



Mediterranean
Action Plan
Barcelona
Convention



CALL FOR CONSULTANCY No. 09/2026_SPA/RAC

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES

**External mid-term evaluation (2026) of the Post-2020 Regional
Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other
effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the
Mediterranean**

April 2026

**This call for consultancy document is available only in English.
Offers should be made in English.**

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

I. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

I.1. The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre

The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) was established by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in order to assist the Mediterranean countries in implementing the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Barcelona Convention. Tunisia has been hosting the centre since its establishment in 1985.

The centre works under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) - Barcelona Convention Secretariat, based in Athens, Greece.

SPA/RAC's main objective is to contribute to the protection, preservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal biological diversity in the Mediterranean and, in particular, the conservation and effective management of marine and coastal areas of particular natural and cultural value and the conservation of threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna in the Mediterranean.

For more information, please consult: www.spa-rac.org.

I.2. The Mediterranean MCPA & OECM strategy

The Post-2020 regional strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean¹ (hereinafter referred to as the "MCPA & OECM strategy"), adopted at COP 22 (2021) of the Barcelona Convention, is the region's principal 2030 framework to strengthen conservation and effective management of marine and coastal biodiversity by contributing to the Kunming-Montreal 30x30 target, improving representativeness, connectivity, management effectiveness and governance of MCPAs and OECMs, and reinforcing regional cooperation. Its main targets are (i) protecting and conserving at least 30% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2030 through well-connected, ecologically representative and effectively managed MCPAs and OECMs with adequate geographic balance and focus on areas of particular biodiversity importance, and (ii) expanding the number and coverage of MCPAs with increased levels of protection to support ecosystem recovery.

The strategy provides for a mid-term external evaluation in 2026 and a final external evaluation in 2030, with SPA/RAC mandated to carry them out under the Evaluation and Monitoring Framework adopted at COP 23. That framework sets out, for each of the strategy's 20 outputs, specific indicators, mid-term (2026) and final (2030) targets, and clearly identified means of verification. The **Evaluation and Monitoring Framework** adopted by COP 23 is appended as [Annex 1](#) to these terms of reference.

The mid-term evaluation will be conducted in alignment with the assessment of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of natural resources in the Mediterranean (Post-2020 SAPBIO) – whose first collective assessment is scheduled for 2027 – sharing indicators and preparatory work to ensure methodological coherence and optimize data use. The evaluation will also seek synergies with related processes and stakeholders – including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) work on fisheries OECMs; SPA/RAC and the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN) joint initiatives such as the Mediterranean MPA Forum² and its post-2020 Roadmap, and joint tools like MAPAMED³ and the Mediterranean MPA status report

¹ UNEP/MAP - SPA/RAC, 2021. Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean. Ed. SPA/RAC, Tunis: 47 pp + Appendix: https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_spa/mcpa_oecm_strategy.pdf

² The Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean: <https://www.medmpaforum.org/>

³ The Database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean: <https://www.mapamed.org/>

– to avoid duplication, maximize uptake of findings, and align recommendations for priority actions on MCPAs and OECMs.

The full contextual section on the **Mediterranean MCPA & OECM strategy** is provided in [Annex 2](#).

II. OBJECTIVE

II.1. General objective

The overall objective of the external mid-term evaluation of the MCPA & OECM strategy is (i) to conduct a rigorous, participatory evaluation of progress in implementing the strategy, aligned with the adopted Evaluation and monitoring framework and its related indicators; and (ii) to provide recommendations for any necessary changes required to increase the likelihood of achieving the strategy's post-2020 targets including their qualitative provisions relating to ecological representativeness, connectivity, management effectiveness, governance quality, adequate geographical balance, prioritization of areas of particular importance for biodiversity, the establishment and expansion of enhanced protection levels, and measures to promote ecosystem recovery and resilience.

II.2. Specific objectives

The **external mid-term** evaluation of the MCPA & OECM strategy has the following specific aims:

- a) Assess the level of implementation of the strategy's 20 outputs across its five strategic pillars, using the indicators, mid-term targets and means of verification specified in the Evaluation and monitoring framework;
- b) Examine progress achieved by:
 - The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and
 - Regional and international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including the extent to which their policies, strategies and actions contribute, directly or indirectly, to the implementation and objectives of the strategy;
- c) Identify achievements, good practices and enabling factors, as well as challenges, constraints and gaps that hinder implementation of the strategy and its ability to achieve the 2030 objectives;
- d) Assess the strategy's contribution to international commitments – particularly the GBF 30x30 target – and to other regional priorities under the Barcelona Convention; and explore linkages with relevant CBD technical and knowledge platforms (for example, subregional technical/scientific cooperation centres and knowledge hubs supporting Target 3), as well as other applicable regional or thematic information-sharing mechanisms;
- e) Formulate clear, concrete and prioritized conclusions and recommendations for Contracting Parties, regional and international organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate and optimize implementation during 2027–2030, including any necessary changes required to increase the likelihood of achieving the strategy's post-2020 targets.

III. TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

SPA/RAC shall contract two independent external experts (consultants) to undertake the evaluation of the MCPA & OECM strategy, using a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques.

The consultants will be responsible for executing the full evaluation process set out below, comprising three main tasks: (1) a comprehensive review and collection of existing data and documentation to establish the evidence base and identify gaps; (2) development and administration of targeted questionnaires and interviews with Contracting Parties and relevant regional and international

stakeholders to gather primary information and perspectives; and (3) an in-depth analysis and preparation of the evaluation report, including operational, prioritized recommendations and presentation materials. Deliverables and indicative timelines for each task are detailed in the following phases.

Phase 1: Collection of available data and information, and development of questionnaires

Data collection will include:

- The MCPA & OECM strategy and its Monitoring and evaluation framework.
- National reports under the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS).
- The MAPAMED database and the 2025 Mediterranean MPA status report.
- Relevant reports and outputs from regional and international partners, including existing assessments and scientific reviews of area-based fisheries management measures by FAO and GFCM (e.g., Fisheries Restricted Areas - FRAs - and fisheries-related OECMs), to ensure consistency, avoid duplication and build on established regional monitoring frameworks.

Development of questionnaires:

- Targeted questionnaires for Contracting Parties based on the Monitoring and evaluation framework, including justification fields and specific questions on challenges, obstacles and successes; the questionnaire will request information on tangible achievements against the 2026 mid-term targets and on planned measures to achieve the 2030 final targets (e.g., future MPAs to be established and managed, resource mobilization strategies, and other planned interventions).
- Targeted questionnaires for regional and international organizations (e.g., GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN Med, WWF, MedPAN, The MedFund, UfM, IMO, PIM, the MAP system RACs, relevant public and private donors, etc.) based on the Monitoring and evaluation framework, including justification fields and specific questions on challenges, obstacles and successes.

