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

**CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN POUR L'INTERVENTION  
D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)**

**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN  
PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE**



9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional  
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre  
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

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Agenda Item 9

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBALLAST PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

**Note by the Secretariat**

**Introduction**

1. Invasive marine species are one of the four greatest threats to the world's oceans. The issue of ships' ballast water-mediated invasive species is largely due to the expanded trade and traffic volume over the last few decades, but unlike other forms of marine pollution, such as oil spills, where response action can be taken and from which the environment will eventually recover, the impacts of invasive marine species are most often irreversible, causing major ecological, economic and human health impacts across the globe.

2. The problem of harmful aquatic organisms in ships' ballast water was first raised with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1988. In response, the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), has developed and adopted Guidelines in 1991, 1993 and 1997.

3. From 1999 onwards, the MEPC efforts to prevent the potentially devastating effects of the spread of harmful aquatic organisms focused on the preparation of a legally binding instrument, which led to the adoption, in February 2004, of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention). IMO's MEPC also adopted a set of fourteen Guidelines for the implementation of the Convention.

4. In addition, in order to help countries understand the problem and monitor the situation, IMO implemented, with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Ballast Water Management Programme (GloBallast Programme) and has provided significant technical support and expertise for its implementation, carried out between 2000 and 2004 in six pilot countries.

5. Following the success of the GloBallast Programme, IMO has again joined forces with the GEF, UNDP, IMO Member Governments and the shipping industry to further assist countries to tackle the ballast water problem by implementing the Project entitled *Building Partnerships to Assist Developing Countries to Reduce the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms in Ships' Ballast Water*, more simply referred to as "GloBallast Partnerships" Project.

6. Thirteen countries, from six high priority regions (the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Pacific Coast of South America, the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and the West Coast of Africa) have agreed to take a lead partnering role in these efforts, focusing especially on legal, policy and institutional reform.

### **IMO's GloBallast Partnerships and UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan**

7. During the project's proposal development period (2005-2007), contacts were established by IMO with UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan, particularly with the MAP's two relevant Centres, i.e. REMPEC and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA), with a view to including the Mediterranean region within the priority regions expected to be covered by the Project.

8. In this respect, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Portoroz (Slovenia), 8-11 November 2005), where IMO presented the initiative, discussions were held between representatives of IMO, REMPEC and RAC/SPA regarding coordination of activities in the Mediterranean Basin under the Project. These discussions continued during the two-day Workshop on Non-indigenous Invasive Species (NIS) in the Mediterranean, organised by RAC/SPA on the 6 and 7 December 2005 in Rome, Italy. Moreover, REMPEC and RAC/SPA attended the "Global Project Task Force Meeting – GloBallast Partnership PDF-B Project" which was held in London, UK between 6 and 7 July 2006, where an in-depth discussion on the Project design and activities took place.

9. The MAP Coordination Unit (MEDU) also provided assistance to the Project, particularly by calling on the Contracting Parties to support the Project, and by associating itself, during side events organised during the 14<sup>th</sup> (November 2005) and 15<sup>th</sup> (January 2008) Contracting Parties Meetings, with IMO's efforts to promote the Project and its benefit for the region.

10. The Project proposal, which eventually included the Mediterranean region, was endorsed by the GEF CEO on 31 August 2007, with effect from 1 October 2007. The last trimester of 2007 was dedicated to the setting-up of the Project's Coordination Unit (PCU) at the IMO Headquarters.

11. REMPEC was designated by the Project's Implementation Agency (IMO) as the Regional Coordination Organization (RCO) for the Mediterranean region, in consideration of both the mandate of the Centre and the co-financing commitment that REMPEC made during the preparatory phase. It was agreed that REMPEC would coordinate the implementation of the GloBallast Partnerships Project in collaboration with RAC/SPA, whose field of activities is closely related to the topic of invasive species, and who also committed itself to financially support some of the activities of the Project.

### **The GloBallast Partnerships Project in the Mediterranean region and beneficiary countries**

12. In January 2008, REMPEC started implementing the GloBallast Partnerships Project, which is of a five-year duration (2008-2012), in the Mediterranean region.

13. The Project covers countries that are eligible to GEF and which confirmed their interest in being either Lead Partnering Countries (LPCs) or Partnering Countries (PCs) of the Project. Two Mediterranean coastal States, namely Croatia and Turkey, were identified as LPCs in the Mediterranean region, in consideration of their advanced stage in the field of ship's ballast water management.

14. Six Mediterranean coastal States eligible to GEF, i.e. Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Montenegro and Syria, were identified as PCs. Although Egypt is a Lead Partnering Country for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) region, it is expected that this country will also oversee and participate in the activities carried out in the Mediterranean region.

### **National GloBallast Focal Points**

15. Soon after the Project started, all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were requested by REMPEC to nominate a National Contact Point for the GloBallast Partnerships Project. The National Contact Point is expected to closely follow-up the implementation of the Partnerships, contribute to the efforts made at regional and national level in the field of ships' ballast water management, and to act, as a member of the GloBallast Regional Task Force, on behalf of its Government.

