

Marine Litter Policy Advances in the Mediterranean



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

WES-BCA
Tuesday, 03 February 2026

Marine Litter Framework in the Mediterranean



Ecosystem Approach Policy (EcAp)

Achieving and maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and coasts.



Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP)

Enhancing the marine and coastal environment monitoring and assessment capacities.



MTS 2022-2027

PROGRAMME: 1. Towards a Pollution and Litter Free Mediterranean Sea and Coast embracing Circular Economy



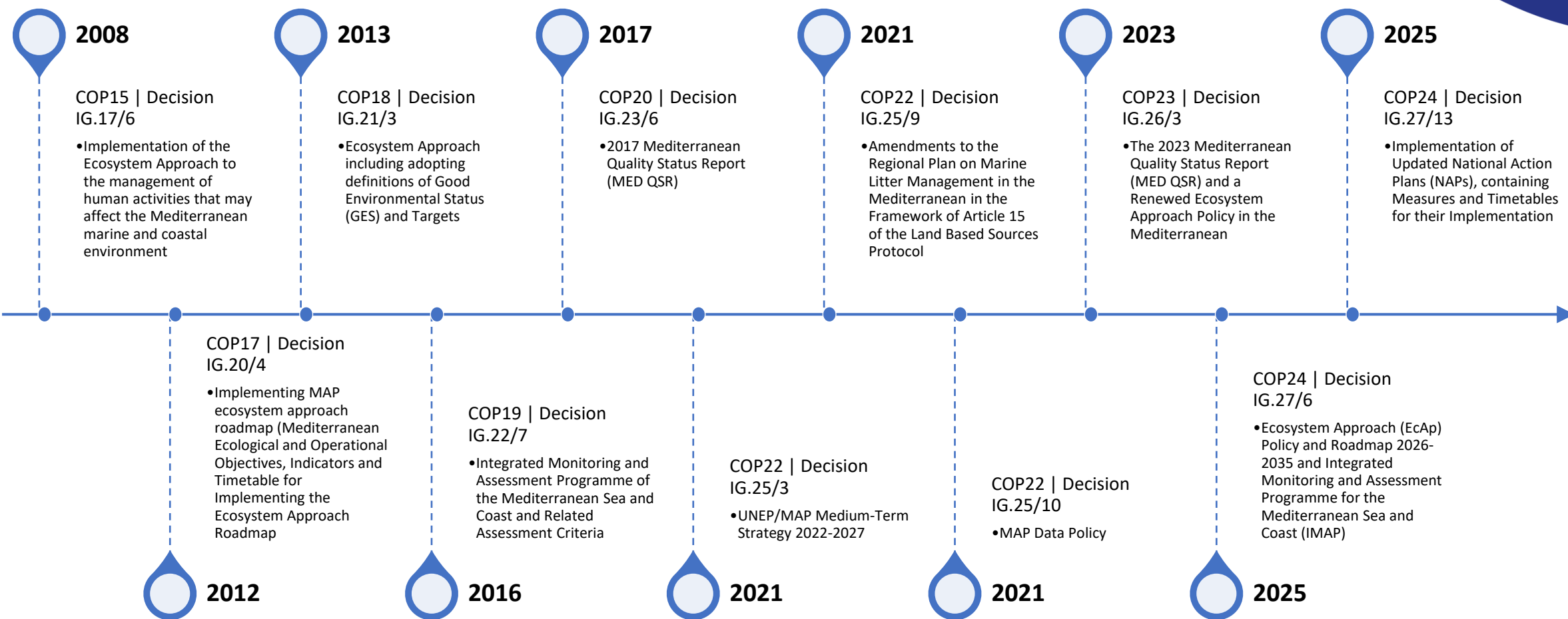
Updated RP on ML

Legally binding measures and timetable for their implementation



UNEP/MAP Related Decisions

The Relevant Decisions adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:





Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management



Measures and their timeline (future dates)

(§13) Establish, as appropriate, a regulatory framework for compostable plastics to be integrated into national waste management policies

(§15.2) Apply prevention measures aiming to achieve, to the extent possible, a circular economy for plastics

