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

Second Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean
Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response
to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)

REMPEC/WG.58/4
18 October 2024
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Lija, Malta, 21 November 2024

**Agenda Item 4: Draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of
the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)**

Review of the Draft Guidance Document

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document will not be printed and is made available in electronic format only.
Delegates are encouraged to consult the document in its electronic format and limit printing.

Note by the Secretariat

The document presents the Draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), as prepared by the Secretariat. The Meeting will be requested to consider and approve the draft Guidance Document with a view to submission for adoption by the 16th Focal Points Meeting.

The Meeting will also be requested to take into consideration the outcome of the Regional Workshop on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031), held on 20 November 2024.

Background

1. The Mediterranean Sea, a biologically diverse marine area hosting a wide variety of species and habitats, holds immense ecological, economic, and cultural importance. With its rich biodiversity and critical role in global maritime trade, it faces significant environmental threats from marine pollution. Recognising this urgent issue, the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) have agreed to individually or jointly take all appropriate measures in accordance with the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.
2. In 2016, the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) (the “Regional Strategy (2016-2021)”) was adopted, providing a framework for regional cooperation and action. While the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) achieved progress, it also highlighted areas requiring further improvement. Building upon the foundation laid by the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), and incorporating lessons learned and addressing emerging challenges to provide a solid framework for the next decade, the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the “Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)”) aims at strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring the effective implementation of international maritime conventions and protocols. The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) is a testament to the collective commitment of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to protect their shared marine environment.
3. In this context, the Secretariat prepared a Draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), hereinafter referred to as the Draft Guidance Document, with a view to guide Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention through the strategic objectives, actions, and expected outcomes, ensuring clarity and facilitating effective preparation and implementation of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). The Draft Guidance Document is contained in the Annex.
4. The Draft Guidance Document was referred for review and consideration of the Regional Workshop on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031), held on 20 November 2024.

Action Requested

5. The Meeting is requested to:
 - .1 Consider and approve the Draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), contained in the Annex, taking into account the outcome of the Regional Workshop on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031);
 - .2 Refer the approved Draft Guidance Document, to the 16th Focal Points Meeting, to be held in May 2025, with a view to adoption.

Annex

Draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)

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

**GUIDANCE DOCUMENT:
PREPARATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION OF,
PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE TO MARINE POLLUTION FROM
SHIPS (2022-2031)**

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Foreword

The Mediterranean Sea, a biologically diverse marine area hosting a wide variety of species and habitats, holds immense ecological, economic, and cultural importance. With its rich biodiversity and critical role in global maritime trade, it faces significant environmental threats from marine pollution. Recognising this urgent issue, the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) have agreed to individually or jointly take all appropriate measures in accordance with the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

In 2016, the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) (the “Regional Strategy (2016-2021)”) was adopted, providing a framework for regional cooperation and action. While the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) achieved progress, it also highlighted areas requiring further improvement. Building upon the foundation laid by the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), and incorporating lessons learned and addressing emerging challenges to provide a solid framework for the next decade, the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the “Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)”) aims at strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring the effective implementation of international maritime conventions and protocols. The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) is a testament to the collective commitment of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to protect their shared marine environment.

In this context, this document is developed to guide Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention through the strategic objectives, actions, and expected outcomes, ensuring clarity and facilitating effective preparation and implementation of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).

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List of abbreviations

ACCOBAMS: Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area

AFS Convention: International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships, 2001

AIS: Automatic Identification System

Barcelona Convention: Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean

BCRS: Barcelona Convention Reporting System

BUNKER Convention: International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001

BWM Convention: International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004

CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity

CECIS: Common Emergency and Information System

CLC Convention: International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1969

COP: Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

CPs: Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention

CSN: CleanSeaNet

CSO: Common Strategic Objective

CTG MPPR: Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response

ECA: Emission Control Area

EcAp: Ecosystem Approach

EMSA: European Maritime Safety Agency

ENPRO: Baltic Sea Network of Environmental Crime Prosecutors

EU: European Union

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

FSI: Flag State Implementation

GEF: Global Environment Facility

GESAMP: Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection

GGGI: Global Ghost Gear Initiative

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

GloMEEP: GEF-UNDP-IMO Global Maritime Energy Efficiency Partnerships Project

GPML: Global Partnership on Marine Litter

HELCOM: Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission)

HNS: Hazardous and Noxious Substance

ICP: Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

IMAP: Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast

IMMA: Important Marine Mammal Area

IMO: International Maritime Organization

IMSAS: IMO Member State Audit Scheme

IEPCA: Global oil and gas association dedicated to advancing environmental and social performance across the energy transition

ITCP: Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

IUU: Illegal Unreported and Unregulated

IWC: International Whaling Commission

MAMIAS: Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species

MAP: Mediterranean Action Plan

MAREΣ: Mediterranean regional AIS Server

MARPOL: International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships

MAU: Mediterranean Assistance Unit

MEDPAN: Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers

MENELAS: Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention

MIDSIS-TROCS: Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MPA: Marine Protected Areas

MSFD: Marine Strategy Framework Directive

MSP: Marine Special Planning

MTCC: Maritime Technologies Cooperation Centre

MTWG: Mediterranean Technical Working Group

NAP: National Action Plan

NCA: National Competent Authority

NCP: National Contingency Plan

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

NSN: North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors

OPRC: International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990

OSCAR-MED: Coordinated Aerial Surveillance Operation for Illicit Ship Pollution Discharges in the Mediterranean

OSPAR Convention: Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

OTSOPA: Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities

PAC: Priority Actions Programme

PM: Particulate Matter

PPR: IMO Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response

PSC: Port State Control

PSSA: Particularly Sensitive Sea Area

RAC: Regional Activity Centre

REMPEC: Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea

RPAS: Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems

SCP: Subregional Contingency Plan

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

SEEMP: Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan

SOLAS: International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974

SPA: Specially Protected Area

SPAMI: Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance

TDM: Traffic Density Mapping

TSS: Traffic Separation Schemes

UCPM: Union Civil Protection Mechanism

UfM: Union for the Mediterranean

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEA: United Nations Environment Assembly

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

VTMIS: Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information Systems

VTS: Vessel Traffic Services

Part I. Background information: The Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)

1. Background

1.1 The Mediterranean Sea, a vital nexus of maritime activity and ecological diversity, is a reservoir of natural resources and a cradle of civilisation. Ensuring its protection against the threats posed by marine pollution is not only a regional priority but a global imperative. However, it is also highly vulnerable to pollution from ships, which poses a significant threat to its marine environment and coastal communities. To address these challenges, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (CPs) have long been committed to preventing and combating marine pollution.