### **Project's national component and expectations from the Lead Partnering Countries (LPCs)**

16. The Lead Partnering Countries (LPCs) are expected to establish a Task Force gathering stakeholders at the national level, meeting every year, in order to follow-up national activities

undertaken within GloBallast Partnerships and to boost support for the legal and policy reform effort and institutional capacity building.

17. In addition, the LPCs will have to carry out rapid assessment identifying their key ballast water management issues, top priorities and plans for reforms. They are also expected to develop a national assessment on economic impact and response costs associated with ships' ballast water transferred invasive species.

18. At the Project's conclusion, each LPC is expected to be implementing a National Ballast Water Management Strategy, with developed/ revised legislation that conforms to the 2004 BWM Convention, and an enhanced compliance monitoring and enforcement system.

19. The activities undertaken at national level and results achieved by the LPCs are expected to be shared with the other Partner countries during the Regional Task Force meetings in order to facilitate similar initiatives and reforms in the latter countries.

### **Project's Regional Activities**

20. The GloBallast Partnerships Project calls for the establishment of Regional Task Forces in each of the regions covered, in order to serve as a mechanism to expand the Partnering Countries' interest and involvement in the GloBallast Partnerships as well as to facilitate the development of regional strategies aimed at minimizing the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens. The Project has also an important national component dedicated to capacity building with a view to promoting the 2004 BWM Convention and assisting participating countries with its implementation and enforcement.

21. Under the GloBallast Partnerships Project, REMPEC, in collaboration with RAC/SPA, is expected to coordinate and facilitate the organization of a total of six training courses and workshops and three Regional Task Force (RTF) Meetings. These events are envisaged to be hosted by the Lead Partnering Countries for the Mediterranean region (Croatia and Turkey).

22. All Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are invited to attend capacity building activities such as workshops and training courses organised within the framework of the GloBallast Partnerships. However, only the participation of PCs in workshops and training courses is sponsored by the Project.

23. As for the meetings of the Regional Task Force, in order to ensure holistic discussions on a regional strategy on ships' ballast water management in the Mediterranean region, financial support is provided by REMPEC and RAC/SPA to ensure that the participation of all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (sponsored partly by the GEF/GloBallast Partnerships budget and partly by the MAP's Mediterranean Trust Fund).

24. A description of activities to be carried out under the GloBallast Partnerships can be found in the Project Implementation Plan (Mediterranean Region), given in document REMPEC/WG./INF.7.

### **Regional capacity building activities implemented in 2008**

- **Introductory Training Course on Ballast Water Management**

25. An Introductory Training Course on Ballast Water Management, organised by REMPEC in Alexandria, Egypt, between 14 and 17 April 2008, with the support of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) of Alexandria, kicked off the GloBallast Partnerships Project activities in the Mediterranean region.

26. The Training Course, which was financed by the GloBallast Partnerships through the IMO's Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme, targeted personnel having different skills, knowledge and experience in ballast water management related issues. The objective of the Training Course was to provide a common set of knowledge and skills to all participants to enable them to take appropriate action in their various capacities with a view to promoting uniform implementation of the BWM Convention.

27. An additional objective of the Training Course was to build the necessary capacity in the participating Mediterranean coastal States by providing a "train-the-trainer" opportunity, leading to the

organisation and delivery of national introductory training courses on ballast water management, thus resulting in a multiplier/cascading effect.

28. Before the closure of the Training Course, the participants adopted a set of recommendations, to be referred to the Mediterranean Region Task Force, calling specifically for a risk assessment in the Mediterranean region.

29. The Training Course was attended by representatives from Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. The Report of the Training Course was disseminated to the participants and is available on the Centre's website.

- **Regional Training Course on Port Biological Baseline Survey (PBBS)**

30. The second capacity building activity implemented in 2008 was the Regional Training Course on Port Biological Baseline Survey (PBBS), which was organised by REMPEC in cooperation with the Under-Secretariat for Maritime Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and hosted by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) of the Marmara Research Centre (MRC).

31. The Training Course, which was mainly financed by the SAFEMED Project<sup>1</sup>, was conducted over a duration of four days and included lectures as well as a field training session. The Training Course was instructed by two experts from the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), New Zealand.

32. Theoretical sessions included background presentations and covered all aspects of port surveys, from planning and funding to taxonomy, collection, housing and final reporting, providing the participants with the necessary knowledge to plan for a port survey in their homeport.

33. A practical training session was also carried out, consisting of field sampling activities, which took place in the Yenikoy Terminal, located in Izmit Bay, with all trainees having an opportunity to observe and participate in the field sampling activities. A team of six divers carried out the sampling, and the samples were then taken to the TÜBİTAK marine laboratory for sorting and further analysis.

34. A total of thirty-eight representatives from fourteen Mediterranean countries have participated in the Training Course. The Report of the Training Course was disseminated to the participants and is available on the REMPEC and SAFEMED Project websites.

