



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention



CALL FOR CONSULTANCY N°03/2026_SPA/RAC_ MARINE LITTER MED PLUS PROJECT

Update the Guidance Factsheet for IMAP Common Indicator 24 (EO10 Marine Litter)

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

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

I- CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

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 the creation 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.

2. Background

The **Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP)** is a regional framework adopted in **2016** (Decision IG.22/7) by the Contracting Parties to the **Barcelona Convention** and its third Cycle was adopted in 2025 (Decision IG.27/6). It operationalizes the **Ecosystem Approach (EcAp)** by establishing a harmonized system to **monitor and assess the Mediterranean Sea and coast** based on region-wide agreed Ecological Objectives (EOs) and Common Indicators (CIs) in a harmonized and integrated manner. Its ultimate aim is to support **evidence-based management of human activities** and achieve **Good Environmental Status (GES)** in the Mediterranean.

In the Mediterranean, marine litter represents a major environmental challenge due to its extensive presence and its documented effects on marine fauna. To address this issue, the UNEP/MAP system adopted the first legally binding **Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean** (Decisions IG.21/7) followed by its update (Decision IG.25/9).

The Regional Plan supports the implementation of IMAP, in particular its Ecological Objective 10 (**EO10**) which focuses on marine litter. EO10 comprises of 4 CIs, of which **Common Indicator 24 (CI24)** "Trends in the amount of litter ingested by or entangling marine organisms focusing on selected mammals, marine birds and marine turtles", focuses on ingestion and entanglement of marine litter by sea turtles.

Guidance Factsheets have been developed for EO10 Common Indicators to ensure harmonized and consistent monitoring and to strengthen the application of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) in the Mediterranean, as well as to ensure the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES). These factsheets define specific objectives and serve as essential references for Contracting Parties, supporting them in the revision and implementation of their national monitoring programs

The Guidance Factsheet for CI24 was developed and reviewed by the Meeting of the Correspondence Group on Monitoring on Marine Litter (CORMON, Madrid, 28 February–2 March 2017) and the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (Rome, 29–31 May 2017).

Since 2017, and in the framework of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED I, Marine Litter MED II and Marine Litter MED Plus Projects, substantial progress has been made towards strengthening CI24 monitoring and assessment:

- i. The sea turtle species *Caretta caretta* was identified as the most representative species to focus on under CI24, having a particular focus on ingestion and entanglement of marine litter.
- ii. A harmonized monitoring protocol for marine litter–sea turtles' interactions (ingestion and entanglement) was developed in collaboration with the EU-funded INDICIT project
- iii. A regional operational strategy for CI24 monitoring was elaborated.
- iv. National Operational Strategies and IMAP-based monitoring programmes for CI24 were developed and implemented in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, and are under finalization in Algeria, Egypt and Libya.
- v. Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for CI24 were developed, validated and are operational through national IMAP data systems.
- vi. Updated Baseline Values (BVs) and establishment of Threshold Values (TVs) for CI24 were established.

Through Decision IG.27/6 of COP 24, the Contracting Parties adopted the EcAp Policy and Roadmap 2026-2035 and the Third Cycle of IMAP, with an emphasis on further enhancing IMAP implementation, strengthening national monitoring capacities, ensuring quality-assured data streams and enhancing the reliability of regional assessments. In this regard, a substantive upgrade took place for IMAP EO10 including upgrading Candidate Common Indicator 24 to full Common Indicator.

Further to the upgrade of Common Indicator CI24, there is a need to update the respective Guidance Factsheet. This revision is essential to ensure that recent scientific knowledge, updated protocols, regional datasets, MED QSR recommendations, operational strategies and ongoing work on Baseline and Threshold Values are fully reflected.

II- OBJECTIVE

The objective of this call of consultancy is to engage a regional/international expert to support updating the Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicator 24 (IMAP EO10), to be submitted for review and endorsement by respective MAP technical/institutional Meetings, including the CORMON Marine Litter and MED POL FPs Meetings to be held in 2026-2027.

III- TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

In his/her capacity as an expert on marine pollution in the Mediterranean, and specifically on marine litter and interactions with marine biodiversity, the consultant will contribute to the implementation of the following tasks:

- Conduct a critical analysis of the 2017 Guidance Factsheet for CI24 and prepare a diagnostic report summarizing the findings, methodological gaps, and recommendations for improvement.
- Develop an updated version of the Guidance Factsheet for CI24.
- Finalise the updated version by incorporating the comments provided during the MAP technical/institutional Meetings (CORMON Marine Litter and MED POL FPs Meetings to be held in 2026-2027)

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the SPA/RAC Programme Officer responsible for the Species Programme and the overall supervision of the SPA/RAC Director. The work will be closely coordinated with the Marine Litter MED Plus Project Management Unit (MED POL). The consultant may be invited to specific online meetings involving SPA/RAC and MED POL, as required.

IV- EXPECTED DELIVERABLES, ESTIMATED WORKING DAYS, AND DEADLINES

The time duration of this contract is three (03) months starting from the date of its signature. The maximum number of effective working days needed to perform this assignment is **seven (07)** effective working days.

The deliverables and their submission deadline are as follows:

Deliverables	Estimated effective working days	Deadlines
Deliverable 1: A methodological note and workplan outlining the proposed approach, steps, and timeline for the update process.	1 day	five days after the signature of the contract
Deliverable 2: A Draft diagnostic report presenting the critical analysis of the 2017 IMAP Common Indicator 24 factsheet, including identified gaps and recommendations for improvement	1 day	25 March 2026
Deliverable 3: A Final diagnostic report incorporating comments received from SPA/RAC and MED POL if any.	1 day	31 March 2026
Deliverable 4: A draft updated version of the IMAP Common Indicator 24 factsheet.	2 days	5 April 2026
Deliverable 5: the draft updated version of the IMAP Common Indicator 24 factsheet incorporating comments received from SPA/RAC and MED POL	2days	10 April 2026

The consultant will inform SPA/RAC of any circumstances that may hinder or delay the execution of the operations provided for in this call for consultancy.

V- SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF CONSULTANTS

The consultant is expected to have the following profile, skills, and expertise:

- Advanced experience in the study of marine litter impacts on marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean region is required.

- Relevant experience in developing: (i) monitoring and assessment studies on marine species, and (ii) indicator-based assessments of biodiversity and pressures affecting the status of the Mediterranean marine environment, is required.
- Good knowledge of the implementation of the Barcelona Convention Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) is required.
- Good knowledge of the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD, 2008/56/EC), or experience in its application, is considered an asset.

Detailed experience is specified in the Technical Evaluation Grid, under Section 9.1 "Technical evaluation", contained in the administrative specifications.

ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIFICATIONS

ARTICLE 1 – CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSULTANCY

Individual consultants with proven skills and experience that match the expert profile specified in Article 09 are eligible to apply for this consultancy.

ARTICLE 2 – COMPOSITION AND PRESENTATION OF THE OFFER

The submitted offer must include separately: (i) a technical offer, (ii) administrative documents, and (iii) a financial offer (must be presented in 3 separate files).

The services provided as part of this assignment consist of an overall fixed and non-revisable cost.

2.1. Technical offer

The technical offer must contain:

1. A cover letter outlining the consultant's suitability for the job.
2. A curriculum vitae (CV), including educational background (minimum of five years of higher education), along with copies of university diplomas and qualifications. The CV should also detail professional experience and include references to relevant previous work, studies, and publications, with the most relevant items highlighted in bold.
3. Documents/URL links/certificates that support the relevant references presented.
4. A methodological note on how the consultant will conduct the assignment, including comments on the terms of reference, if needed.
5. A time planning schedule.

The selection process may include interviews (through a teleconferencing platform), as well as a pre-selection phase followed by requests for complementary information/negotiation if required.

2.2. Administrative documents

The administrative folder should include the following administrative documents:

1. Document certifying the ability to practice this profession (e.g., registration certificate) according to the legislation of their country with the tax number on it; In cases where the bidder has an academic profession (Researcher or University teaching staff), a sworn statement that he/she is complying with the law applicable to taxes and fees in force in his/her country would be accepted.
2. A sworn statement that the bidder is in no situation that could in any way be incompatible with the mission or compromise independence in carrying out the mission.
3. Terms of reference signed (including date, signature and stamp of the bidder at the end of the document).

If the original administrative documents are not in English or in French, they should be provided with additional copies translated into English or French by a sworn translator.

Should any of the administrative documents be missing, the tenderer will be contacted to complete the missing offer documents within a period of five (5) days. If after a period of five (5) days, the documents are still not complete the offer will be eliminated.

