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

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Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional  
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre  
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.45/7  
Date: 30 April 2019

Malta, 11-13 June 2019

Original: English

Agenda Item 7

**Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021)  
and future steps**

**Note by the Secretariat**

**SUMMARY**

**Executive Summary:** This document provides an overview of the status of implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) as well as information on on-going cooperation in the Mediterranean and possible ways to strengthen this cooperation in the context of the preparation of a post-2021 Regional Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships.

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 29

**Related documents:** UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, REMPEC/WG.37/12, REMPEC/WG.41/4, REMPEC/WG.41/10, REMPEC/WG.41/12, REMPEC/WG.45/4, REMPEC/WG.45/14, REMPEC/WG.45/INF.19, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/23

**Background**

1 The Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the “Regional Strategy (2016-2021)”, was prepared by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), following an extensive consultative process with the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) and partners. The Regional Strategy (2016-2021)<sup>1</sup> was adopted by the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP19) (Greece, 9-12 February 2016).

2 The Regional Strategy (2016-2021) aims at preventing pollution from ships and maritime accidents and at enhancing the level of preparedness for response to major pollution incidents, in the Mediterranean region. It lists the priority issues to be addressed when implementing the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (“the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol”) to the

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/4

Barcelona Convention and includes, for each of these issues, precise commitments and a timetable for the implementation of twenty-two specific objectives to be achieved by 2021.

3 In addition to the Regional Strategy 2016-2021, the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil to the Barcelona Convention (Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan)<sup>2</sup>, prepared by the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with a substantive contribution of REMPEC, was also adopted by COP 19.

4 REMPEC's work guided by the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and by the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan supports Mediterranean coastal States and the European Union (EU) in making progress towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular SDG 14 related to the conservation and sustainable use of the seas and marine resources for sustainable development, further reinforcing and linking the work of the wider UN-family in the Mediterranean region.

5 The Regional Strategy (2016-2021) is in line with the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) (2016-2021)<sup>3</sup>, as adopted by COP19. The MTS sets up a strategic framework to ensure consistency, continuity, increased efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance of the MAP/Barcelona Convention system and contribution to the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region for the period 2016-2021.

6 The Regional Strategy (2016-2021) also supports the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the six-year period 2016 to 2021<sup>4</sup>, adopted on 25 November 2015, which was recently revoked by the Strategic Plan for the Organization for the six-year period 2018 to 2023<sup>5</sup>, adopted on 6 December 2017 by the IMO Assembly, which set out the areas of particular focus for the period 2018-2023.

### **Implementation of the Regional Strategy 2016-2021**

7 The Programme of Work 2016-2017<sup>6</sup> and the Programme of Work 2018-2019<sup>7</sup> adopted by COP 19 and the Twentieth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 20) (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017), respectively and the Programme of Work 2020-2021 proposed in REMPEC/WG.45/14 were prepared with a view to facilitating the full implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, with the support, where relevant, of REMPEC.

8 The main sources of funding allowing the support of the implementation of these programmes of work have been:

- .1 Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF);
- .2 IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP);
- .3 EU-funded "Marine Litter-MED" Project;
- .4 Cooperation Agreement between the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) and UNEP, coordinated by UNEP/MAP;
- .5 Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil & HNS Pollution Cooperation — West MOPoCo co-financed by the EU under the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism;

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<sup>2</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/3

<sup>3</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/1

<sup>4</sup> Resolution A.1097(29)

<sup>5</sup> Resolution A.1110(30)

<sup>6</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/20

<sup>7</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/23, Decision IG.23/14

- .6 Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline cleanup and Oiled Wildlife interventions (POSOW) co-financed by the EU under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism;
- .7 Global Environment Facility (GEF) - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme; and
- .8 Voluntary contributions from Mediterranean coastal States (France, Italy, Malta and Monaco) and the private sector (Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG), IPIECA – The global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues.

