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Athens, Greece, 25-29 May 2015

Agenda item 9 :The Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean region (SAP BIO) Strategic Goals and Priority Actions

Agenda item 11 : Roundtable on the funding of the SAP BIO priority projects/activities

Note on the Funding of SAP BIO priority projects/activities

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Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)
Boulevard du Leader Yasser Arafat
B.P. 337 - 1080 Tunis Cedex - Tunisia
E-mail: car-asp@rac-spa.org

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Background on SAP BIO

The Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO: <http://sapbio.rac-spa.org/sapbioeng.pdf>) was adopted on 14 November 2003 in Catania by the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Environment (Barcelona Convention) to cope with the complex threats to which marine and coastal biodiversity is subject in the Mediterranean.

The process to elaborate the SAP BIO took 3 years and was led by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC – UNEP/MAP) with the financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It consisted on a wide-ranging process based on consultations with the countries to diagnose the state of marine and coastal biodiversity, to identify national and regional priorities and to craft National Action Plans (NAP) addressing the priority themes. In this context, sixty three NAPs were designed to handle the national priority issues identified. The results of the national consultations were compiled to develop the regional SAP BIO element that would back up and coordinate the Priority Actions and National Action Plans.

Furthermore, in 2008-2009 the SAP BIO was updated with Climate Change issues through the participation of Contracting Parties expert representatives, with a focus of climate change impacts on biodiversity. (http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/meetings/nfp9/wg_331_13_eng.pdf)

During the Eleventh Meeting of SPA/RAC Focal Points, held in Rabat (Morocco) in June 2013, in line with the Ecosystem Approach agreed Ecological Objectives and the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the document “SAP BIO implementation: The first decade and way forward (as reviewed by the National Correspondents of SAP BIO)” (http://www.rac-spa.org/nfp11/nfpdocs/working/report_en.pdf, Annex IV) was endorsed.

It presents, complemented by doc UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.382/Inf.3 “Report on the evaluation and future orientations of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO)”, an analysis of how SAP BIO has been implemented at regional and country levels since it was adopted in 2003, as well as a set of proposed strategic goals and priority actions for the period 2014-2020, accompanied with a proposal for modalities of implementation.

While the revisions ensured that SAP BIO reflects the regional, international common goals and visions regarding biodiversity protection, its principle objective, ie to establish a logical base for implementing the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean stayed the same. The SAP BIO fulfills its ‘objective by providing the Contracting Parties, international and national organizations, NGOs, donors and all other stakeholders involved in the protection and management of the Mediterranean natural environment, with principles, measures and concrete and coordinated actions at national, transboundary and regional level for the conservation of the Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity.

The SAP BIO identified 30 Priority Actions at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels and was accompanied with 63 National Action Plans (NAPs) identified and elaborated by countries. It also included an estimation of the economic investment necessary for its implementation.

During their Fourteenth Ordinary Meeting (Portoroz, Slovenia, November 2005), the Contracting Parties invited the SPA/RAC to further integrate the SAP BIO into its programme of activities and seek funding for its implementation through the GEF and other external donors support.

As a result two SAP BIO regional high Priority Actions were implemented, (i.e. (i) Assisting countries to protect marine and coastal sites of particular interest, and (ii) Declaring and developing new coastal and marine protected areas including in the high seas) through:

- The UNEP/MAP – GEF MedPartnership (2010-2015) / Component 3 “Conservation of Biological Diversity: Implementation of SAP BIO and related NAPs” / Sub-Component 3.1 “Conservation of

coastal and marine diversity through the development of a Mediterranean MPA Network”, funded by the European Union (EU), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM), with contribution of the Mediterranean Trust Fund); and

- The “EU – UNEP/MAP Joint Management Action for identifying and creating Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) in the open seas, including the deep seas”, executed in three phases: a first phase in 2008-2009, a second phase in 2010-2011, and a third phase in 2012-2015, funded through the EcAp-MED project by the EU, with contribution of the Mediterranean Trust Fund.

Further resource mobilization needs for the SAP BIO implementation

The current period, 2014-2020 set 39 SAP BIO Priority Actions. It serves as guidance to relevant bodies, in accordance with their competences and mandates, for the conservation of Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity, and are included in the Annex IV, “SAP BIO implementation: The first decade and way forward (as reviewed by the National Correspondents of SAP BIO)” of the Report of the Eleventh Meeting of SPA/RAC Focal Points (Rabat, Morocco, July 2013, http://www.rac-spa.org/nfp11/nfpdocs/working/report_en.pdf).

During the 2014-2015 biennial period, and as a follow-up to the 2013 SAP BIO evaluation and to the Decision IG.20/4 of the Contracting Parties, SPA/RAC has prepared a first draft of project portfolios addressing the updated SAP BIO priority actions.