1.2 In 2016, the Regional Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) (the “Regional Strategy (2016-2021)”) was adopted, providing a framework for regional cooperation and action. While the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) achieved progress, it also highlighted areas requiring further improvement. Building on these insights, the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the “Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)”) was developed to continue and enhance these efforts over the next decade.

1.3 The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) is informed by key international resolutions and conventions, including the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution “Towards a pollution-free planet”. It emphasises the importance of implementing internationally recognised regulations, particularly those established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), such as the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention).

2. Introduction

2.1 The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) represents a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to tackling marine pollution in the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) was adopted by the CPs at their 22nd Ordinary Meeting (COP 22) in 2021 ([Decision IG.25/16](#)), reflecting a collective commitment to protect the marine environment through enhanced regional cooperation and adherence to international standards.

2.2 In its Preamble, the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) affirms that nothing in the said Strategy shall undermine the principles of State Sovereignty, Freedom, rights of Navigation, and Innocent Passage in the Territorial Sea. It articulates a vision of “A clean and healthy Mediterranean marine and coastal environment with a sustainable and pollution-free maritime sector, supported by robust enforcement and enhanced multi-sectoral cooperation, for the benefit of present and future generations”.

2.3 The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) sets out clear objectives and actionable measures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to pollution from ships. It calls upon CPs to strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks, ratify relevant international conventions, and engage in collaborative efforts to address marine pollution. The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) plays a crucial role in supporting these efforts by providing technical assistance, promoting capacity-building initiatives, and facilitating resource mobilisation.

2.4 Stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). The active participation of multilateral financial institutions, industry sectors, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders is essential to mobilise the necessary resources and expertise. The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) encourages the formation of sustainable partnerships to enhance international cooperation and maximise synergies in addressing marine pollution.

2.5 The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) goes beyond being a policy document, it is a call to action. It invites all parties to work together towards a shared vision of a cleaner, healthier, and sustainable Mediterranean Sea. Through concerted efforts, this unique marine ecosystem and its legacy can be protected and secured for future generations.

2.6 For that, the Guidance Document: Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (the “Guidance Document”) was developed to provide a clear and comprehensive guidance to all CPs in the formulation of their National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), and for stakeholders to engage in contributing to the National Assessment (NA) of where each CP stands and where to aim for reaching the objectives contained in the said Strategy.

2.7 To provide a comprehensive overview, this document is divided into Parts I and II, and also includes an Annex.

2.8 In **Part I**, Sections 3 to 9 detail key aspects of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) and cover the following:

- **Section 3:** Outlines the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);
- **Section 4:** Presents the Action Plan for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);
- **Section 5:** Explains the objective of the Guidance Document;
- **Section 6:** Focuses on the importance of implementing the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);
- **Section 7:** Discusses practical arrangements for managing and implementing the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), providing guidance on operational aspects, including on reporting and monitoring mechanisms;
- **Section 8:** Discusses the mid-term review and evaluation processes; and
- **Section 9:** Describes the institutional framework under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

2.9 **Part II** provides detailed guidance on the preparation and implementation of NAPs in alignment with the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) and covers the following:

- **Section 10:** Covers the introduction to the preparation process of the NAP;
- **Section 11:** Focuses on the NA, detailing the criteria for evaluating national conditions and needs;
- **Section 12:** Describes the work methodology for preparing the NAP, including best practices and approaches for creating an effective plan; and
- **Section 13:** Explains how the NAP can pave the way to the IMO Member State Audit Scheme.

2.10 Finally, the **Annex** offers a Common Template for the preparation of the NAP.

3. Objective of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)

3.1 The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) aims to contribute to the implementation of overarching and thematic Mediterranean strategies, particularly the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) (2016-2025), the United Nations (UN) Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)'s Mid-Term Strategy (2022-2027), the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) and its roadmap for implementation, the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), and the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean adopted in the Framework of Article 15 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (the "LBS Protocol") to the Barcelona Convention.

3.2 It also strives to contribute to global and other regional goals and strategies, notably, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, the IMO Strategic Plan for the six-year period 2018 to 2023, the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships, the IMO Strategy on reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships (the "Initial IMO GHG Strategy"), disaster resilience, prevention, preparedness and response in line with the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the European Green Deal, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) 5-Year Strategy (2020-2024), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) ministerial declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, and the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through the Aichi Targets (specifically target 9 on invasive alien species), and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework which is currently in development.

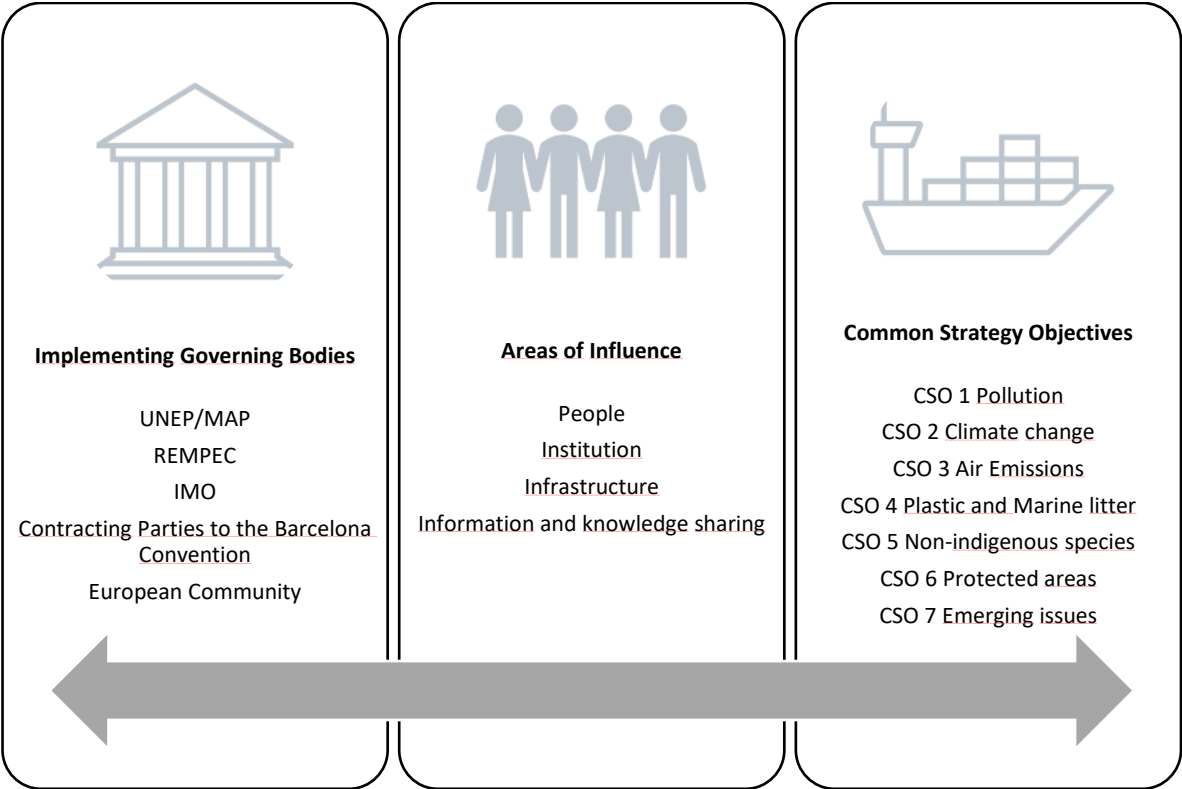
4. Action Plan for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)