9 As outlined in the Progress Reports on REMPEC's activities (i.e. REMPEC/WG.41/4 and REMPEC/WG.45/4), and in consideration of activities proposed for the next biennium, the Centre has been contributing to the implementation of the following Specific Objectives:

- Specific Objective 1: Ratification of relevant international maritime conventions related to the protection of the marine environment;
- Specific Objective 2: To control and manage ships' biofouling to minimise the transfer of invasive aquatic species;
- Specific Objective 3: Ensuring effective maritime administrations;
- Specific Objective 5: Provision of reception facilities in ports;
- Specific Objective 6: Delivery of generated wastes;
- Specific Objective 7: Improved follow-up of pollution events as well as monitoring and surveillance of illicit discharges;
- Specific Objective 8: To improve the level of enforcement and of the prosecution of discharge offenders;
- Specific Objective 9: To reduce the pollution generated by pleasure craft activities;
- Specific Objective 12: Identification of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs);
- Specific Objective 13: Reduction of marine noise caused by ships;
- Specific Objective 14: To establish procedures for designation of places of refuge minimise the risk of widespread pollution;
- Specific Objective 15: To examine the possibility of designating the Mediterranean Sea or parts thereof as a SO<sub>x</sub> emission control area, under MARPOL Annex VI and effectively implement the existing energy efficiency measures;
- Specific Objective 16: To ensure that adequate emergency towing capacity is available throughout the Mediterranean to assist vessels, including tankers, in distress;
- Specific Objective 17: To enhance the levels of prepositioned spill response equipment under the direct control of Mediterranean coastal States;
- Specific Objective 18: To encourage the participation of the regional scientific and technical institutions in research and development activities and to facilitate transfer of technology;

- Specific Objective 19: To improve the quality, speed, and effectiveness of decision-making process in case of marine pollution incidents, through the development and introduction of technical and decision support tools;
- Specific Objective 20: To increase, as much as practical, the level of knowledge in the field of preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution by oil and other harmful substances;
- Specific Objective 21: To revise the existing recommendations, principles, and guidelines, and to develop new ones aimed at facilitating international cooperation and mutual assistance within the framework of 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol; and
- Specific Objective 22: To strengthen the capacity of individual coastal States to respond efficiently to marine pollution incidents through development of sub-regional operational agreements and contingency plans.

10 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have also progressed independently or with the assistance of other institutions on the other Specific Objectives namely:

- Specific Objective 4: To strengthen the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Port State Control (PSC) in the Mediterranean region (Mediterranean MoU);
- Specific Objective 10: relating to the reduction of risk of collisions by establishing Ship's Routeing Systems; and
- Specific Objective 11: Improved control of maritime traffic.

11 To support, at national level, the full implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), REMPEC provided technical assistance to Albania, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey through the provision of national consultancy services upon their request, with a view to preparing their respective National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021). The preparation of such NAPs is based on the related Guidance document<sup>8</sup>, as amended and agreed upon by Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points REMPEC (St. Julian's, Malta, 23-25 May 2017), and as reproduced in document REMPEC/WG.45/INF.3.

12 It is recalled that the NAP is a live tool that can be reviewed and updated regularly, based not only on internal developments, such as national achievements, national assessments under the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and self-assessments of flag State performance, but also any upcoming external developments, such as advances made by the IMO, including the implementation of the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), or general audits carried out by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in each of the Member States of the EU that are also Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

13 Considering the valuable information collected through the preparation of NAPs, the Secretariat proposes to pursue this effort in other Mediterranean coastal States during the biennium 2020-2021 and, subject to the availability of funds, provide them with the necessary assistance upon request.