2.3. Financial offer

The financial offer must be expressed in **US Dollars (USD)**, in both **tax-free** and **all tax-included prices**. It should include all the costs connected to the provision of the service.

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 tasks and deliverables and including fees and any necessary equipment and/or supplies (Cf. Annex 2).

The financial offer should also include:

- A 'Submission letter', using the template attached in **Annex 1**.
- 'The details of the global price' using the template in **Annex 2**.

ARTICLE 3 – SUBMISSION

Offers must be received electronically at the following e-mail address: procurement@spa-rac.org, before **9 March 2026, at 23:59 UTC+1 (Tunis Time)**.

E-mails should have the following subject: Restricted call for consultancy n°03_2026 SPA/RAC - **"Review and update of the IMAP Common Indicator 24 Guidance Factsheet (Marine Litter) – 'applicant name'"**.

Proposals received after this deadline 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 - BUDGET MAXIMUM

A maximum budget of **XXXX USD** including VAT is available for this study. Any financial offer in excess of this budget will result in the elimination of the offer.

ARTICLE 6 – DEFINITION, CONSISTENCY, AND VARIATION OF PRICES

The services provided as part of this assignment consist of an overall fixed and non-revisable cost.

6.1. Variation of prices

The prices of the contracts are fixed and not subject to revision.

6.2. Finality of prices

The services provided may not, under any pretext, reconsider the market prices which were agreed by her/him.

ARTICLE 7 – TENDER VALIDITY PERIOD

Any tenderer who submitted a tender will be bound by their tender for one hundred and twenty (120) days starting from the day following the deadline fixed for receiving the offers. During that period, the prices and information proposed by the tender will be firm and non-negotiable.

ARTICLE 8 – TERMS OF PAYMENT

The total amount of the contract will be paid after receipt and validation by SPA/RAC of Deliverables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and when an invoice is received from the contractor. This payment is also conditioned by a certificate from SPA/RAC that the service provider has accomplished all its contractual obligations and duties to SPA/RAC satisfaction.

All payments will be made by bank transfer after the receipt of an invoice from the contractor. Payments shall be made to a bank account held by the bidder in his/her resident country and where he/she pays the taxes.

ARTICLE 9 – EVALUATION PROCEDURE

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

9.1. *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) The consultant's profile (experience, references, and diploma) in relation to the subject of the present mission;
- (ii) The methodology proposed for conducting the mission;
- (iii) The time planning schedule;

Technical evaluation grid		
Criteria		Scoring
Expert	Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minimum of 10 years' experience on marine Biodiversity monitoring and assessment in the Mediterranean sea with focus on marine pollution and litter (10 points).• Demonstrated experience in conducting monitoring and assessment studies of marine Species, with a strong background in applying indicator-based approaches to evaluate biodiversity and environmental pressures in the Mediterranean sea , within the framework of the implementation of the Barcelona Convention Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) or <u>55 points maximum</u>

		the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. (09 points /valid reference; max: 45 points).	
		No references in the above-mentioned kind of experiences	0 points (<i>In this case, the offer is eliminated</i>)
	Diploma	A PhD (Doctorate) in environmental sciences, marine biology, ecology, or a related field.	<u>5 points maximum</u>
		A master's degree in one of the disciplines listed above.	2 points
		No university degree	0 point (<i>In this case, the offer is eliminated</i>)
Methodology proposed for conducting the mission	Methodology clearly presented, well-developed and meets the assignment terms of reference and objectives	<u>30 points maximum</u>	
	Methodology clearly presented, fairly well-developed and meets the assignment terms of reference and objectives	25 points	
	Methodology not developed but meets the assignment terms of reference and objectives	15 points	
	Methodology not clearly presented and does not meet the assignment terms of reference and objectives, Or No methodology presented	0 point (<i>In this case the offer is eliminated</i>)	
Time planning schedule	Planning is clearly presented, well developed and meets the assignment terms of reference and objectives	<u>10 points maximum</u>	
	Planning is not much developed but meets the assignment terms of reference and objectives	5 points	
	Planning not clearly presented and does not meet the assignment terms of reference and objectives, Or No planning presented	0 point (<i>In this case the offer is eliminated</i>)	
Total score		100 points	

Any offer that has not attained the minimum score of 80 points will be eliminated.

In the event of no offer obtains 80 points or more, the call for consultancy will be declared unsuccessful.

