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

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

REMPEC/WG.58/7  
18 October 2024  
Original: English

Lija, Malta, 21 November 2024

**Agenda Item 7: Reporting and Monitoring Procedure**

**Proposal for restructuring of the Intersessional Working Groups of the Mediterranean Strategy 2022-2031, and the establishment of a Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) Inter-Secretariat Group to support coordination amongst relevant stakeholders**

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 Mediterranean Strategy 2022-2031 was adopted in December 2021. The First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022), hereinafter referred to as the First Coordination meeting, *inter alia*, agreed to establish seven (7) Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) with the aim to discuss the progress and coordination of implementation of actions, during and between the biennial coordination meetings on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).

The process to establish the IWGs and the engagement in that process from Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and relevant stakeholders, has highlighted a need to consider how the IWGs might operate best in future biennia.

This document seeks to set out a proposal for how the IWGs might be restructured for the next biennium and puts forward a proposal to establish a Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) Inter-Secretariat Group to support coordination amongst relevant stakeholders.

## **Introduction**

1. The First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022), hereinafter referred to as the First Coordination meeting, *inter alia*, agreed to establish seven (7) Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) with the aim to discuss the progress and coordination of implementation of actions, during and between the biennial coordination meetings on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).
2. The IWG were established in July 2024 and document REMPEC/WG.58/2/1 provides a brief summary of the work undertaken by the IWGs alongside recommendations from the IWGs and suggested priorities for the next biennium.
3. Document REMPEC/WG.58/3 presents the Biennial Review, assessing the progress and effectiveness of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), identifying suggested areas for improvement. The Biennial Review considered the reports from each of the seven IWGs and concluded that, the process to establish the IWGs and the engagement in that process from Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and relevant stakeholders, has highlighted a need to consider how the IWGs might operate best in future biennia.
4. A number of recommendations are made in the Biennial Review that relate to the future operation of the IWGs:
  - .1 There is a need for greater ownership of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) and the actions to deliver the seven CSOs, amongst Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and relevant stakeholders;
  - .2 There is also a need for greater recognition of the ambition behind the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), i.e. that this is not a REMPEC led Strategy, but a Strategy for all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and relevant stakeholders, and its success is dependent on taking collective and collaborative action to address ship source pollution in the Mediterranean;
  - .3 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and relevant stakeholders should support and encourage active engagement in the IWGs;
  - .4 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should consider the specific and targeted recommendations on the work recommended as set out in the reports of the IWGs;
  - .5 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should consider the IWGs required to support the delivery of the various CSOs, and if there is a need to combine existing groups (for example to have a unique IWG for CSO 1 instead of the current 2 groups: IWG-PREVENT and IWG-RESPOND due to overlapping and duplication of efforts), or if there is a need to revisit the ToRs for all of the IWG to ensure they are able to be operationalised and support the delivery of the CSOs;
  - .6 Contracting Parties should consider how the IWGs could be organised so that they are able to review and update the Action plan and related actions, to discuss identified support needs raised by Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, alongside activities being organised / offered by relevant stakeholders (including training opportunities, funding, and capacity-building), considering how best to raise awareness of existing opportunities, and also how to highlight requirements for additional support, towards better implementation of the actions of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031); and

- .7 To support better coordination nationally, regionally and internationally, relevant stakeholders should regularly engage in the IWGs set up under the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).
5. This document seeks to set out a proposal for how the IWGs might be restructured, together with proposed draft Terms of Reference (TOR), contained in the Annex, for the next biennium and puts forward a proposal to establish a Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) Inter-Secretariat Group to support coordination amongst relevant stakeholders.

### **Proposed restructuring of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) IWGs**

6. The following general observations are made in the Biennial Review about the way in which the IWGs are currently operating:
  - .1 Not all IWGs were able to become operational. This was partly due to time limitations, but was also due to a lack of leadership / ownership ;
  - .2 For the IWGs that were operational, there was in some cases limited engagement, with a lack of national nominations and stakeholder nominations for experts to join the groups;
  - .3 For the IWGs that were operational, there was also, in some cases, limited engagement from Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and relevant stakeholders during discussions at the meetings, as well as limited feedback received outside of the IWG meetings;
  - .4 REMPEC, as the Secretariat responsible for the overall coordination of the work being undertaken, should not take the lead of any of the IWGs; and
  - .5 Concerns were raised during IWG discussions that the terms of reference (ToR) for the IWGs were not clear, and participants at the IWG meetings felt unable to fulfil the requirements of the ToR, as currently set out.
7. The general observations above could be addressed by reconsidering the structure and approach taken by the IWGs to fulfil the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). The Secretariat therefore proposes the following:
  - .1 To re-establish the IWGs with one for each CSO (seven in total); and
  - .2 To establish a separate Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) Inter-Secretariat Group to support coordination amongst relevant stakeholders.
8. The purpose of the new IWGs would be to focus on identifying the needs of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to fulfil the relevant CSO of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). This would include defining an action plan, based on the needs identified by the IWG, and highlighting the appropriate priority actions required to achieve the CSO. As the IWG matures, there would be a requirement to review and amend the defined Action Plan to ensure it remains current, and that it reflects the shared and collective requirements of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.
9. It is envisaged that the IWGs would include national nominations from each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, to ensure that all Contracting Parties are fairly represented in the requirement of needs set out by the IWGs. The IWGs would also be open to relevant observer organizations and stakeholders. In this way, it will be ensured that the output developed is inclusive and representative as much as possible, taking into consideration the input of all Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders.

10. The purpose of the Inter-Secretariat Group would be to bring together the relevant stakeholders in the Mediterranean region to consider the needs and priority actions put forward by each of the IWGs, and define programmes of work, coordinating activities, to support Contracting Parties in achieving the CSOs of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), based on the needs and actions identified by the IWGs.
11. The IWGs and the Inter-Secretariat Group would need to work alongside each other, with reciprocal reporting between each, and clearly defined meeting schedules to enable a fully functioning feedback loop (i.e. as needs are identified, activities can be defined and resources allocated as appropriate).

**Action Requested**

12. The Second Coordination Meeting is invited to:
  - .1 Consider the proposed restructure of the IWGs, and the establishment of a Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) Inter-Secretariat Group to support coordination amongst relevant stakeholders.
  - .2 If appropriate, instruct REMPEC to coordinate the establishment of the newly restructured IWGs, and the establishment of a Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) Inter-Secretariat Group.

## ANNEX

### **Draft terms of reference for the Establishment of the Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs)**

The Secretariat proposes to establish the 7 Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) for each of the CSOs set out in the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) with the following terms of reference:

Taking into account REMPEC documents REMPEC/WG.58/2/1, REMPEC/WG.58/2/INF.1, REMPEC/WG.58/3, the outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coordination Meeting for the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), as applicable, and the comments and decisions made at the 16<sup>th</sup> Focal Points Meeting, the Intersessional Working Groups are instructed to:

- .1 identify the needs of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to fulfil the relevant CSO of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);
- .2 define an action plan, based on the needs identified by the IWG, and highlighting the appropriate priority actions required to achieve the CSO;
- .3 review and amend (at quarterly intervals) the defined Action Plan and associated actions, to ensure it remains current, and that it reflects the shared and collective requirements of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention;
- .4 update the Action Plan and associated actions and determine a timeline for its implementation , for consideration in the Mid-Term Review of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);
- .5 identify the appropriate vehicles for the inclusion of the agreed revised Action Plan;
- .6 review the draft Workplan developed by the Inter-Secretariat Group;
- .7 submit a written report to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Coordination Meeting to be held in November 2026.