14 To ensure the capitalisation of past and ongoing efforts and to increase the effectiveness of the resources made available for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), on the one hand, by the UNEP/MAP and its components, IMO, as well as other partners through the mobilisation of resources in a coordinated and integrated manner and, on the other hand, by all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention through bilateral, multilateral or regional activities or

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<sup>8</sup> Guidance Document for the preparation of National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021)

projects, the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC invited Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to:

- .1 submit a fiche for each bilateral, multilateral or regional project or activity relevant to the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), based on the template set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.41/12, which is reproduced in the **Annex** to the present document for ease of reference, to the Secretariat, preferably at the beginning of the said project or activity; and
- .2 report the main developments or outcome at the Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC following the submission of the fiche, possibly by means of information documents, with a view to increasing visibility on these projects/activities.

15 Despite the recognition of the added value of such fiches, at the time of drafting of the present document, the Centre received only one submission from EMSA on the SAFEMED IV, EuroMed Maritime Safety Project. The document referred as REMPEC/WG.45/INF.19 submitted to this meeting provides a compilation of fiches providing information on projects supporting the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021). In this context and light of the measures proposed in the following paragraphs, the Secretariat urges all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to submit their respective fiche, as required.

**Enhancing cooperation in the field of prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships in the Mediterranean region for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021)**

16 In recognition of the need to enhance coordination among international and regional marine pollution response and assistance mechanisms and institutions, to face a major accidental pollution in the Mediterranean in the most effective manner, COP19 adopted a decision<sup>9</sup> to promote cooperation and partnership, which requested the Secretariat of UNEP/MAP:

- .1 to initiate discussions with relevant regional and international organisations with the aim to optimise synergies and coordination on response and assistance in case of major accidental pollution in the Mediterranean; and
- .2 to further expand the cooperation with regional and international organisations, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, and other relevant actors, including the private sector, with a view to mobilising as many actors as possible in support of implementing in a coherent, synergistic and effective manner the priorities established by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

17 Such cooperative approach was anticipated by the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Attard, Malta, 15-17 June 2015), which agreed, in the context of the cooperation between REMPEC, the European Commission and EMSA<sup>10</sup>, to:

- .1 strengthen the possible synergies between the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) and the Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR) by requesting the CTG MPPR meetings to note any relevant MTWG developments;
- .2 explore possible synergies on future joint activities or projects to benefit from stronger cooperation on topics of common interest, and to propose possible synergies to the various technical groups of the regional agreements and the CTG MPPR, within the framework of the Inter-Secretariat Meetings;
- .3 organise working-level exchanges between, the Mediterranean coastal States and relevant entities such as the IMO, UNEP together with UNEP/MAP, the Joint

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<sup>9</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/18

<sup>10</sup> REMPEC/WG.37/12

UNEP/United Nation (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) Environment Unit (JEU) and REMPEC, the European Commission as well as EMSA, to discuss cooperation arrangements and synergies between the European and regional mechanisms, in view of the organisation of a high-level meeting; and

- .4 to initiate discussions, in consultation with the IMO and UNEP/MAP, to define, as soon as possible, the most appropriate way to cooperate and support the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

18 In line with the above, with the theme “Cooperation in the Mediterranean to Prevent and Combat Marine Pollution from Ships”, the Centre organised the celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of REMPEC and the High-level Meeting (Valletta, Malta, 4 October 2016), which aimed primarily at bringing together all relevant stakeholders under one forum and with one clear objective: to collaborate and strive towards the protection of the Mediterranean Sea. Over one hundred and thirty (130) participants representing Mediterranean coastal States, organisations and institutions, attended the event. During the Ministerial Session, Ministers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Greece, and Malta together with twelve (12) other representatives of the twenty (20) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention attending the event, expressed their satisfaction on REMPEC's achievements and called on its continuous assistance to the Mediterranean coastal States within its mandate and beyond, in particular for the implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan.