9.2. 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:

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

9.3. 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 consultant.

ARTICLE 10 – MONITORING, CONTROL AND VALIDATION OF THE WORK

The contract related to this tender will be signed with SPA/RAC.

The bidder will work under the supervision of SPA/RAC. The bidder will submit the final version of the deliverables as indicated in Section V of the Technical Specifications.

ARTICLE 11 – DEADLINE FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE MISSION

The overall duration for carrying out this consultancy is three months from the date of signature of the contract, including the deadlines for handing in the final documents and deliverables according to the timeline table in Article IV of the technical specifications.

ARTICLE 12 – PENALTY

In the absence of completion by the tenderer of the services at his charge within the contractual deadlines envisaged in Article 11 (Deadline for the execution of the mission), 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 10% 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 19 (Cancellation conditions), and without that the service provider can raise disputes or claim any compensation.

ARTICLE 13 – 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 14 – CONFIDENTIALITY / PROFESSIONAL SECRET CLAUSES

The selected service provider undertakes to observe total discretion in all matters relating to the facts and information of which he became aware during the performance of his assignment.

The consultant assigned to the mission covered by this contract who contravenes the aforementioned obligation of professional secrecy shall be liable to legal proceedings.

ARTICLE 15 – 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 16 – 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 17 – 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 18 – CANCELLATION CONDITIONS

SPA/RAC could cancel this contract through a notification in writing addressed to the tenderer after one of the events indicated in the following paragraphs:

- a. no respect of the deadline of the execution in application of Article 11 (Deadline for the execution of the mission);
- b. in the case described in the Article 12 (Penalty) when the amount is capped at 10% of the total amount of the contract;
- c. non-conformity to the content of the service listed in the technical specification of the present tender documents;
- d. If the tenderer goes bankrupt or into receivership;
- e. If, after a case of force majeure, the holder is unable to execute a substantial part of the Services for a period equal to at least sixty (60) days;
- f. If the tenderer was involved in corruption or fraudulent manipulations in order to obtain the contract or during the execution of the contract. For the purpose of the clause: a person is guilty of "corruption" if he/she offers, gives, solicits or accepts any kind of advantage in order to influence the action of a public official during the selection or the execution of the contract; and undertakes "fraudulent manipulations" which distort or denature the facts so as to influence the selection or the execution of the contract to the detriment of the borrower; by "fraudulent manipulations" is meant any agreement or collusive manipulation of the tenderers (before or after submitting the proposals) so as to artificially maintain the prices of the tenders at levels which do not correspond to prices which would have resulted from free and open competition and which deprive the borrower of the advantages of free and open competition; or
- g. If SPA/RAC, on its own initiative and for any reason whatsoever, decides to terminate the contract.

ARTICLE 19 – CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

19.1. *Prohibition of incompatible activities*

The contract tenderer, the personnel and agents must not engage, directly or indirectly, during the contract implementation period, in professional or commercial activities which could be incompatible with the activities with which they have been entrusted due to the present contract.

19.2. *Non-participation of the holder in certain activities*

The tenderer is prohibited, during the contract duration and at the end of the contract period, to provide good, works or services means for any project stemming from the Services or closely connected with the present contract services (except for the implementation of the present contract services and their continuation).

ANNEX 1

SUBMISSION LETTER

I, the undersigned (Director) of
..... recorded in the commercial register on under the number
..... Domiciled at After having taken
due note of the dossier documents of the call for tenders N° launched by
....., pertaining to a mission of
.....

I hereby pledge to execute the requested services in conformity with the provisions defined in the documents referred to, for the prices as established by myself without taking into account the taxes and knowing that the stamp duties and registration are to be covered by the insurer.
The total price of my bid is (.....) USD Dollars.

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

I pledge that the conditions in my 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.

SPA/RAC pledges to pay the amount after the signing of a convention into the bank current account of the Bank In the name of Under the number of
..... RIB (BIC - IBAN)
.....

In, on

(Name, first name and function)
Right for submission
(Signature and official stamp)

ANNEX 2

DETAILS OF GLOBAL PRICE

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

Designation	Unit price	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Total Steps (1+2+3)	
		Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total
Fees									
Expert									
Other costs necessary for the proper execution of the present consultancy									
Sub-total/Step									

Amount of bid, is fixed at the sum of

In, on
 (Signature and official stamp of bidder)