Deliverables:

- **D1.1-** A report including the bibliography and information sources, and a first rapid analysis.
- **D1.2-** A gap analysis identifying issues to be addressed in phase 2.
- **D1.3-** Questionnaire templates (English/French): one targeting SPA/BD Focal Points and another one targeting relevant regional and international organizations.
- **D1.4-** Interview guides (questions) for selected Focal Points and organizations.

Indicative timeline:

End of May 2026: Finalization of deliverables D1.1 to D1.4 and dissemination of questionnaires by SPA/RAC to the SPA/BD Focal Points and relevant regional and international organizations

Phase 2: Complementary interviews

The consultants will organize complementary interviews with selected SPA/BD Focal Points and key international and regional organizations to deepen understanding of MPAs and OECMs implementation at national, sub-regional and regional levels, and further identify weaknesses and challenges possibly hindering the implementation of the MCPA & OECM strategy, as well as identified successes and achievements.

Indicative timeline: June 2026

Deliverables:

- **D2.1-** A report with brief compilation of the minutes of interviews.
- **D2.2-** Table of contents of the evaluation report.

Phase 3: Analysis and drafting of the evaluation report

This phase will produce a comprehensive evaluation report on the progress in the implementation of the MCPA & OECM strategy, based on the following elements:

- Where do we stand in implementing the outputs of the Strategy?
- What actions have been implemented and what results achieved since 2021, by country and at sub-regional and regional levels?
 - How effective were the management arrangements, capacities, and processes in delivering these results?
 - Which enabling factors or barriers influenced achievement of objectives and outcomes?
- What gaps and urgent efforts are needed to achieve the targets by 2030?
- What are the priority actions, measures to be taken, and challenges between now and 2030?
- Comprehensive evaluation report on the progress towards the 30x30 target at national, sub-regional and Mediterranean levels.

The consultants will also consider the results of the evaluation of the Mediterranean MPA Roadmap developed at the last Mediterranean MPA Forum (December 2021) — process that may be conducted in 2026.

Indicative timeline: July 2026—February 2027

Deliverables:

- **D3.1-** A first draft of the evaluation report for AGEM.
- **D3.2-** An advanced draft of the evaluation report for SPA/DB Focal Points and AGEM.
- **D3.3-** PowerPoint presentations for AGEM⁴ and for SPA/BD Focal Points⁵.
- **D3.4-** A final evaluation report with operational, prioritized and action-oriented recommendations for 2027–2030, to be presented at the 18th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (scheduled in May 2027).

N.B.1: Regular consultations with AGEM will be carried out to ensure the scientific and technical coherence of the evaluation. At least three meetings are therefore foreseen:

- A first meeting to present the first draft of the report to AGEM (planned for November 2026).
- A second meeting to present the advanced draft of the report to AGEM and, where relevant, to the SPA/DB Focal Points (planned for January 2027).

N.B.2: The final report of the external mid-term evaluation must be completed by mid-February 2027; however, the consultancy team leader may be invited in May 2027 to present the evaluation's outcomes at the 18th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points. This should be taken into account when planning expert availability and the intervention timeline.

⁴ Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean: A multidisciplinary ad hoc group of experts for marine protected areas in the Mediterranean set up to support the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) and the Contracting Parties to progress with the 2020 and post-2020 marine protected areas agenda in the Mediterranean and to work on related issues such as preparing guidelines, setting up definitions and measurable indicators, and tailoring global concepts and approaches to the Mediterranean context (COP 21 Decision IG.24/6)

⁵ Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity: Appropriately empowered persons appointed by the government or administrative bodies of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. They are responsible for policies on marine and coastal biodiversity and protected areas. They liaise with SPA/RAC to coordinate the implementation of the SPA/BD Protocol, assess the Centre's activities, and review technical documents and proposals (such as the SPAMI List) prior to their submission for adoption by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP)

IV. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

IV.1. Temporal scope

The mid-term evaluation will cover the period from the adoption of the MCPA & OECM strategy (on 10 December 2021) up to mid-2026, corresponding to the midpoint of its implementation and to the time when the mid-term evaluation will be carried out.

IV.2. Geographical scope

The evaluation will cover the entire Mediterranean region, including all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, as well as supporting actions implemented by relevant regional and international organizations active in the region. Assessments will be conducted primarily at the national level, and subsequently aggregated at sub-regional and regional levels. This approach is aligned with the Post-2020 SAPBIO evaluation methodology to enable a coherent, context-sensitive regional synthesis.

IV.3. Thematic scope

The evaluation will address all components of the MCPA & OECM strategy, including its five strategic pillars:

- Strategic pillar 1: MCPA and OECM governance
- Strategic pillar 2: MCPA network expansion
- Strategic pillar 3: OECMs
- Strategic pillar 4: MCPA management effectiveness
- Strategic pillar 5: Government and stakeholder action and support

V. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The evaluation will be strictly based on the Evaluation and monitoring framework of the MCPA & OECM strategy, adopted by COP 23 through Decision IG.26/5.

For each of the 20 outputs, the framework provides:

- Measurable indicators
- Mid-term targets
- Clearly defined means of verification

VI. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Phase	Deliverables
Phase 1: Collection of available data and information	<p>D1.1- A report including the bibliography and information sources, and a first rapid analysis.</p> <p>D1.2- A gap analysis identifying issues to be addressed in phase 2.</p> <p>D1.3- Questionnaire templates (English/French): one targeting SPA/BD Focal Points and another one targeting relevant regional and international organizations.</p> <p>D1.4- Interview guides (questions) for selected Focal Points and organizations.</p>
Phase 2: Development of questionnaires and interviews	<p>D2.1- A report with a brief compilation of the minutes of interviews.</p> <p>D2.2- Table of contents of the evaluation report.</p>
Phase 3: In-depth analysis and drafting of the evaluation report	<p>D3.1- A first draft of the evaluation report for AGEM.</p> <p>D3.2- An advanced draft of the evaluation report for SPA/DB Focal Points and AGEM.</p> <p>D3.3- PowerPoint presentations for AGEM and for SPA/BD Focal Points.</p> <p>D3.4- A final evaluation report with operational, prioritized and action-oriented recommendations for 2027–2030, to be presented at the 18th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (scheduled in May 2027).</p>

All deliverables shall be submitted in English; however, source data for analysis may be available primarily in English and French.