19 Recalling Decision IG.22/18 on cooperation and partners adopted by the Contracting Parties at COP19, which requested the Secretariat to initiate discussions with relevant regional and international organizations with the aim of optimizing synergies and coordination on response and assistance in case of major accidental pollution in the Mediterranean, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017) (COP20) adopted the Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents. The Guide was prepared by REMPEC in consultation with all parties concerned including EMSA and DG ECHO.<sup>11</sup>

20 Further to the request of the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, in the context of the cooperation in the Mediterranean to prevent and combat marine pollution from ships<sup>12</sup>, the Centre:

- .1 supported and contributed to the organisation of the Workshop on Risk Assessment and Response Planning, during the Interspill 2018 exhibition and conference;
- .2 liaised with EMSA to clarify the access by the Secretariats of the regional agreements and by non-EU countries to EMSA's Integrated Maritime Services (IMS) and other services including CleanSeaNet and SafeSeaNet, as reported in the document REMPEC/WG.45/INF.6 on EU data sharing, monitoring and reporting on marine pollution from ship submitted by the European Union; and
- .3 continued to explore, within the framework of the Inter-Secretariat Meetings, possible synergies on joint activities or projects, such as the West MOPoCo co-financed by the EU under the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism, further detailed in document REMPEC/WG.45/INF.19, in order to benefit from stronger cooperation on topics of common interest.

21 In this context, since its establishment, the EU, as a Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, has contributed to the work of UNEP/MAP and its components, including REMPEC, through its political support in the definition of policies, legal obligations and guidance documents as well as through its technical and financial support in the implementation of such policies, obligations and documents in the field of prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships, and in the field of safety of offshore oil and gas operations in the Mediterranean region.

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<sup>11</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/23, Decision IG.23/11

<sup>12</sup> REMPEC/WG.41/12

22 The complementary roles of REMPEC and EMSA, for the region, is now widely acknowledged. It is further recognised that the region would benefit from a transparent dialogue to materialise the longstanding need for clarity on the complementary role in the Mediterranean and ultimately in the EU region, and to define concrete cooperation between the relevant organisations, in particular with EMSA established by Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002, as amended<sup>13</sup>.

23 The cooperation between REMPEC and EMSA has been fruitful in many aspects, including during the implementation by REMPEC of the EU-funded MEDA Regional Project “Euromed Cooperation on Maritime Safety and Prevention of Pollution from Ships – SAFEMED”, between 2006 and 2009 (SAFEMED I – MED 2005/109-573) and between 2010 and 2013 (SAFEMED II – MED 2007/147-568) as well as during the implementation by EMSA of SAFEMED III (2013 – 2016) and the ongoing project SAFEMED IV (2017 – 2021). Acknowledging the evidence of the complementarity but also the risk of duplication if the respective activities of EMSA and REMPEC are not coordinated, the establishment of a durable and regular communication between the SAFEMED Team and REMPEC is crucial and certainly benefits both EMSA and REMPEC, but more importantly the beneficiary countries and the good environmental status of the Mediterranean Sea.

24 Such communication and collaboration have considerably progress, in the current biennium, with the active participation and contribution of REMPEC to events organised by EMSA:

- .1 1st Steering Committee Meeting for the SAFEMED IV Project (Lisbon, Portugal, 25-26 September 2017);
- .2 Fourteenth Inter-Secretariat Meeting between the Regional Agreements Secretariats, DG ECHO and EMSA, (Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 February 2018);
- .3 EMSA/DG ECHO Joint Workshop on Risk Assessment and Response Planning in Europe (14 March 2018, London, UK);
- .4 2nd Steering Committee for the SAFEMED IV Project (Aqaba, Jordan, 9 – 10 October 2018);
- .5 EMSA Workshop on ship-source pollution (Implementation of Directive 2005/35/EC) (13 November 2018, Lisbon, Portugal);
- .6 Workshop on “Sulphur Regulation: awareness raising for the upcoming 0.50% Sulphur requirement and consistent implementation as of 2020” for Mediterranean Countries, (EMSA, Lisbon, Portugal, 13-14 February 2019);
- .7 Fifteenth Inter-Secretariat Meeting between the Regional Agreements Secretariats, DG ECHO and EMSA, (Lisbon, Portugal, 26 February 2019) (via teleconference); and
- .8 Sulphur Regulation awareness raising for the upcoming 0.50% Sulphur requirement and consistent implementation as of 2020 for Mediterranean Countries – Follow-up meeting, London, 14 May 2019.