4.1 The Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) is supported by an Action Plan, composed of seven (7) Common Strategic Objectives (CSOs) and are grouped by four distinct areas of influence: People, Institution, Infrastructure, and Information and Knowledge Sharing¹. All areas of influence are guided by each CSO.

4.2 Each action is presented with an indicator, target and is linked to the implementing and/or governing body responsible for delivering the action (the lead or partner). The actions are also prioritised as high, medium, or low. **Figure 1** aims to visualise the interconnection between implementing and/or governing body responsible for delivering the actions, the areas of influence, and the CSOs.

¹ For full description of each area of influence, please refer to Decision IG.25/16, Section 6.

Figure 1. Interlocking CSOs, areas of influence and implementing / governing bodies responsible for delivering on the actions of the Action Plan



Source: Based on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)

5. Objective of the Guidance Document

5.1 The objective of the Guidance Document is to provide a practical tool to guide individual CPs in their efforts to prepare their NAPs for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) at the national level and, thus, all the regional and international instruments addressing the prevention of, preparedness, and response to marine pollution from ships to which they are Parties. The Guidance Document also enables CPs to carry out a self-assessment of national capabilities and performance and should enable them to gage progress made and define any necessary remedial action. In addition, these measures should pave the way for individual maritime administrations to subject themselves to the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), which has been in force since 1 January 2016.

6. Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)

6.1 The implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) shall be governed through the comprehensive and integrated institutional, legal, and implementing framework of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, particularly 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”), in collaboration and consultation with relevant national, regional and international organisations, institutions, agencies and stakeholders. This shall be done by coordinating parallel initiatives and processes to ensure the capitalisation of past and ongoing efforts, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the resources mobilised to meet the CSOs of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).

6.2 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contributing to the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) are invited to apply for accreditation as UNEP/MAP partners to become involved in the implementation of the present strategy. UNEP/MAP Partners provide expert policy and technical advice and promote the policies, strategies and programmes derived from the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. UNEP/MAP Partners participate as Observers in the meetings of the CPs and its Protocols as well as in activities carried out within the framework of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work.

6.3 The CPs further encourage regional and international institutions to formalise their cooperation to provide financial and technical support to CPs for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) through specific partnership agreements, as appropriate.

6.4 It is important to note that the NAP should not be seen as a static document but as a living tool that can be reviewed and updated regularly, based not only on internal developments, such as national achievements, NAs under the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) 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 IMSAS, or general audits carried out by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in each of the Member States of the European Union (EU) that are also CPs.

7. Practical arrangements for the management and implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)

7.1 To align with the CSOs of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) that are shared by all stakeholders, a biennial Coordination Meeting on the implementation of the said Strategy (the “Meeting”) will be organised during the first year of each biennium to:

- .1 Report and assess the progress made in the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);
- .2 Define priority actions and propose related activities for the following biennium; and
- .3 Define roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the proposed activities and establish operational and strategic synergies, through specific partnership agreements, if required, by coordinating parallel initiatives and processes to ensure the capitalisation of past and ongoing efforts, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the resources and expertise mobilised to meet the CSOs of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).

7.2 The Rules of procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the CPs for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the deliberations of the Meeting.

7.3 The Secretariat of the Meeting will be REMPEC administered by the IMO, in cooperation with UNEP/MAP.

7.4 The Meeting will be attended by:

- .1 Experts on the prevention of, and response to marine pollution from ships from CPs members of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols;
- .2 Relevant national, regional and international organisations, institutions and agencies, as observers; and
- .3 Accredited UNEP/MAP Partners, as observers.

7.5 In line with the 2017 UN Secretary General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, the participation of female gender representatives will be encouraged, to contribute to joint efforts towards gender-balanced participation.

7.6 The outcome of the Meeting will be considered for the preparation of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget to be submitted to the Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC for its review, to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points for its approval and to the Ordinary Meeting of the CPs for its adoption. Relevant national, regional and international organisations, institutions and agencies, and accredited UNEP/MAP Partners, will be encouraged to build their respective programme of work taking into account the outcome of the Meeting.

7.7 For each of the seven CSOs, CPs are committing to maintaining an effective and fully operational network of designated officials, who will ensure coordination at national level between relevant competent authorities and other stakeholders including the private sector. CPs will exchange lists of official national designations between relevant regional and international organisations to ensure coordination. Furthermore, each CP will have nominated officials who have clear responsibilities to deliver on the actions set out in the Action Plan.

Reporting and monitoring procedure

7.8 In preparation for the Meeting, CPs, along with relevant national, regional, and international organisations, institutions, agencies, and accredited MAP Partners whose activities align with the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), will be requested to complete an online concise progress report. This report will also include input on ongoing and future related actions based on the action tables of the Action Plan. It should be noted that the preparation and implementation of the NAPs will be essential inputs for the successful organisation of the Meeting. The contributions from CPs through their NAPs will be specifically referenced to ensure a comprehensive and informed discussion.