VII. SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The contract implementation will need about **80 (eighty) working days** starting from the date of the contract signature, until the completion of all tasks no later than **31 May 2027**, with the following tentative schedule:

Milestone / Activity	Timing
Preparation of the terms of reference and launch of the consultation by SPA/RAC	Early April – First half of April 2026
Evaluation of applications and selection of experts	End of April 2026
Launch of the consultancy	Early May 2026
Data collection phase (including questionnaires and interviews) [Deliverables D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D2.1, D2.2]	May – First half of July 2026
Online follow-up meeting (consultants and SPA/RAC)	End of June 2026
Data analysis and preparation of the first draft of the report by the consultants	June – Mid-September 2026
Submission of the first draft to SPA/RAC	Mid-September 2026
Review of the first draft by SPA/RAC and meetings with SPA/RAC (if needed)	Mid-September – Mid-October 2026
Integration of SPA/RAC feedback and submission of the revised draft to AGEM [Deliverable D3.1]	End of October 2026
Integration of input from the MPA Forum Roadmap evaluation process	November 2026 (To be confirmed)
Meeting with AGEM on the revised first draft	End of November 2026
Integration of AGEM comments and preparation of the advanced draft	December 2026
Meeting to present the advanced draft to AGEM, and possibly to SPA/BD Focal Points [Deliverables D3.2 and D3.3]	Mid-January 2027
Finalization of the evaluation report [Deliverable D3.4]	Mid-February 2027
Presentation of the final evaluation report at 18 th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points	End of May 2027

VIII. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following outlines the principal roles and responsibilities of each party involved in the evaluation to ensure clear governance, effective coordination and timely delivery of all tasks and deliverables.

- **SPA/RAC**
 - Overall process coordination
 - Recruitment and contract management of consultants
 - Facilitating access to data and stakeholders
 - Developing of a communication and awareness strategy to disseminate evaluation findings to Contracting Parties and national, regional and international organizations and stakeholders
- **External consultants**
 - Design and implementation of the methodology
 - Data collection and analysis
 - Preparation of all assignment deliverables
 - Presentation of findings and recommendations

- **AGEM**
 - Provision of key technical and advisory support throughout the process
 - Review and guidance on key milestones
- **Contracting Parties (SPA/BD Focal Points) and regional partners**
 - Provision of necessary data and information
 - Active participation in consultations
 - Validation of reports through the SPA/BD Focal Points

IX. CONSULTANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

SPA/RAC will recruit a two-expert consultancy team. Their combined expertise must meet the following qualifications to ensure a rigorous, regionally relevant and policy-oriented evaluation.

Consultant 1 – Team leader / Senior marine conservation and evaluation expert

The Team leader will be responsible for the overall coordination of the evaluation process and for ensuring its scientific and methodological integrity.

Required profile:

- **Education:** Advanced university degree (Master's or PhD) in marine sciences, conservation, environmental management, or a related field.
- **Experience:** At least 15 years of professional experience in marine conservation, specifically involving marine protected areas.
- **Strategic expertise:** Proven track record in developing strategic documents and conducting evaluations at regional or international levels
- **Technical knowledge:** Comprehensive understanding of MCPAs, OECMs, the 30x30 framework, the Mediterranean context, and Barcelona Convention processes.
- **Soft skills:** Strong analytical, synthesis, and report-writing skills.
- **Languages:** Excellent command of English; proficiency in French or other Mediterranean languages is highly desirable(*).

Consultant 2 – Marine conservation, evaluation and policy analysis expert

The second consultant will provide specialized expertise in monitoring and evaluation (M&E), indicator analysis, and data utilization.

Required profile:

- **Education:** University degree in marine sciences, conservation, environmental management, or a related field.
- **Experience:** At least 10 years of professional experience in marine conservation, including marine protected areas.
- **Strategic expertise:** Proven experience in developing or evaluating environmental strategies, programmes, and policies.
- **M&E Skills:** Expertise in analyzing indicators and results frameworks, with familiarity in regional and international reporting mechanisms.
- **Technical knowledge:** Practical knowledge of MCPAs and/or OECMs.
- **Soft skills:** Strong analytical and writing skills.
- **Languages:** Excellent command of English; proficiency in French or other Mediterranean languages is highly desirable(*).

(*) At least one of the two consultants must have a working command of French to facilitate communication with French-speaking stakeholders and support regional engagement.

ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIFICATIONS

ARTICLE 1 – CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

1.1. Eligibility

This call for consultancy is open to **individual consultants** only. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, candidates must apply as a **team of two (2) experts**, comprising:

- One (1) Team leader & Senior marine conservation and evaluation expert; and
- One (1) Marine conservation, evaluation and policy analysis expert.

The Team leader shall serve as the primary point of contact for SPA/RAC on behalf of the team and will be responsible for the overall coordination of the consultancy team's activities. Each consultant must provide documented evidence of the legal and professional qualifications required to perform the assignment successfully.

By submitting a bid, each bidder expressly declares that it has no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest in relation to this call for consultancy. A conflict of interest includes, but is not limited to, any situation where the bidder, or any related party:

- Has a financial, business, family, or personal relationship with the procuring entity, its staff, or its evaluation committee members;
- Has provided consulting or advisory services to the procuring entity on the same subject matter within the past [e.g., 12 months];
- Is participating in more than one call for the same contract through different legal entities or arrangements;
- Has access to confidential information not available to other bidders.

1.2. Contracting modalities

The selected experts may be contracted under one of the following two modalities:

- **Individual contracts:** Two separate contracts issued to each consultant; or
- **Joint contract:** A single contract governed by a formal association agreement between the consultants. This agreement must clearly identify the Team leader as the legal representative of the consultant association.

1.3. Application requirements

Regardless of the chosen contracting modality, the team must submit a **single, unified proposal**. This proposal must clearly specify the following for each consultant:

- **Division of labor:** A detailed breakdown of roles (who does what), outlining the specific tasks and responsibilities assigned to each expert.
- **Level of effort:** The exact number of working days allocated to each consultant.
- **Financial breakdown:** The specific remuneration amounts and fees corresponding to each expert.

ARTICLE 2 – COMPOSITION AND PRESENTATION OF THE OFFER

The submitted offer must be presented in three separate parts: (i) a technical offer, (ii) administrative documents, and (iii) a financial offer.

The services provided as part of this assignment are to be quoted as an all-inclusive, fixed, and non-revisable global cost.