The future projects needed to implement the SAP BIO Priority Actions, based on the analysis of SPA/RAC, are expected to include: **(i)** national pilot projects targeting national priorities in the framework of SAP BIO, and **(ii)** regional projects that support countries in areas of regional interest.

SPA/RAC aims to present a draft Portfolio of projects, for discussions with Contracting Parties, potentially interested Donors, partners and other stakeholders, during the SAP BIO session scheduled in the agenda of the Twelfth Meeting of SPA/RAC Focal Points that will be held in Athens, Greece, on 25-29 May 2015 (12th SPA/RAC FPs Meeting).

The Contracting Parties, potential donors, implementing partners and other stakeholders are invited during this agenda point to comment on the draft Portfolio of projects, based on their own priorities and progress made in the implementation of the SAP BIO,

The aim of this agenda item is to have an early discussion on how to improve the SAP BIO implementation efforts and see how the best future projects could assist the implementation of the SAP BIO priority actions and beyond, the achievement of the EcAp Ecological Objectives and CBD Aichi Targets.

The portfolio of project concept notes are still in the initial stages of development and should be seen as living documents, basis for discussions. In addition to Contracting Parties, potential donors, partners and other interested stakeholders are invited to participate and play a role in finalizing the formulation of the projects portfolio and contribute to the coordinated implementation of actions at regional level in order to seek further synergies and avoid overlaps.

Every project concept in the portfolio identifies the relevance to the SPA/RAC and UNEP/MAP, as well as to the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets. It also specifies the Strategic Goals and Actions of SAP BIO to which the implementation of the project would contribute.

The portfolio includes 11 project concept notes and while some of them may complement other externally funded activities to be implemented by UNEP/MAP, some are new concepts, following the needs of the SAP BIO priority actions. The concept notes portfolio consists on the following items:

1. Monitoring of biodiversity indicators in a Mediterranean sub region (Western, Central, Eastern or Adriatic), including climate change, and including in SPAMIs

2. Rehabilitation and valorisation of Mediterranean coastal wetlands for biodiversity conservation and the socio-economic benefit of local communities
3. Initiative to support the implementation of the Dark Habitat Action Plan
4. Pilot project to shape governance models in open-sea priority areas for conservation in the Mediterranean (Alboran and Adriatic)
5. Ecological Connectivity: a tool for maritime spatial planning in the Mediterranean
6. Supporting country actions for capacity building on MPAs management
7. Supporting Countries for valorisation of MPAs: a new approach for the conservation of the marine environment and the development of eco-tourism
8. Supporting South and East Mediterranean countries in the establishment and management of MPAs
9. Marine Alien species assessing program in South and Easter Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea (support the implementation of the Action Plan concerning species introduction and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea)
10. Conservation of the Mediterranean Monk Seal in the Central Mediterranean, including the Adriatic
11. Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening Strategy for Marine Conservation

Further to the discussions and recommendations of the 12th SPA/RAC FP Meeting on the portfolio of concept notes under Agenda item 9, the portfolio will be updated and used as a basis for further, more detailed discussions during the “Roundtable on the funding of the SAP BIO priority projects/activities” scheduled under Agenda item 11.

Roundtable on the funding of the SAP BIO priority projects/activities

The “Roundtable on the funding of the SAP BIO priority projects/activities” will be an opportunity to have a face-to-face consultation among international donor organizations, Contracting Parties, key partner organizations, based on the SPA/RAC prepared concept notes, on common priorities and interests.

The Roundtable will represent a first step in a resource mobilization activity by SPA/RAC for SAP BIO regional and national priority actions implementation. In addition, it will also be an opportunity to enhance regional cooperation among different institutions and discuss common shared priorities and visions for 2015-2020.

Participants to the Roundtable are invited to present their current strategies, priorities and experiences in supporting projects in the Mediterranean. They are especially invited to give their advice on how the SAP BIO could be integrated in their plans to become an effective framework for the future financing of biodiversity actions in the Mediterranean.

Following the presentation of a summary on the results of the previous SAP BIO session, the updated portfolio of projects will be presented for an open discussion with the donor institutions; with the aim of listening to their opinion regarding common priority areas and potential interest in funding the proposals as well as their advice in developing a larger strategy for funding the SAP BIO,

Based on the Recommendations of the Roundtable session, the SPA/RAC will further review the portfolio of projects and revise them, in line with the Contracting Parties highlighted implementation needs and common priorities with partners and donors.

Based on the discussions during the 12th SPA/RAC FPs Meeting, SPA/RAC will further analyze the potential of the development, of a coordinated proposal on a large strategy for funding the SAP BIO, together with interested partners.