7.9 For each CSO and corresponding Area of Influence, the progress report and input will focus on action, indicator, target and financial resources mobilised.

7.10 The report of the Meeting will be publicly available and will be submitted to the Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC and to other fora, as appropriate.

Public awareness

7.11 CPs will be encouraged to regularly communicate to the public on key issues relevant to the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) as well as to engage with coastal communities and civil society. CPs will demonstrate to stakeholders that they are delivering on the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), successfully and effectively. CPs will also be encouraged to promote the work undertaken to deliver on the CSOs through supporting increased media exposure of relevant activities, the promotion and dissemination of relevant studies, and through the organisation of activities to increase public engagement.

8. Mid-term review and evaluation

8.1 The implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) will be regularly monitored through a consultative process with CPs and relevant regional and international organisations.

8.2 Following a period of five (5) years, the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) and its Action Plan will be reviewed based on an analysis of the progress of its implementation and on the outcome of discussions on emerging issues. The need to update and revise the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) and its Action Plan will be assessed, in 2026, with a view to potentially adopt a revised strategy in 2027. The review will take into consideration the development of the forthcoming UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (2028–2032), alongside reporting by CPs on the status of implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) and its Action Plan.

9. Institutional framework

9.1 This Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) was developed building on the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) adopted by the COP 19 in 2016. Although much progress has been made, several of the issues highlighted in previous strategies still have relevance today, and therefore it is important to build on past efforts and recognise the progress that has already been achieved.

9.2 The CPs have developed the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) in collaboration with REMPEC, the IMO, UNEP/MAP and other key stakeholders in the Mediterranean.

9.3 The development of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) was undertaken in parallel with the development of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027. Considering the legal, financial and institutional framework of the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention system, including in particular the provisions of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) should be seen as an integral part of the UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy.

Part II. Preparation and implementation of the National Action Plan

10. Introduction to the preparation process of the National Action Plan

10.1 Preparing a NAP involves several critical steps and considerations to ensure that national efforts effectively align with the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). The process emphasises the importance of flexibility, stakeholder engagement, and a thorough NA.

10.2 To begin preparing a NAP, a comprehensive review of the Action Plan outlined in the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), as adopted through Decision IG.25/16, is required. CPs should evaluate these actions in the context of their national circumstances, identifying which actions align with their current capacities and priorities. While the actions set out in the Action Plan provide a solid foundation, CPs are encouraged to adapt them or propose additional actions that better reflect their specific needs and implementation levels. **Section 11** explores this in detail.

10.3 The NAP should undergo a validation process in which key stakeholders participate to ensure that it accurately reflects the current context and that the relevant government bodies confirm its feasibility for implementation. This process helps create a comprehensive NAP that effectively addresses both national and regional goals.

10.4 Preparing a tailored NAP requires setting clear objectives. It is essential to review feasibility before formal approval. Continuous monitoring and periodic updates are necessary to adapt to changing circumstances and ensure effective implementation. **Sections 12 and 13** detail the NAP preparation process following the NA.

11. Preparation for the National Assessment

Instructions for completion

11.1 Following the structure of the Action Plan, the [National Assessment](#) comprehensively addresses all aspects based on the four areas of influence for the CSOs: People, Institution, Infrastructure, as well as Information and Knowledge Sharing. It was developed to assist CPs in assessing their current situation. Each action within the Action Plan is associated with specific indicators and targets, and the questions are designed to help CPs and stakeholders evaluate their progress toward these objectives.

11.2 Gathering all necessary information may require collaboration. To complete the NA effectively, the first step for each CP is to identify the various individuals at the institutional level and different stakeholders that should participate in the completion of the NA.

11.3 Stakeholder participation is critical; therefore, it is highly recommended to distribute the NA among stakeholders to empower them to identify their roles and contribute to this effort. Each question is linked to indicators and targets, enabling CPs to measure their achievements, identify gaps, and thereby facilitate more effective planning of their NAP.

11.4 To ensure effective stakeholder engagement, the following questions should be addressed:

- .1 *How can stakeholders' input be effectively integrated into the NA? What mechanisms can be established to ensure their active participation and feedback?*
- .2 *What roles do different stakeholders play in the implementation of the NAP? How can these roles be clarified and coordinated?*
- .3 *How can the results of the NAP be communicated to stakeholders to maintain transparency and foster collaborative efforts?*

11.5 For the completion of the NA, start by filling out the *General Information* section, which requires basic details about your organisation or entity, including its name, contact information, and your role within the organisation:

STEP 1 - WHO YOU ARE

3.1 Select the answers and complete the box below:

You represent:

Contracting Party to
the Barcelona
Convention:

Name of contact(s):

Position of contact(s):

E-mail(s) of contact(s):

STEP 2 - COMPLETE THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The full National Assessment is composed by seven (7) Common Strategy Objectives (CSOs): CSO (1-7) People, CSO (1-7) Institution, CSO (1-7) Infrastructure, CSO (1-7) Information and Knowledge Sharing (I&KS)
- 2.2 Participation at any kind of events and any kind of documents produced, the answers are from 2022 onwards.
- 2.3 *Questions marked in green are of **low** priority*
- 2.4 *Questions marked in yellow are of **medium** priority*
- 2.5 *Questions marked in red are of **high** priority*

STEP 3 - FOR STAKEHOLDERS ONLY

- 3.1 Send the National Assessment back to the designated Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention.

11.6 Next, assess the current situation by answering all questions related to the seven (7) CSOs and their respective areas of influence. For answering the questions of the NA, you may go to the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), as adopted through [Decision IG.25/16](#), and use the Section 6 (Common objectives to achieve the vision for the Mediterranean) and the Appendix (Action Plan) for each indicator and target. The questions set out in the NA are associated to each action, following the same numerical order.

11.7 For completing the NA, carefully review your responses to ensure accuracy and completeness. Validate the information with supporting documents. Note that participation in events is considered from 2022 onwards, though not limited to this timeframe. Each question includes space for comments and observations; use this section to provide any relevant information or insights.