2.1. Technical offer

The technical offer must include:

1. **Curriculum vitae (CV):** Updated CVs for both consultants, highlighting higher education degrees, professional experience, and references to relevant previous works, studies, and publications. **Key references must be highlighted in bold.** Applicants are encouraged to attach electronic copies of relevant past work or provide accessible web links.
2. **Methodological note:** A detailed note presenting the consultants' vision for the project. This should demonstrate alignment with the assignment's objectives and scope, the proposed methodological approach, the organization of work, and any relevant comments on the Terms of Reference (ToR).
3. **Work plan and schedule:** A detailed implementation timeline, including a chronogramme of intervention for each expert.

Note: The selection process may include interviews (via videoconference or phone), as well as a pre-selection phase followed by requests for additional information or negotiations, if required.

2.2. Administrative documents

The administrative folder must contain:

1. **Cover letter:** Outlining the consultants' suitability and motivation for the assignment.
2. **Proof of professional standing:** A document certifying the legal ability to practice this profession (e.g., a registration certificate) according to the legislation of the consultant's country, including a tax identification number. For academic professionals (Researchers or University staff), a sworn statement confirming compliance with the tax and fee legislation in force in their country of residence would be accepted.
3. **Declaration of independence and absence of conflict of interest:** A sworn statement confirming that the bidder is not in any situation of conflict of interest and is not subject to any incompatibility that could compromise their independence or impartiality during the assignment.
4. **Signed Terms of Reference:** The present ToR, signed and dated by the provider on the final page.

If original administrative documents are not in English, they must be accompanied by a certified translation into English or French.

Missing documents: Should any administrative documents be missing, the tenderer will be contacted to provide them within **five (05) calendar days**. If the file remains incomplete after this period, the offer will be automatically disqualified.

2.3. Financial offer

The financial offer must be expressed in **US Dollars (USD)**, providing both **net (tax-free)** and **all-tax-included** prices. It must cover all costs associated with the provision of the service.

The financial offer must include:

- **Submission letter:** Using the template provided in [Annex 3](#).
- **Detailed global price breakdown:** Using the template provided in [Annex 4](#).

It is important to note that the financial offer should detail the number of working days (person-days), as well as the allocation of funds to each of the various tasks and deliverables.

ARTICLE 3 – SUBMISSION

Offers must be received electronically at the following e-mail address: procurement@spa-rac.org, with the date of electronic transmission as the reference, and indicating in the subject line:

Call for consultancy No. 09/2026_SPA/RAC – MCPA & OECM strategy mid-term evaluation – [the Applicant name].

The deadline for receiving proposals is set for **28 April 2026, at 23.59 UTC+1 (Tunis Time)**. Any proposal received by SPA/RAC after this date and time will not be considered.

ARTICLE 4 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Should questions or need for clarification related to these terms of reference and their content arise, bidders may submit a written request by e-mail to: procurement@spa-rac.org, no later than **five (5) calendar days** before the deadline for the proposal submission.

ARTICLE 5 – MAXIMUM BUDGET

The maximum available budget for this study is **25 000 USD ATI (including VAT)**. Any financial proposal exceeding this amount will be **automatically disqualified**.

ARTICLE 6 – TERMS OF PAYMENT

Payments under this contract shall be made within **thirty (30) days** of receipt of a valid invoice and all required supporting documentation, subject to validation by SPA/RAC. The payment schedule is as follows:

- **30%** upon submission of deliverables **D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, and D1.4**, following review and formal approval by SPA/RAC.
- **60%** upon submission of deliverables **D2.1, D2.2, and D3.1**, following review and formal approval by SPA/RAC.
- **10%** upon submission of deliverables **D3.2, D3.3, and D3.4**, and the issuance of a **Final acceptance certificate** by SPA/RAC, confirming that the consultants have fulfilled all contractual obligations to the satisfaction of SPA/RAC.

Payment modalities: All payments will be made by **bank transfer** upon receipt of an invoice from the contractor. Payments shall be made to a **bank account held by the bidder** in their **country of residence** where they are officially registered for tax purposes.

Travel and subsistence: Travel and accommodation expenses (including airfare, lodging, catering, local transportation, and travel insurance) required for the performance of this assignment will be **fully covered by SPA/RAC**. These costs will be managed through direct payment and the provision of Daily Subsistence Allowances (DSA) in accordance with standard UNEP rules and regulations.

ARTICLE 7 – EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The evaluation must be conducted with total impartiality. Any previous involvement of the consultants in the design or implementation of the programmes being evaluated must be disclosed and may lead to disqualification if it compromises the independence of the evaluation.

The evaluation will be based on combined technical and financial criteria as follows:

7.1. Technical evaluation

The technical offer(s) will be first examined, while the financial offer(s) remain sealed.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- i. Individual consultants' experience and diploma;
- ii. The methodology proposed for conducting the assignment; and
- iii. The planning and detailed time schedule (including a chronogramme of intervention).

Criteria		Scoring	
Consultant 1 – Team leader / Senior marine conservation and evaluation expert	Experience	Proven experience in marine conservation, specifically involving marine protected areas	15 points maximum (4 points/reference + 1 additional point/reference in the Mediterranean)
		Proven experience in developing strategic documents and conducting evaluations at regional or international levels	5 points maximum (2 points/reference)
	Diploma	Advanced university degree (Master's or PhD) in marine sciences, conservation, environmental management, or a related discipline	5 points maximum
		A university degree in the abovementioned or a related discipline	2.5 points
		No university degree in the above-mentioned or a related discipline	0 point <i>(In this case the offer is eliminated)</i>
	Consultant 2 – Marine conservation, evaluation and policy analysis expert	Experience	Proven experience in marine conservation, including marine protected areas
Proven experience in developing or evaluating environmental strategies, programmes, and policies			5 points maximum (2 points/reference)
Diploma		University degree in marine sciences, conservation, environmental management, or a related field	5 points maximum
		No university degree in the above-mentioned or a related discipline	0 point <i>(In this case the offer is eliminated)</i>
The methodology proposed for conducting the	a. The methodology proposed for	Methodology clearly presented, well developed and meets the study terms of reference and objectives (the	40 points maximum

mission, the planning and detailed time schedule (including a chronogramme of intervention)	conducting the mission	<u>presentation of improvements and innovations is desirable</u>	
		Methodology clearly presented, fairly well developed and meets the study terms of reference and objectives	30 points
		Methodology not well developed but meets the terms of reference and objectives	20 points
		Methodology not clearly presented and does not meet the study terms of reference and objectives, or No methodology presented	0 point <i>(In this case, the offer is eliminated)</i>
	b. The planning and detailed time schedule (including a chronogramme of intervention)	Realistic planning clearly presented, coherent with the time schedule considering the requested time for reports validation and with the chronogramme of intervention	<u>10 points maximum</u>
		Realistic planning but more or less well presented, fairly coherent with the time schedule and with the chronogramme of intervention	5 points
		Planning unclearly presented, doesn't respect the deadline, or no planning, or no time schedule or no chronogramme of intervention	0 points <i>(In this case, the offer eliminated)</i>
Total score (100 points maximum)		... points	

Any offer that has not attained the **minimum score of 70points** will be eliminated.