### **Development of a regional strategy on ships' ballast water management in the Mediterranean**

35. The development in the Mediterranean region of a Strategy addressing the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens via ships' ballast water and sediments was discussed during the First Meeting of the GloBallast Regional Task Force, when it was formally decided to form a Regional Task Force to develop such a Strategy and promote bringing into effect the 2004 BWM Convention.

36. The Meeting took place between 11 and 12 September 2008 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and was organised by REMPEC in co-operation with RAC/SPA and the Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure of Croatia.

37. During the Meeting, the Regional Task Force was formally established and Terms of Reference were agreed upon. The Task Force members identified principles and key elements to be taken into consideration when developing the Strategy, and agreed upon the appropriate format the Strategy should adopt. In this regard, it was decided that an Action Plan, containing operational arrangements, should be developed as part of the Strategy.

38. Furthermore, in order to fasten the process, four Focus Groups, each led by a Mediterranean coastal State, were established on specific subject matters, namely risk assessment (Turkey), legal aspects (Croatia), capacity building (Cyprus) and policies monitoring (Italy).

39. It was agreed that the Task Force and its Focus Groups would work by correspondence and that the initiative will be presented for endorsement to the 2009 Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, and consequently submitted to the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, to take place in Marrakech, Morocco, in November 2009.

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<sup>1</sup> EU-funded MEDA Regional Project "Euromed Cooperation on Maritime Safety and Prevention of Pollution from Ships – SAFEMED" (MED 2005/109-573).

40. Eighteen Mediterranean coastal States and the European Commission participated in the Meeting. The Meeting's report was disseminated to the participants and uploaded on REMPEC's website.

#### **Financial contribution of REMPEC and RAC/SPA to the Project**

41. It should be noted that REMPEC's contribution in kind to the Project (professional and assistance staff working time dedicated to the implementation of the activities of the GloBallast Partnerships) amounted, in 2008, to approximately 64, 256 US Dollars. The Centre also financed from its own budget the participation of non-GEF eligible Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in the First Meeting of the Regional Task Force, and covered other expenses incurred for the organisation of events, such as travel of REMPEC's officers. Furthermore, the GloBallast Partnerships benefitted from an additional financial contribution of approximately 53, 500 US Dollars through the SAFEMED Project. The total contribution of REMPEC to the GloBallast Partnerships Project for 2008 amounted to an estimate of 184, 182 US Dollars.

42. RAC/SPA also provided in kind support to the Project, as well as financial resources, by co-financing the organisation of the First Meeting of the Regional Task Force and by covering the cost of expertise in training activities. In 2008, the total contribution (financial and in kind) of RAC/SPA to the Project amounted to an estimated 13, 072 US Dollars.

#### **Future regional activities**

43. During the biennium 2010-2011, the following regional activities will be carried out by REMPEC in collaboration with RAC/SPA under the GloBallast Partnerships Project:

- **Task 1.1.4 (Regional Task Force) and Task 2.4.2 (Regional Harmonization Workshop)**

REMPEC will coordinate the organisation of the Second Meeting of the Regional Task Force (2010) when it is expected that the first consolidated draft of a regional strategy on ship's ballast water management and invasive species in the Mediterranean would be agreed upon. It will be organised back to back with a one-day Regional Harmonisation Workshop, where knowledge and exchange of experience leading to the regional harmonisation of legal, policy and institutional reforms will be provided by the Contracting Parties.

- **Task 2.5.2 (Legal Training Course on Ballast Water Management Issues)**

REMPEC will coordinate the organisation of a three day training course on the legal aspects of maritime and ballast water management, with the objective of supporting the GloBallast participating countries to acquaint their national Government lawyers and experts with the ballast water management issue, and achieve regulatory frames and controls for ballast water management.

- **Task 2.7.2 (Workshop on Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement - CME)**

REMPEC will coordinate the organisation of a three-day regional Compliance and Monitoring (CME) Workshop, designed to help LPCs and CPs in developing and implementing such systems, by providing them with practical knowledge on CME management and the development of a risk-based approach.

44. In addition REMPEC included, in its work programme for 2010-2011, an activity related to the assessment of ships' ballast water in the Mediterranean using the REMPEC database on maritime traffic in the Mediterranean region. It is expected that the assessment will provide detailed information on main ships' ballast water routes and receiver ports. Unfortunately, the limited budget of the Centre cannot allocate financial resources for this last proposed activity, however, the Centre will investigate on the possibility of concluding a partnership with a Governmental scientific institution or a private organisation to undertake the study.

**The Meeting of Focal Points is invited to:**

- **take note** of the information provided and of the work carried out by the Regional Task Force with respect to the development of a Strategy addressing the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens via ships' ballast water and sediments in the Mediterranean region;
- **support** the implementation of the activities to be carried out under the Globallast Partnerships Project in the biennium 2010-2011 as well as the development of the Strategy and its Action Plan; and
- **request** the Secretariat to present the work of the Regional Task Force to the next Meeting of MAP Focal Points, with a view to recommend to the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to approve the development of a Strategy addressing the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens via ships' ballast water and sediments in the Mediterranean region.