11.8 Once the NA is fully completed, the designated authority or committee responsible for compiling and formulating the NAP should collect responses from different institutions and stakeholders. The analysis of the outcomes is necessary to identify key needs, priorities, and capabilities that must be addressed in the NAP. This structured approach ensures a comprehensive evaluation of present circumstances, leading to the next step, the formulation of a NAP.

11.9 Use the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), as adopted through [Decision IG.25/16](#), for guidance and its Appendix (Action Plan) for the explanation of each CSO and their required actions. Below please find an extract of CSO 1 (People) as an example of the use of [Decision IG.25/16](#) for the completion of the NA:

Decision IG.25/16:
Appendix, Action Plan:
CSO 1 on People

CSO 1 Prevent, prepare for, and respond to operational, illegal and accidental oil and HNS pollution from ships

6.2. The rates of accidental pollution from ships have decreased globally and regionally, despite the increase in shipping transportation. These results have been achieved in particular through the adoption of regional and international regulatory framework, through the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System and IMO, respectively, namely the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as amended by the Protocols of 1978 and 1997 relating thereto (MARPOL) and its Annexes, the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC) and the Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances 2000 (OPRC-HNS Protocol), as well as technical cooperation activities undertaken at national and regional level. However, risks associated with the transport by ships of oil and HNS with possible harmful consequences on biota and ecosystems cannot be eliminated, accidents can and still do occur. The practice of illegal discharge from ships has been increasingly monitored and enforcement procedures are being put in place progressively through the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) to prosecute offenders.

6.3. To meet this CSO, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agree to reinforce the already established collaborative and collective effort, within the framework of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) and invite relevant organisations to cooperate and coordinate their actions for assistance to facilitate the ratification, effective implementation and strict enforcement of relevant legally binding instruments. The Contracting Parties also acknowledge the need to further develop policies to address current and new challenges in prevention, preparedness and response to operational, illegal and accidental pollution from ships in the Mediterranean, and to facilitate and enhance existing or new services to foster monitoring and exchange of knowledge and data. To maximise these efforts, closer synergies are required between relevant networks within, and outside the Mediterranean region.

6.4. Furthermore, Contracting Parties acknowledge that in maritime transport, the linear cycle of exploitation and use of resources and the elimination of waste is no longer feasible. Therefore, it is required that Contracting parties look towards a vision for a circular economy in maritime transport and the maritime industry, including: leisure (pleasure and entertainment, cruise business); harvesting of raw materials (oil and gas, offshore mining, fishing); logistics (shipping of food, energy, containers, bulk material); and infrastructure (ferries, local shipping, ports). In that line, Contracting Parties also recognise the key role of shipping, as the backbone of trade in the Mediterranean region, in enabling and capitalising on a circular conversion of supply chains and in determining what type of collaboration across value chains those changes would require.

6.5. Contracting Parties also recognise the need for a stronger inter-sectoral cooperation between at-sea, shoreline, and wildlife responders, port authorities, oil and chemical industry and agree to aim for a holistic / integrated management of marine pollution incidents that enable a coordinated response operation at sea and onshore, including the response to wildlife. Such a holistic approach should permeate the oil spill preparedness and response, both at a national level and in region-wide cooperation.

Decision IG.25/16:
Appendix, Action Plan:
CSO 1 on People

CSO 1: Prevent, prepare for, and respond to, operational, illegal and accidental oil and HNS pollution from ships

Area of Influence	Action	Indicator	Target	Supporting Institution ²²	Priority Level
PEOPLE					
1.1 Networks	1.1.1 To maintain and actively participate in the: a) MENELAS b) Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) c) Clean/SeaNet National Competent Authorities (CSN NCAs) d) Mediterranean AIS Experts Working Group (MAREE EWG)	% of CPs having designated officials	100%	To be defined	low
	1.1.2 To capitalize on experience and on knowledge available in other sectors (e.g. knowledge sharing lessons learnt)	Number of seminars, webinars, presentations from other sectors, etc	At least 2 per year	To be defined	low
	1.1.3 To strengthen synergies between relevant networks including: a) IMO Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) b) MTWG c) MENELAS d) Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR) e) the Bonn Agreement and its Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA); f) Helsinki Commission (HELCOM); g) North Sea Network of investigators and Prosecutors (NSN) h) the Baltic Sea Network of Environmental Crime Prosecutors (ENPRO) i) NCAs	Number of documents submitted Number of joint products delivered	1 activity report submitted to the various sessions on work carried out by other relevant networks 1 joint product per biennium	To be defined	low

11.10 Complete the NA provided in Microsoft Excel format [see section 11.2 to access the document].

National Assessment: CSO 1 on People				
Related Questions:				
1.1.1 Have you actively participate in the:	Yes/No	Please indicate the years that designated officials have participated in:		Comments and/or Observations:
a) Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Authorities for Safety and Security at Sea (MENELAS)				
b) Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG)				
c) CleanSeaNet National Competent Authorities (CSN NCAs)				
d) Mediterranean AIS Experts Working Group (MAREE EWG)				
1.1.2 Have you participated in seminars, webinars, presentations from other sectors, etc.?	Yes/No	Please detail the average participation per year:	Please name the event(s):	Comments and/or Observations:
1.1.3 Have you submitted a report to:	Yes/No	Please detail the number of reports/documents submitted:	If the document is available, please provide details on how it can be accessed:	Comments and/or Observations:
a) IMO Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR)				
b) Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG)				
c) Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Authorities for Safety and Security at Sea (MENELAS)				
d) Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR)				
e) The Bonn Agreement and its Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA);				
f) Helsinki Commission (HELCOM);				
g) North Sea Network of investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)				
h) The Baltic Sea Network of Environmental Crime Prosecutors (ENPRO)				
i) National Competent Authorities (NCAs)				

11.11 Following a tailored approach, ensure that the NAP is both relevant and achievable, fostering a strong alignment between national objectives and the overarching Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). To facilitate the preparation of the NAP, CPs should consider the following questions:

- .1 *How integral are the CSOs to the sustainable development and marine environmental protection policies of the country?*
- .2 *Are there clear indicators and targets within the NA that align with national priorities? How can these be adapted to better reflect specific context of the country?*
- .3 *What resources and capacities are required for the effective implementation of the NA? How can these be mobilised or enhanced?*

12. Work Methodology for the preparation of the National Action Plan

12.1 As a first step, CPs should be expected to make themselves fully conversant with the contents of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), as adopted by the CPs through Decision IG.25/16.