In the event of no offer obtains 70points or more, the call for consultancy will be declared unsuccessful.

7.2. Financial evaluation

Once the technical evaluation has been completed, the financial offers of applicants that have not been eliminated during the technical evaluation will be examined.

The evaluation committee will check that the financial offers do not contain any obvious arithmetical errors. Any possible obvious arithmetical errors will be corrected, and the corrected figures will be taken into consideration.

The evaluation committee will then proceed to a financial comparison. The lowest financial offer that is judged acceptable will receive 100 points. The other offers will be attributed a score based on the following equation:

$$\text{Financial score} = (\text{amount of the lowest accepted offer}/\text{amount of the considered offer}) \times 100$$

7.3. Conclusions of the evaluation committee

The choice of the best offer is achieved by weighting the technical and financial scores using a distribution key of **80/20** basis. To this end:

- The technical score will be multiplied by a coefficient of 0.80.
- The financial score will be multiplied by a coefficient of 0.20.

The weighted technical - financial scores thus calculated will be added to ascertain the offer with the best technical and financial score.

If two offers obtain the same weighted technical-financial scores, preference will be given to the applicant in the following order:

- Having obtained the best technical score.
- Having obtained the best score for methodology.
- Having obtained the best total score for experience and qualifications of the consultants.

ARTICLE 8 – MONITORING, CONTROL AND VALIDATION OF THE WORK

The consultants will work under the supervision of SPA/RAC, which is responsible for overall process coordination.

The consultants will submit draft version of each deliverable as indicated in sections [VI](#) (Expected deliverables) and [VII](#) (Schedule for implementation). The consultants will submit the final versions of deliverables considering the SPA/RAC, AGEM members or Contracting Parties inputs as indicated in sections VI (Expected deliverables) and VII (Schedule for implementation) of the technical specifications.

ARTICLE 9 – DURATION OF THE CONTRACT

The contract implementation will need about **80 (eighty) working days** starting from the date of the contract signature, until the completion of all tasks no later than **31 May 2027**, with the following tentative schedule:

ARTICLE 10 – PENALTIES

In the absence of completion by the tenderer of the services at his charge within the contractual deadlines envisaged in [Article 9](#) (Duration of the contract), it will be applied as of right and without notice, a penalty of one three hundredth (1/300) of the total amount of the contract for each calendar day of delay.

The amount of the late penalties will be deducted from the accounts. The amount of the penalties is **capped at 5%** of the total amount of the contract. When this limit is reached, SPA/RAC reserves the right to terminate the contract at the service provider's fault, in accordance with [Article 15](#) (Cancellation conditions), and without that the service provider can raise disputes or claim any compensation.

ARTICLE 11 – INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, OWNERSHIP OF DOCUMENT

All legal rights throughout the world in works or inventions created by the provider in connection with consultancy will remain the property of SPA/RAC. The provider recognizes that such rights include, but are not limited to, copyright and other rights in written material, sound and video recordings (including films), maps, photographs, etc. as well as patents and other rights in inventions, and that the said rights enable SPA/RAC to control and authorize, where appropriate, all publications, publicity material and other exploitation of the said works and inventions.

All the plans, drawings, software, photos, videos, data, presentations, study reports and any other documents, elaborated and submitted by the provider to SPA/RAC for the execution of the present contract, will become and remain the property of SPA/RAC, and the consultant will submit all of them to SPA/RAC.

The provider does not have the right to use or copy the products resulting from this consultancy whatever their form or their media, without the explicit written non objection of the SPA/RAC.

ARTICLE 12 – ARBITRAGE, DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

Every dispute arising from or in connection with this contract execution shall be solved by way of amicable negotiations by the parties. The contract is deemed to have been made in Tunisia and to be subject to Tunisian law. In case of dispute, the Court of Tunis is competent.

ARTICLE 13 – LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

SPA/RAC does not accept any liability for acts of third parties, accidents, sickness, losses of any kind, however caused arising during the implementation of the specific actions and the production of the relative outputs expected. The bidder confirms that themselves or any involved staff will be covered by appropriate insurance.

ARTICLE 14 – FORCE MAJEURE

Force majeure means any event outside the control of a party so that it is impossible for one party to carry out his obligations or the implementation of these obligations becomes so difficult that it is considered to be impossible to carry them out under such circumstances.

The party which invokes force majeure must inform its co-contractor within seven (7) days of its occurrence so that the contractual deadline will be suspended with a joint agreement between the parties for the period which is covered by the case of force majeure.

SPA/RAC has a right to assess the circumstances of the impediments invoked by the holder as a case of force majeure to see if they are convincing, and if this should not be the case, then the days of discontinued work will be accounted for as days of delay.

Failure by either party to fulfil any of its contractual obligations does not entail a contract termination or failure to fulfil its contractual obligations if such a failure is due to a case of force majeure, if the party that finds itself in such a situation has done the following:

- a) Has taken all the reasonable precautions and measures to allow it to comply with the terms and conditions of the contract; and
- b) Has informed the other party of the event, as soon as possible. Any timeline given to a party for the execution of its contractual obligation will be prolonged by a period which is equal to the period during which that party was prevented from fulfilling its obligations.

Any timeline given to a party for the execution of its contractual obligations will be prolonged by a period which is equal to the period during which that party was unable to fulfil its obligations due to the case of force majeure.

