analysis for the National Scope Actions underscores that **Financial Resources (FR)** and **Regulatory Framework (RF)** emerge as general challenges across all Mediterranean sub-regions (Western Mediterranean, Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean, Aegean Sea and Levantine Basin) and all Goals (1, 2, 3), reflecting systemic gaps in funding allocation and governance coherence. Sub-regional variations highlight additional critical barriers, such as **Technical Capabilities (TC)** in the Western Mediterranean and Aegean Sea, **Administrative Management (AM)** in the Ionian Sea, and Policy Framework (PF) in subsequent assessments. Addressing these interconnected challenges demands prioritized investments, streamlined regulatory harmonization, and capacity-building initiatives tailored to sub-regional contexts.

23. For the Regional Scop Actions, **Financial Resources (FR)** are the most significant challenge across all three goals. challenges related to **Financial Resources (FR)** and **Policy Framework (PF)** and also hinder progress.

4. Conclusions and recommendations of the Eleventh Meeting of Post-2020 SAPBIO National Correspondents (Athens, Greece - 9-10 April 2025)

24. The Meeting acknowledged that the Barcelona Convention is leading in biological diversity strategic planning compared to other regions, exemplified by the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Protocol developed in 1995 and the first “Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity” (SAPBIO) in 2003.

25. To enhance resource mobilization efforts and strengthen collective capacity for biodiversity conservation in the region, the Meeting recommended that the Barcelona Convention Secretariat initiate a collaborative dialogue with the secretariats of other Regional Sea Conventions, such as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (HELCOM). This dialogue should address the shared challenges faced by their Contracting Parties in financing and resourcing key activities related to biodiversity protection and conservation, with a focus on identifying new and innovative funding avenues.

26. The Meeting recommended that SPA/RAC, in collaboration with relevant partners, offer training to enhance the skills necessary for the preparation and implementation of National Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Finance Plans, where needed.

27. The Meeting commended the efforts of the Secretariat dedicated to the preparation of the documents related to the mid-term assessment focusing on the Post-2020 SAPBIO start-up activities, including the sub-regional reports and the preliminary findings.

28. The Meeting emphasized the need for Mediterranean countries to develop their National Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Finance Plans and advocate for increased budgetary allocations at the national level to ensure the successful implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO actions, including the exploration of innovative financing mechanisms.

29. The Meeting urged Mediterranean countries to prepare or revise their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), if needed, to fully incorporate the relevant elements of the Post-2020 SAPBIO.

30. The Meeting recommended that the UNEP/MAP - SPA/RAC and relevant regional partners collaborate and joint efforts to mobilize additional financial resources for the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO.

31. The Meeting recommended that Contracting Parties work towards reallocating a portion of environmentally harmful subsidies coming from blue economy activities – without increasing overall government spending – as a financially viable solution to boost funding for species recovery which would offer a cost-neutral way to support conservation funding.

32. The Meeting highlighted the opportunity for cooperation and coordination between future assessments of the Post-2020 SAPBIO and the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), as well as other relevant reporting frameworks.

33. The Meeting recommended that SPA/RAC actively participate in relevant global processes occurring in the Mediterranean region, such as the 2025 UN Ocean Conference (taking place in Nice, France, on 9-13 June 2025) and the “Intersessional workshop of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies” (also in Nice, on 7-8 June 2025).

34. The Meeting emphasized the need for the involvement of qualified finance experts in the elaboration of National Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Finance Plans and in fund mobilization to enhance effective resource allocation and support for the Post-2020 SAPBIO and other conservation initiatives.