12.2 The aim of the NAP should set out where the country wants to be as well as what it is aiming for and why. To help CPs in setting the goals, the National Actions found in the Appendix (Action Plan) to the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) contain indicators and targets so that CPs can formulate their NAP.

12.3 Defining the aim of the NAP requires an understanding of where the country currently stands in terms of prevention of, preparedness, and response to marine pollution from ships, as well as how these will likely develop in the future. Based on this understanding, the country should identify where it wishes to be, setting out its own vision for the future. Defining the aim of the NAP is closely linked with delineating its scope, establishing what aspects the NAP will address and, equally important, what it will not.

12.4 Steps should be initiated to start the preparation of the NAP, and this is likely to include:

- .1 identification and engagement of relevant stakeholders;
- .2 completion of the NA;
- .3 determining the aim and scope of the NAP;
- .4 development of National Actions;
- .5 identification of financing needs;
- .6 reviewing the NAP; and
- .7 approving the NAP.

Entities responsible for the preparation of the National Action Plan

12.5 The Constitution and administrative governance structure of the country are fundamental. A centralised government system will require coordination and integration, both within and across ministries and agencies.

12.6 The establishment of a sound coordinating mechanism is critical to preparing and implementing the NAP as well as needs to be addressed early in the process.

12.7 In order to structure the process of preparing and implementing the NAP, in consultation and cooperation with the relevant agencies and stakeholders, the following actions are recommended:

- .1 identify the *Lead Body* (see **Box 1**);
- .2 establish a *National Task Force (NTF)* (see **Box 2**); and
- .3 designate a *National Focal Point* (see **Box 3**).

12.8 The process instils ownership and thus ultimately strengthens implementation and compliance. It is also a tool for utilising the sets of skills spread out over a number of institutions, sectors and stakeholders.

Box 1: Lead Body

The Lead Body has the principal responsibility for preparing the NAP and should be in a position to lead the process, i.e. should have a clear understanding of the technicalities of the process and subject matter, along with a strong legitimacy to lead the process.

The Lead Body should support mobilising as well as securing political will and government buy-in at the highest appropriate level at the earliest stage of preparing the NAP, and should delegate various aspects or components of the preparation of the NAP to other stakeholders with particular competence in the field (e.g. the Ministry of Environment).

Box 2: National Task Force (NTF)

It is recommended that a National Task Force (NTF) be established for the purpose of advising and supporting the process of preparing and implementing the NAP. The NTF membership ideally should include both government officials and major national stakeholders, in particular those who would be key to the success of the process of the preparation and implementation of the NAP. It is recommended that the NTF membership includes representatives from:

- the Lead Body;
- pertinent government bodies (e.g. ministries and agencies, maritime administrations, port authority representatives, and so on);
- stakeholders from the maritime industry and the environmental community, as appropriate (e.g. representatives from shipowners, shipbuilders, classification societies, maritime training organisations, NGOs and academia); and
- stakeholders from other industries, as appropriate.

The NTF should be established at the earliest possible stage of the preparation of the NAP, in order to undertake meaningful consultations as well as ensure ownership by participants and all relevant stakeholders.

Box 3: National Focal Point

It is recommended that a specific individual from the Lead Body be designated as National Focal Point to be responsible for the overall coordination and management of the process of preparation of the NAP at the national level as well as for organising and chairing relevant meetings.

Tailoring a comprehensive National Action Plan

12.9 The Common Template for the Preparation of the NAP (the “NAP Common Template”), as set out in the **Annex** to the present document, should be utilised as the basis on which to build a specific NAP tailored to the needs and capabilities of each CP. Since the NAP Common Template is presented as an outline document that only sets out titles and placeholders to be filled by the CPs according to their current situation and circumstances, it would be prudent to follow a work methodology that would enable the completion of the NAP Common Template as soon as possible and, thus, to define a specific NAP for immediate implementation.

12.10 Acknowledging that individual CPs have different institutional framework, available resource levels, geographical configurations, etc., the work methodology presented in the Guidance Document provides general suggestions, which should be adjusted or modified taking into account the actual capabilities and means of each CP.

12.11 With a view to preparing their NAPs, CPs are expected to use the NAP Common Template, and tailor it to their specific needs and capabilities according to their particular roles, depending on their geographical and national circumstances.

12.12 As a second step, it is recommended that the NA is completed, as explained in the previous section. The participation of government bodies and national stakeholders will enable each CP to identify the actors, context and arrangements needed to prepare, adopt and implement the NAP, namely:

- .1 Institutional framework, i.e. the departments of the administration that need to be involved in the preparation of the NAP, which should reflect the multi-faceted nature of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). Ideally, the administration could consider the establishment of a dedicated NTF with representatives of the departments involved and other stakeholders.
- .2 Involved stakeholders, i.e. other State departments, industry, civil society, regional and international organisations, etc. whose input may contribute to the successful preparation of the NAP.
- .3 Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes, with a view to integrating as much as possible results and lessons learnt from other experiences to avoid duplication of work and resources.
- .4 Timeline for completion, including a detailed schedule of actions to be taken in accordance with the priorities assigned under the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).
- .5 Approval and endorsement by the relevant authorities, as specified in the institutional framework.

12.13 An order of precedence for the implementation of the seven (7) CSOs could be established at this stage, if possible, or as soon as possible, based on the priorities assigned under the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Decision IG.25/16, Section 7) and the reigning circumstances of the concerned CP.

12.14 The actions within each CSO are categorised by priority. It is recommended that the NAP adhere to these prioritised actions.

12.15 The third step is filling the NAP Common Template that takes the form of an outline document setting out essential titles and brackets where text should be inserted as appropriate. The CPs will be expected, with the assistance of REMPEC if requested, to supply the technical content based on the CSOs and the NA. Such technical content and other qualitative information, together with the results of internal consultations and developments under each CSO, should make it possible for the CPs to fill in the NAP Common Template and obtain a specific NAP fulfilling the CSOs as agreed in Decision IG.25/16.

12.16 **Once the draft of the NAP is at a reasonably advanced stage, it should be reviewed in terms of whether it is ‘fit for purpose’ or not.** This means that it is clear about the aim to be achieved and how to achieve it. To do this effectively, the NAP should support the direction and vision of the government overall policy as well as should be easily understandable and accessible to the people who will need to work with it and implement it. **Box 4** provides the key questions to consider in this review process:

Box 4: Is the draft of the NAP ‘fit for purpose’?