ARTICLE 15 – CANCELLATION CONDITIONS

SPA/RAC may cancel this contract by providing written notification to the consultant(s) upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

- a) Non-compliance with the execution deadlines as stipulated in [Article 9](#) (Duration of the contract);
- b) Cases described in [Article 10](#) (Penalties), specifically when penalties reach the **5% cap** of the total contract amount;
- c) Non-conformity with the technical specifications or the scope of work defined in the tender documents;
- d) If the consultant(s) enter into bankruptcy, insolvency, or receivership;
- e) If, following a case of *force majeure*, the consultant(s) are unable to execute a substantial part of the Services for a period of at least sixty (60) days;
- f) If the consultant(s) are found to be involved in corrupt or fraudulent practices during the selection process or contract execution. For the purpose of this clause:

- "Corruption" refers to offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting any advantage to influence the action of a public official,
 - "Fraudulent practices" refer to any misrepresentation or manipulation of facts to influence the selection process or contract execution to the detriment of SPA/RAC (the Contracting Authority). This includes collusive practices among tenderers to artificially manipulate prices and undermine free and open competition;
- g) If SPA/RAC, at its sole discretion and for any reason, decides to terminate the contract.

ARTICLE 16 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

16.1. Prohibition of incompatible activities

The consultants, including all members of the consultancy team and their personnel, shall not engage, directly or indirectly, in any professional or commercial activities during the contract implementation period that may conflict or be incompatible with the duties entrusted to them under the present contract.

16.2. Restrictions on subsequent activities

The consultants, whether contracted individually or as an association, are prohibited during the contract period and following its completion from providing goods, works, or services for any project resulting from or closely connected to the Services provided under this contract (except for the direct implementation or continuation of the present contract services).

16.3. Duty to disclose

The consultants have an ongoing obligation to disclose to SPA/RAC any situation that arises during the performance of the contract that may constitute an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Failure to do so may result in the immediate termination of the contract.

ANNEX 1 – EVALUATION AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR THE POST-2020 REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR MARINE AND COASTAL PROTECTED AREAS AND OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Output	Indicator	Mid-term target 2026	Final target 2030	Means of verification
The Strategy overall target: By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well connected, ecologically representative and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring adequate geographical balance, with the focus on areas particularly important for biodiversity				
--	% coverage of MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean Sea	15% of the Mediterranean Sea	30% of the Mediterranean Sea	MAPAMED database ¹
Strategic Outcome 1: Governance arrangements for MCPAs and OECMs are inclusive and effective in delivering conservation and livelihood outcomes				
Output 1.1: Legal frameworks and institutional arrangements of MCPAs and OECMs allow for opportunities for participatory management	Number of Contracting Parties with legal frameworks and institutional arrangements of MCPAs allowing for opportunities for participatory management.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	National reports
	Number of Contracting Parties with legal frameworks and institutional arrangements of OECMs allowing for opportunities for participatory management, considering the objectives of such OECMs.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	Official data provided by the Contracting Parties
Output 1.2: Governance arrangements for MCPAs and OECMs are inclusive and equitable	Number of Contracting Parties with governance structures and mechanisms (e.g., a national commission or other) for MCPAs established and functional, that facilitates inclusive and equitable governance.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties

¹ SPA/RAC should ensure that the MAPAMED database is expanded to cover all the indicators agreed upon under this Evaluation and Monitoring Framework, and includes coastal protected areas, provided that relevant data and information are shared by the Contracting Parties to inform the MAPAMED database for these indicators.

	Number of Contracting Parties with appropriate procedures and mechanisms for the effective participation of and/or coordination with other stakeholders in OECM processes.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	
Output 1.3: National, regional, transboundary and cross sectoral co-operation for the establishment and management of MCPAs and OECMs are strengthened	Number of Contracting Parties with multi-sectoral cooperation tools (e.g., committees, consultations, agreements, etc.) for MCPAs or OECMs established. Number of transboundary co-operation agreements for MCPAs or OECMs.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention 3 Agreements	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention 5 Agreements	National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties
Output 1.4: Adaptive planning and management frameworks of MCPAs and OECMs that anticipate, learn from and respond to changes in decision-making are strengthened	Number of MCPAs that have management plans. % of MCPAs applying adaptive management. % of OECMs that have flexible procedures in place to ensure that results from monitoring, evaluation, consultation, and multiple knowledge sources are used to inform management and planning processes.	50% of MCPAs 50% of MCPAs 50% of OECMs	100% of MCPAs 100% of MCPAs 100% of OECMs	MAPAMED database
Strategic Outcome 2: MCPA coverage increased through the expansion of soundly-designed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of MCPAs				
Output 2.1: Areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services are identified	Number of Contracting Parties that have identified areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, serving to inform MCPAs establishment process.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties
Output 2.2: Distribution of MCPA systems across the Mediterranean Sea is balanced	The unbalanced MCPA distribution between the 4 Mediterranean sub-regions (Adriatic Sea; Aegean - Levantine Sea; Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean Sea; and Western Mediterranean Sea) is reduced.	The unbalanced distribution is reduced by 50%	The distribution is balanced	MAPAMED database

	<u>Baseline: % coverage of MPAs per Mediterranean sub-region²:</u> Adriatic Sea: 4.8% Aegean - Levantine Sea: 2.1% Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean Sea: 1.8% Western Mediterranean Sea: 20.4%			
Output 2.3: MCPA coverage in areas beyond national jurisdiction is increased	The coverage of MPAs in ABNJ ³ is increased. <u>Baseline: % coverage of MPAs in ABNJ: (less than 1.85%)⁴</u>	The coverage of MPAs in ABNJ is increased by 50%	The coverage of MPAs in ABNJ is increased by 100%	MAPAMED database
Output 2.4: The number and coverage of MCPAs with enhanced protection levels is increased	% coverage of NTZs ⁵ within MCPAs/OECMs. <u>Baseline: % cumulative surface of no-go, no-take or no-fishing area⁶: 0.04%</u>	2% of the Mediterranean Sea	5% of the Mediterranean Sea	MAPAMED database National reports
Strategic Outcome 3: Marine and coastal OECMs in the Mediterranean are identified, recognized and reported towards post-2020 global and regional targets				
Output 3.1: Awareness in Contracting Parties and stakeholders on OECMs enhanced and guidance for the application of OECM criteria provided	Number of Contracting Parties that established processes to evaluate the application and identification of OECMs, applying the guidance for application of OECM criteria.	50% of the States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	100% of the States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties
Output 3.2: OECMs identified, recognized and reported to regional and global databases by Contracting Parties and regional organizations	Surface of OECMs recognized and reported.	OECM surface complementing MPA surface to 15%	OECM surface complementing MPA surface to 30%	MAPAMED database

² Source: SPA/RAC and MedPAN, MAPAMED 2019 edition.

³ The extent of ABNJ in the Mediterranean depends on the number of EEZs declared by coastal States. If all the coastal States declare their EEZ, there will be no more ABNJ.

⁴ Figure to be updated by SPA/RAC on the following versions of the draft document (information requested from the Pelagos Agreement Permanent Secretariat).