25 Similarly, EMSA contributed, as follows to activities implemented and organised by REMPEC during the period under review:

- .1 Update EMSA response equipment inventory through the Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR);
- .2 Input for the preparation of the 2017 Quality Status Report for the Mediterranean (2017 MED QSR);

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<sup>13</sup> by Regulation (EC) No 1644/2003, Regulation (EC) No 724/2004, Regulation (EC) No 2038/2006, Regulation (EU) No 100/2013 and Regulation (EU) 2016/1625.

- .3 Regional Workshop on Response to Spill Incidents involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) (MEDEXPOL 2018) (Valletta, Malta, 20-21 June 2018); and
- .4 Regional Workshop on Ratification and Effective Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI (Valletta, Malta, 11-13 December 2018).

26 Furthermore regular communication on programmes of work, schedules and progress reports will eventually led to the organisation of three (3) joint national activities in 2019, namely a National training course on response to HNS in the marine environment, in Turkey and two (2) National workshop on ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, in Algeria and Israel.

### **Future steps and post-2021 Regional Strategy**

27 In light of the above, the Secretariat proposes to carry out a joint analysis, involving IMO, relevant Directorate Generals (DGs) of the European Commission (notably DG MOVE, DG ENV, and ECHO), EMSA and REMPEC, to identify the complementarities of relevant projects implemented in the Mediterranean region, in particular the SAFEMED IV Project, and REMPEC activities in the framework of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and to propose concrete synergies.

28 Considering that the year 2021 corresponds to a major milestone in the Mediterranean region, marking the end of the MTS, the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) and the SAFEMED IV Project, simultaneously, the Secretariat proposes to continue the on-going efforts, through a specific activity of the programme of work for the biennium 2020-2021:

- .1 to review the progress made in the field of prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships in the Mediterranean region by analysing information gathered in the NAPs referred to in paragraph 13 above, the project fiches indicated in paragraph 15 above, and the analysis mentioned in the paragraph 27 above, as well as any other relevant information;
- .2 to launch a wide consultation process involving national competent authorities, relevant regional and international institutions and stakeholders addressing challenges and offering expertise, resources, and funding to progress in the improvement of the prevention of and response to marine pollution from ships in the Mediterranean region:
  - a) to define through a collaborative approach, the vision, the strategic directions, and objectives of a post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships;
  - b) to outline the main institutions and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities within their respective mandate, and identify required synergies; and
  - c) to propose a modus operandi (e.g. Action Plan) to ensure concerted planning, coordinated implementation, and monitoring procedures.
- .3 to submit to the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, to be held in 2021, the draft post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, for consideration.

### **Actions requested by the Meeting**

29 **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2 **consider** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat, as laid down in paragraphs 13, 15, 27 and 28 of the present document.



**Annex**

**Fiche for project/activity  
relevant to the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021)**

**Country:**

**Date:**

**GENERAL INFO ON OVERALL PROJECT/ACTIVITY**

**Title:**

**Description and main objective(s):**

**Main project/activity output(s):**

**Geographical scope and countries  
involved:**

**Total budget (EUR):**

**Main source(s) of funding:**

**Lead organisation (manager):**

**Other partners:**

**Start/end dates:**

**INFO ON COUNTRY'S PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT/ACTIVITY**

**Description of project/activity  
output(s) for which the Country is  
responsible:**

**Project budget for Country's  
activities (EUR):**

**Other Mediterranean  
Countries/Partners involved:**

**Relevant Specific Objective(s) of  
the Regional Strategy (2016-2021):**

**Comments/Explanations on added  
value of the project/activity for the  
implementation of the Regional  
Strategy (2016-2021):**