- Is the NAP clear about what aim it is intended to achieve and how it supports the national government in its overall policy direction?
- Does the NAP take account of the wider agenda of government policy for shipping and the environment?
- Does the NAP take into account the evolving international regulatory?
- Does the NAP make clear links to other relevant strategies and policies so that it ‘fits’ with the overall direction of the government and avoids giving out contradictory messages?
- Are the objectives and actions clear? If met, will they lead to the overall achievement of the aim of the NAP?
- Is it easy to understand what needs to be done to implement the NAP?
- Does the NAP make clear reference to and fit within the appropriate legislative requirements?
- Is the NAP clear and concise? Is it written in a style that is simple and direct and avoids longwinded language or becomes difficult to follow?
- Is it clear who is responsible for implementing the NAP?
- Has the NAP been shaped by the involvement and consultation of a range of stakeholders?
- Does the NAP draw on a relevant evidence base to support assertions?

12.17 Once the NAP has been reviewed by all relevant parties and is considered ‘fit for purpose’, the document will require formal endorsement and approval/adoption at the highest appropriate political and administrative level, in line with national government protocols. **Box 5** provides potential barriers that may include:

Box 5: Potential Barriers

- Weak regulatory authority;
- Lack of support from other ministries and stakeholders as well as lack of agreement on goals and objectives;
- Multiplicity of ministries involved making coordination a challenge;
- No incentives for involvement of stakeholders and even a lack of interest in the issue;
- Lack of clarity on responsibilities and commitments during implementation;
- Lack of information;
- Competing policy priorities;
- Lack of an adequate budget;
- Non-availability or high cost of appropriate technology;
- Lack of trained personnel in relevant ministries and agencies; and
- Inability to agree on appropriate objectives as well as a monitoring and evaluation strategy; and limitations on the ability of stakeholders to adopt specific measures recommended in the NAP – for example, the economic climate places constraints on ability of especially medium and small shipowners to invest in new equipment.

Management of implementation of the National Action Plan

12.18 Once the NAP is approved at the highest appropriate level, consideration should be given to how the implementation of actions will be managed, monitored and evaluated and how the NAP will be communicated to various audiences. **Box 6** outlines key implementation and communication considerations:

Box 6: Implementation considerations

- How will the overall implementation of the NAP be managed?
- Have the aims, objectives and actions been identified?
- Have responsibilities for each action been allocated?
- Have timeframes been set for each action?
- Have funding sources been identified?

Funding sources administration

12.19 Once the aim, objectives and actions are identified, responsibilities allocated, timeframes set and resource requirements as well as potential funding sources identified, the various elements of the NAP can be assembled into an implementation plan.

12.20 The NAP is expected to cover a significant range of activities that will require careful and consistent management. **It is recommended that the management of the NAP implementation be considered at an early stage.**

Monitoring and evaluation

12.21 The preparation and implementation of the NAP is an iterative process rather than a one-off activity and should be monitored, evaluated and revised on a regular basis to ensure the relevance of the NAP in the face of changing national and international circumstances. It is also important to monitor if desired results are being achieved or plan is on course towards the aim of the NAP. To guide this process, refer to the structured guidelines outlined in **Box 7** and **Box 8**.

Box 7: Monitoring progress

- How will the implementation progress of the NAP be monitored?
- At what intervals will this occur?
- What criteria/performance indicators will be used to assess the implementation of the NAP?
- Who will be responsible for monitoring progress and evaluating effectiveness?

Box 8: Evaluation outcomes

- Which actions have been successfully implemented?
- Which have not? If not, how could they be improved?
- Have other challenges been identified? (e.g. information gaps, lack of engagement)
- How can these challenges be addressed?

External communication

12.22 A NAP communication strategy is essential for its successful implementation and alignment with its objectives. Key considerations include how the NAP should be communicated and the objectives of this communication strategy. Is the goal to raise general awareness, or to secure buy-in for effective implementation? Identifying the target audience(s) and understanding their interests are crucial for effective targeting. Defining the key messages to be conveyed and selecting the appropriate tools and activities for communication are vital steps. Additionally, it is important to consider the available resources and whether they can be utilised within the required timescale or not. Finally, continuous feedback mechanisms should be established to improve and strengthen communication efforts.

Establishing deadlines

12.23 By adhering to these structured phases and deadlines, the CPs can ensure a systematic and efficient process for preparing and implementing their NAPs. This approach facilitates the achievement of the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), ensuring the reduction of marine pollution and fostering sustainable development within the maritime sector. **Box 9** outlines the suggested phases and deadlines for the preparation of the NAP:

Box 9: Tasks and deadlines for the preparation of the NAP	
Task	Deadline
Phase 1: Initial Preparation (months 1 and 2)	
Institutional and stakeholder identification	month 1
Distribution of the NA	month 2
Phase 2: Data Collection (months 3 to 5)	
Completion of NA by national entities and stakeholders	months 3 to 5
Phase 3: Analysis of the NA (months 6 to 8)	
Answers analysis	months 6 to 8
Phase 4: Drafting of the NAP (months 9 and 10)	
Drafting of the NAP	months 9 to 10
Phase 5: Revision of the NAP (month 11)	
Validation and finalisation of the NAP	month 11
Phase 6: Approval of the NAP (month 12)	
Formal approval of the NAP	month 12

13. National Action Plan: paving the way to the IMO Member State Audit Scheme

13.1 Since most of the international instruments referred to in the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) were adopted under the IMO auspices and since the NAP includes NAs, the IMSAS has been used as a core reference. Moreover, familiarisation with IMSAS will pave the way for CPs that have not undergone the process to subject themselves to the said audit. For reference purposes, the IMSAS has been issued as an IMO publication (2015 Edition, IMO Publication sales number I118E) and consists of six sections:

- .1 Framework and Procedures for the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMO Assembly resolution A.1067(28)), which provide the overall strategy for the Scheme;
- .2 IMO Instruments Implementation Code (IMO Assembly resolution A.1070(28)) (“the Audit standard”), developed to provide regulatory connectivity between the provisions of the IMO mandatory instruments and the requirements they set out that concern a State’s obligations and responsibilities for their effective implementation and enforcement;
- .3 2023 Non-exhaustive list of obligations under instruments relevant to the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code) (IMO Assembly resolution A.1187(33));

- .4 All the amendments to the mandatory IMO instruments included in the scope of the Scheme that were adopted by the respective IMO bodies in the process of institutionalising the Scheme to make mandatory the auditing of IMO Member States and the use of the III Code;
- .5 Other resolutions, including the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMO Assembly resolution A.946(23)), established with a view to it being made mandatory in the future, as it happened on 1 January 2016, and Transition from the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme to the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMO Assembly resolution A.1068(28)); and
- .6 Auditor's Manual for IMSAS, developed as guidance to assist auditors in their planning, conducting and reporting duties.