⁵ No-Take Zones are geographically defined zones within marine protected areas that do not allow any fishing, mining, drilling, or other extractive activities.

⁶ Source: MedPAN: The Mediterranean MPA management database, 2021.

Output 3.3: Effectiveness of identified OECMs is enhanced, including through prioritization in cross-sectoral marine spatial planning	Number of OECMs included within MSP measures adopted by the Contracting Parties using OECMs to contribute to the 30% target for the Mediterranean. Number of projects to evaluate the effectiveness of OECMs.	3 OECMs 3 projects	6 OECMs 6 projects	National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties
Output 3.4: New OECMs are established and recognized OECMs expanded	Guidance document on future OECM designation, recognition and reporting Number of new OECMs established at Mediterranean level contributing to the 30% collective target on protected areas and OECMs.	1 10 OECMs	-- 20 OECMs	Guidance document MAPAMED database
Strategic Outcome 4: MCPAs are effectively managed and their conservation outcomes successfully delivered				
Output 4.1: All MCPAs have adaptive management plans adopted, effectively implemented and periodically reviewed	MCPAs have adaptive management plans adopted, effectively implemented and periodically reviewed.	50% of MCPAs	100% of MCPAs	MAPAMED database
Output 4.2: Sufficient and sustainable resources for the establishment and management of MCPAs in the Mediterranean are mobilized	% of MCPAs where financial constraints are not threatening the capacity of management to achieve the site's objectives.	50% of MCPAs	100% of MCPAs	MAPAMED database
Output 4.3: Individual and institutional capacity for MCPA management is enhanced	% of MPCAs with adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff provided by the responsible entity. Number of Contracting Parties with MCPA institutions in place.	50% of MCPAs 11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	100% of MCPAs All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	MAPAMED database National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties

Output 4.4: Surveillance and enforcement in MCPAs are strengthened and ensured, and user compliance is promoted	% MCPAs having regular surveillance.	50% of MCPAs	100% of MCPAs	National reports MAPAMED database
Output 4.5: Monitoring of conservation outcomes and evaluation of management effectiveness are strengthened across the MCPA system	% MCPAs with regular monitoring identifying biological threat and socio-economic indicators	50% of MCPAs	100% of MCPAs	MAPAMED database
	% MCPAs carrying out regular site-level management effectiveness evaluations	50% of MCPAs	100% of MCPAs	
Strategic Outcome 5: Actions and support for MCPAs and OECMs are mobilized				
Output 5.1: Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the values of, and threats to, MCPAs and OECMs across government and non-government stakeholders, the private sector, the youth and wider society	Number of Contracting Parties with targeted communication and awareness strategies as standalone or as part of other national activities.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties Stakeholder survey
	Number of CPs having education programmes including MCPAs and OECMs.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	
	% of positive attitudes towards MCPAs/OECMs across wide stakeholder groups.	30% positive attitudes towards MCPAs/OECMs	60% positive attitudes towards MCPAs/OECMs	
Output 5.2: Political support for the establishment and management of MCPAs and biodiversity conservation is increased	% of MCPAs receiving regular adequate funds from government budgets for management.	50% of MCPAs	100% of MCPAs	National reports Official data provided by the Contracting Parties
	Number of Contracting Parties that consider MCPAs in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Spatial Planning processes.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	
Output 5.3: The contribution of MPCAs and OECMs to sustainable development goals, the blue economy, climate change mitigation and	Number of Contracting Parties with MCPA/OECM considerations included into national plans and policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.	11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention	National reports Official data provided by the

<p>adaptation, and the wider society are recognized and accounted for</p>	<p>Number of Contracting Parties with MCPA/OECM considerations included into national plans and policies for sustainable blue economy growth.</p> <p>Number of national Public Relation (PR) and awareness initiatives in relation with MCPA/OECM targeting the wider society</p>	<p>11 States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention</p> <p>1 per Contracting Party</p>	<p>All States Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention</p> <p>2 per Contracting Party</p>	<p>Contracting Parties</p> <p>Media produced (social media platforms, videos, etc.)</p>
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ANNEX 2 – THE MEDITERRANEAN MCPA & OECM STRATEGY

1. Objectives of the strategy

Adopted by the 22nd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 22) (Antalya, Türkiye, 7–10 December 2021) through Decision IG.25/12⁶, the Post-2020 regional strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean⁷ (hereinafter referred to as the “MCPA & OECM strategy”) constitutes the main regional framework aimed at strengthening the conservation and effective management of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean by 2030.

The strategy notably aims to:

- Contribute concretely to the achievement of the 30x30 target of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Improve the representativeness, connectivity, management effectiveness and governance of MCPAs and OECMs.
- Strengthen regional cooperation and alignment between national and regional efforts.

Its two main targets are:

- i. By 2030, at least 30 per cent of the Mediterranean Sea is protected and conserved through well-connected, ecologically representative and effectively managed systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, ensuring an adequate geographical balance and focusing on areas of particular importance for biodiversity.
- ii. By 2030, the number and coverage of marine and coastal protected areas with increased levels of protection are expanded, thereby contributing to the recovery of marine ecosystems.

2. Evaluation of the strategy

The strategy provides for an external mid-term evaluation to be conducted in 2026. This evaluation will assess progress against the strategy’s indicators and recommend any adjustments needed to increase the likelihood of meeting the post-2020 targets. Mid-term findings and proposed amendments will be presented at the 2027 COP of the Barcelona Convention, and an effective communication and awareness plan will be implemented to share results with Contracting Parties, national and regional authorities, international organizations, and other stakeholders.

The strategy also provides for a final external evaluation toward the end of the strategy period (scheduled for 2030). This evaluation will focus on lessons learned and on barriers or enabling factors that affected achievement of the intended outcomes. The 2030 evaluation and its recommendations will inform development of the next strategy for 2031–2040; findings will be presented at the 2031 COP and distributed to the wider stakeholder community.

⁶ Decision IG.25/12 - Protecting and conserving the Mediterranean through well connected and effective systems of marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Specially Protected Areas and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/api/core/bitstreams/ac5e18e3-6e1e-4426-b5e6-19766632fae2/content>

⁷ UNEP/MAP - SPA/RAC, 2021. Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean. Ed. SPA/RAC, Tunis: 47 pp + Appendix:

https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_spa/mcpa_oecm_strategy.pdf

3. Evaluation and monitoring framework of the strategy

By Decision IG.26/5⁸, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, at their COP 23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5–8 December 2023), adopted the Evaluation and monitoring framework for the MCPA & OECM strategy⁹ – developed in close consultation with the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean¹⁰ (AGEM). On this basis, SPA/RAC is mandated to conduct the strategy's mid-term and final evaluations, scheduled for 2026 and 2030, respectively.