Annex. Common template for the preparation of the National Action Plan

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION OF,
PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE TO MARINE POLLUTION FROM
SHIPS (2022-2031)

[Flag of the Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention]

[Name of the Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention]

Introduction

As a Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, [country name] is proud to introduce our National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the “Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)”). Rooted in our commitment to international environmental standards and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this NAP reflects our dedication to safeguarding the Mediterranean Sea, a vital maritime ecosystem of global significance. Reinforcing the urgency of implementing internationally recognised regulations set forth by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), [including MARPOL and the BWM Convention; amend as appropriate], these regulations are pivotal in mitigating pollution risks and promoting sustainable maritime practices within our territorial waters and beyond.

Our NAP is designed with clear objectives and actionable measures aimed at preventing, mitigating, and responding effectively to marine pollution incidents. It emphasises the strengthening of our legal and institutional frameworks to ensure robust enforcement and compliance with international protocols. By ratifying relevant conventions and fostering collaborative partnerships, [country name] seeks to enhance regional cooperation and resilience against maritime pollution threats.

Central to our efforts is the support provided by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) [add other key regional stakeholders, as appropriate]. This partnership underscores our commitment to leveraging regional resources and expertise in achieving our shared environmental objectives.

Through stakeholder engagement and inclusive governance, [country name] aims at maximising synergies and resources, ensuring the effective implementation of our NAP and contributing to a cleaner, healthier Mediterranean Sea for present and future generations.

Governmental efforts to date

[Country name] has made significant progress in environmental protection and maritime pollution prevention, reflecting our alignment with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols as well as the objectives outlined in Decision IG.25/16. Key initiatives include [describe the enactment of comprehensive maritime legislation, the establishment of stringent environmental monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and the successful implementation of pollution control programs]. Our government has ratified key international conventions, such as [insert key international conventions, e.g. MARPOL and the BWM Convention], reinforcing our commitment to global maritime standards. [If applicable, also add the creation of dedicated marine protection agencies and the development of advanced response strategies for pollution incidents]. These accomplishments lay a solid foundation for our NAP, ensuring it builds upon and enhances existing legal frameworks and governmental initiatives, thus fortifying our resolve to protect the Mediterranean Sea.

National implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)

The compatibility and alignment of our NAP with broader regional agreements and international frameworks are fundamental to its success. Ensuring coherence and avoiding contradictions with other regional initiatives, agreements, or programs is vital for maintaining the integrity and practicality of our environmental strategies. By harmonising our NAP with these higher-level commitments, we aim to create a cohesive and effective approach to marine pollution prevention that is both actionable and aligned with our broader environmental and developmental objectives.

The NAP for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) is based on the seven (7) Common Strategies Objectives (CSOs), grouped by four distinct areas of influence: People, Institution, Infrastructure, as well as Information and Knowledge Sharing. In order by CSO and by priority level (high, medium, low), the NAP to implement the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) is as follows:

CSO 1	Prevent and reduce litter (in particular plastic) entering the marine environment from ships, in order to limit the environmental, health, and socio-economic impact of marine litter in the Mediterranean
Assessment of the current situation	[develop here]
Institutional framework	[develop here]
Involved Stakeholders	[develop here]
Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes	[develop here]
Main objectives	[develop here]
Actions to be taken	[develop here]
Timeline for completion	[develop here]

CSO 2	Promote and support the development and implementation of innovative global solutions to mitigate and respond to climate change
Assessment of the current situation	[develop here]
Institutional framework	[develop here]
Involved Stakeholders	[develop here]
Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes	[develop here]
Main objectives	[develop here]
Actions to be taken	[develop here]
Timeline for completion	[develop here]

CSO 3	Reduce and monitor air emissions from ships to a level that is not harmful to the marine environment, or the health of the coastal population of the Mediterranean
Assessment of the current situation	[develop here]
Institutional framework	[develop here]
Involved Stakeholders	[develop here]
Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes	[develop here]
Main objectives	[develop here]
Actions to be taken	[develop here]
Timeline for completion	[develop here]

CSO 4	Eliminate the introduction of non-indigenous species by shipping activities Institutional framework
Assessment of the current situation	[develop here]
Institutional framework	[develop here]
Involved Stakeholders	[develop here]
Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes	[develop here]
Main objectives	[develop here]
Actions to be taken	[develop here]
Timeline for completion	[develop here]

CSO 5	Achieve a well-managed safe and pollution free Mediterranean, with integrated marine spatial planning and designation of special areas, where shipping activity has a limited impact upon the marine environment
Assessment of the current situation	[develop here]
Institutional framework	[develop here]
Involved Stakeholders	[develop here]
Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes	[develop here]
Main objectives	[develop here]
Actions to be taken	[develop here]
Timeline for completion	[develop here]

CSO 6	Prevent and reduce litter (in particular plastic) entering the marine environment from ships, in order to limit the environmental, health, and socio-economic impact of marine litter in the Mediterranean
Assessment of the current situation	[develop here]
Institutional framework	[develop here]
Involved Stakeholders	[develop here]
Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes	[develop here]
Main objectives	[develop here]
Actions to be taken	[develop here]
Timeline for completion	[develop here]

CSO 7	Identify and understand collectively emerging issues related to pollution from ships in the Mediterranean, and define required actions to address issues identified
Assessment of the current situation	[develop here]
Institutional framework	[develop here]
Involved Stakeholders	[develop here]
Interlinkages to and synergy with other relevant policy frameworks and processes	[develop here]
Main objectives	[develop here]
Actions to be taken	[develop here]
Timeline for completion	[develop here]

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