This evaluation framework includes, for each of the 20 outputs of the strategy, specific indicators, mid-term and final targets, and clearly identified means of verification (such as the MAPAMED¹¹ database, national reports, data provided by Contracting Parties).

4. Objectives of the mid-term evaluation

At the midpoint between the adoption of the MCPA & OECM strategy in 2021 and the 2030 deadline, conducting a mid-term evaluation represents a key strategic milestone. It will allow to:

- Assess progress made by the Contracting Parties and regional and international stakeholders.
- Evaluate the ecological effectiveness of the regional MCPA and OECM network, including its contribution to biodiversity recovery, ecosystem resilience, and ecological connectivity across the Mediterranean, beyond the sole assessment of its spatial expansion.
- Identify gaps, challenges and opportunities.
- Provide conclusions and recommendations.
- Guide priority actions to be implemented during the remaining period until 2030.

This evaluation therefore represents a critical regional milestone to ensure that implementation of the strategy effectively contributes to international and regional commitments on marine biodiversity conservation, and that the growing network of MCPAs and OECMs delivers tangible ecological outcomes for the Mediterranean marine environment.

5. Link with the Post-2020 SAPBIO evaluation

The mid-term evaluation of the MCPA & OECM strategy will be conducted in coherence with the first assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of natural resources in the Mediterranean region (Post-2020 SAPBIO), which is scheduled for 2027. Preparatory work for this evaluation will begin in 2026.

In this context, SPA/RAC has recently developed a set of Post-2020 SAPBIO evaluation indicators, which will be discussed and validated at meetings of the SAPBIO Advisory Committee and National Correspondents scheduled for the first half of 2026.

The Monitoring Framework for the assessment of the collective implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO¹², developed by SPA/RAC in 2025, did not address the Post-2020 SAPBIO targets on MCPAs

⁸ Decision IG.26/5 - Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and Ecosystem Restoration: <https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/api/core/bitstreams/713c1596-ff30-4cbb-ada7-457dda82c09b/content>

⁹ Cf. Annex I to Decision IG.26/5: page 290–296

¹⁰ A multidisciplinary ad hoc group of experts for marine protected areas in the Mediterranean set up to support the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) and the Contracting Parties to progress with the 2020 and post-2020 marine protected areas agenda in the Mediterranean and to work on related issues such as preparing guidelines, setting up definitions and measurable indicators, and tailoring global concepts and approaches to the Mediterranean context (COP 21 Decision IG.24/6)

¹¹ The Database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean: <https://www.mapamed.org/>

¹² UNEP/MAP, 2025. Monitoring Framework for the assessment 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), 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, UNEP/MED IG.27/Inf.21: <https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/api/core/bitstreams/e0993046-fc95-4850-a5ed-fe5a65d14e6d/content>

and OECMs. This is because these targets are covered by the Evaluation and monitoring framework for the MCPA & OECM strategy.

This is why the two evaluation processes are complementary and closely linked. Conducting them in parallel helps to ensure methodological coherence, optimize data collection and use, and align analyses and recommendations related to MCPAs and OECMs.

The results of the mid-term evaluation of the MCPA & OECM strategy will inform the Post-2020 SAPBIO evaluation in 2027, providing an integrated assessment of regional progress in marine and coastal biodiversity conservation, sustainable natural resources management, and sustainable livelihoods. They will also inform the identification of priority actions for MCPAs and OECMs towards 2030.

6. Link with other relevant processes

The mid-term evaluation of the MCPA & OECM strategy will be conducted in the context of multiple complementary regional processes to ensure coherence, avoid duplication and maximize uptake of findings.

The mid-term evaluation will, where relevant, explicitly seek synergies with existing fisheries OECM work led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), while support for non-fisheries OECMs can be further promoted through the Barcelona Convention and related regional initiatives. The mid-term evaluation results and recommendations will also take into account existing FAO/GFCM fisheries OECM outputs and help identify where additional Barcelona Convention support is needed for non-fisheries OECMs, thereby informing the identification of priority actions for MCPAs and OECMs towards 2030.

The evaluation process will also seek synergies with other initiatives led by SPA/RAC and the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), notably the Mediterranean MPA Forum¹³ process, its Post-2020 Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Roadmap, and the related mechanism for tracking collective progress through a call for commitments to all MPA stakeholders.

The process will further coordinate with the jointly managed MAPAMED database and the periodic Mediterranean MPA status report, ensuring that data and findings flow between the evaluation and these existing reporting tools to optimize data use and avoid duplicative requests to national and local authorities.

¹³ The Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean: <https://www.medmpaforum.org/>



Mediterranean
Action Plan
Barcelona
Convention



ANNEX 3 – SUBMISSION LETTER

We, the undersigned(full name of Expert 1, Full name of Expert 2).....,

After having taken due note of the dossier documents of the call for tenders No., launched by, pertaining to a mission of

We hereby pledge to execute the requested services in conformity with the provisions defined in the documents referred to, for the prices as established by ourselves knowing that the stamp duties and registration are to be covered by the tenderer.

The total price (all taxes included) of our bid is (.....) US Dollars.

We take due note of the fact that you are not obliged to proceed with the tendering procedure and that we cannot claim a compensation.

we pledge that the conditions in our tender will remain valid for a period of one hundred and twenty days (120 days) starting from the day after the date for the deadline for the receipt of tenders.

Date:

(Name, first name and signature of Expert 1)

(Name, first name and signature of Expert 2)

ANNEX 4 – DETAILS OF TOTAL PRICE

The bidder, in support of its bid, should provide a breakdown of each unit price according to the following model:

(US\$)

Designation	Unit price	Phase1		Phase 2		Phase3...		Total Phases (1+2+3...)	
		Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total
Fees									
Expert 1 (full name)									
Expert 2 ((full name))									
Other costs									
Travel and accommodation									
Other costs necessary for the proper execution of the present consultancy									
Sub-total / task (Excluding VAT)									
TOTAL Excluding VAT									
VAT Amount									
TOTAL All Taxes Included									

Amount of the offer excluding Tax is fixed at the sum of

Amount of the VAT is fixed at the sum of

Amount of the offer is fixed at the sum of All Taxes Included (ATI).

Date:

(Name, first name and signature of Expert 1)

(Name, first name and signature of Expert 2)