(§15.3a) Base urban solid waste management on reduction at source

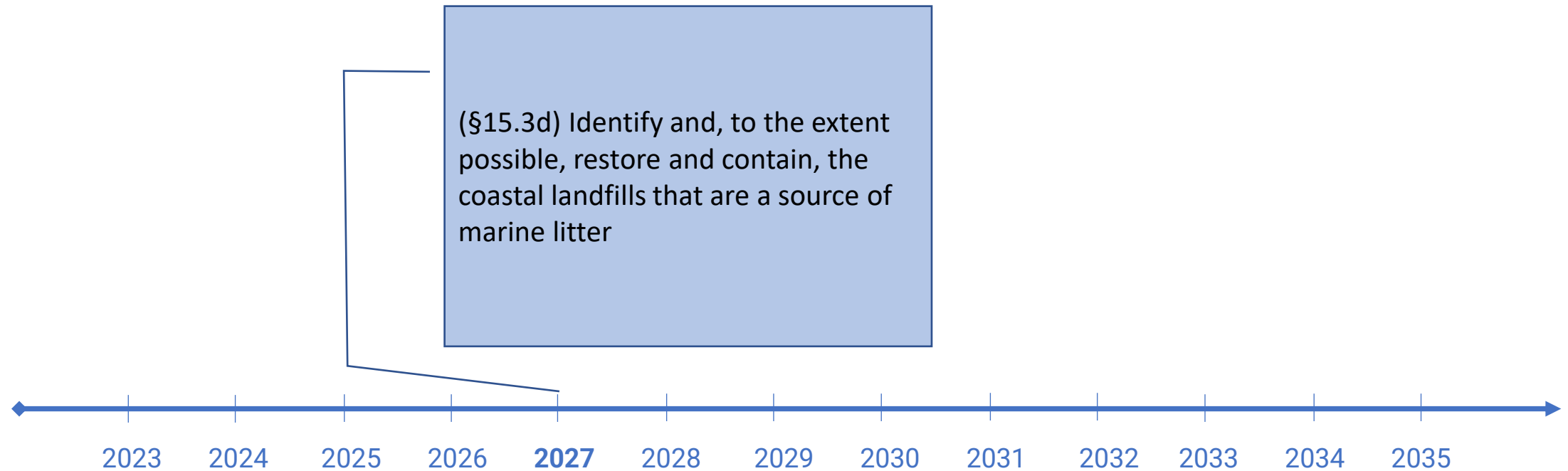
(§15.3f) Identify and assess impacts of marine litter accumulations in upstream regions of rivers and their tributaries, and apply measures to prevent or reduce their leakage into the Mediterranean

(§15.4i) Implement targeted measures aiming at preventing and reducing marine litter impact in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)

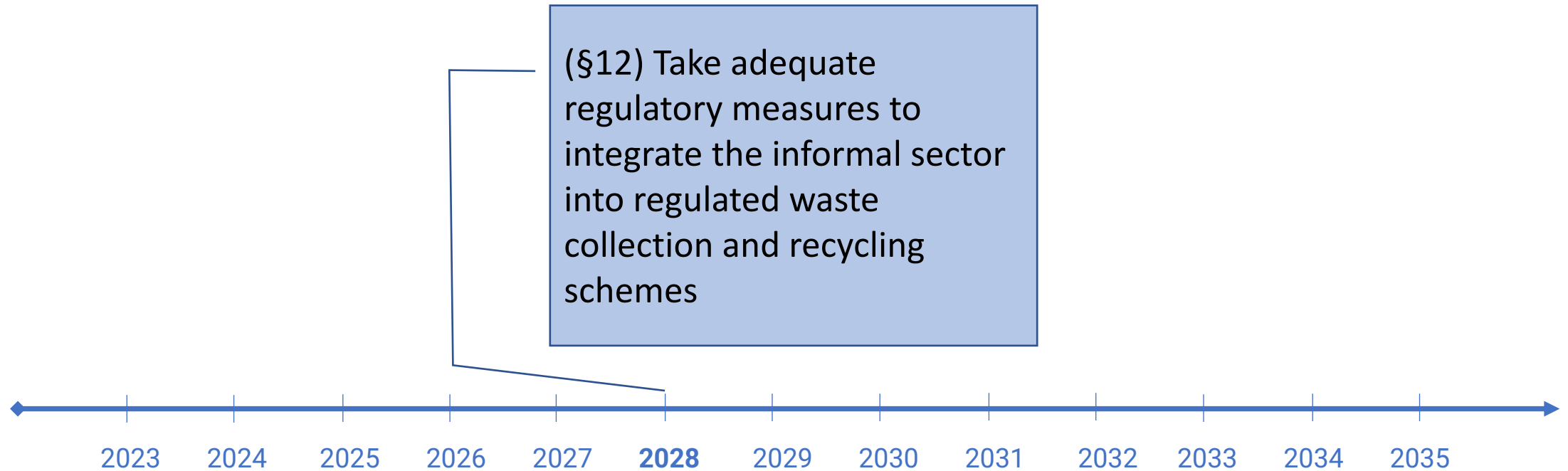
(§18) Explore and implement targeted activities for the localization and retrieval, and where possible, reuse or recycling of derelict fishing gear



Measures and their timeline (future dates)



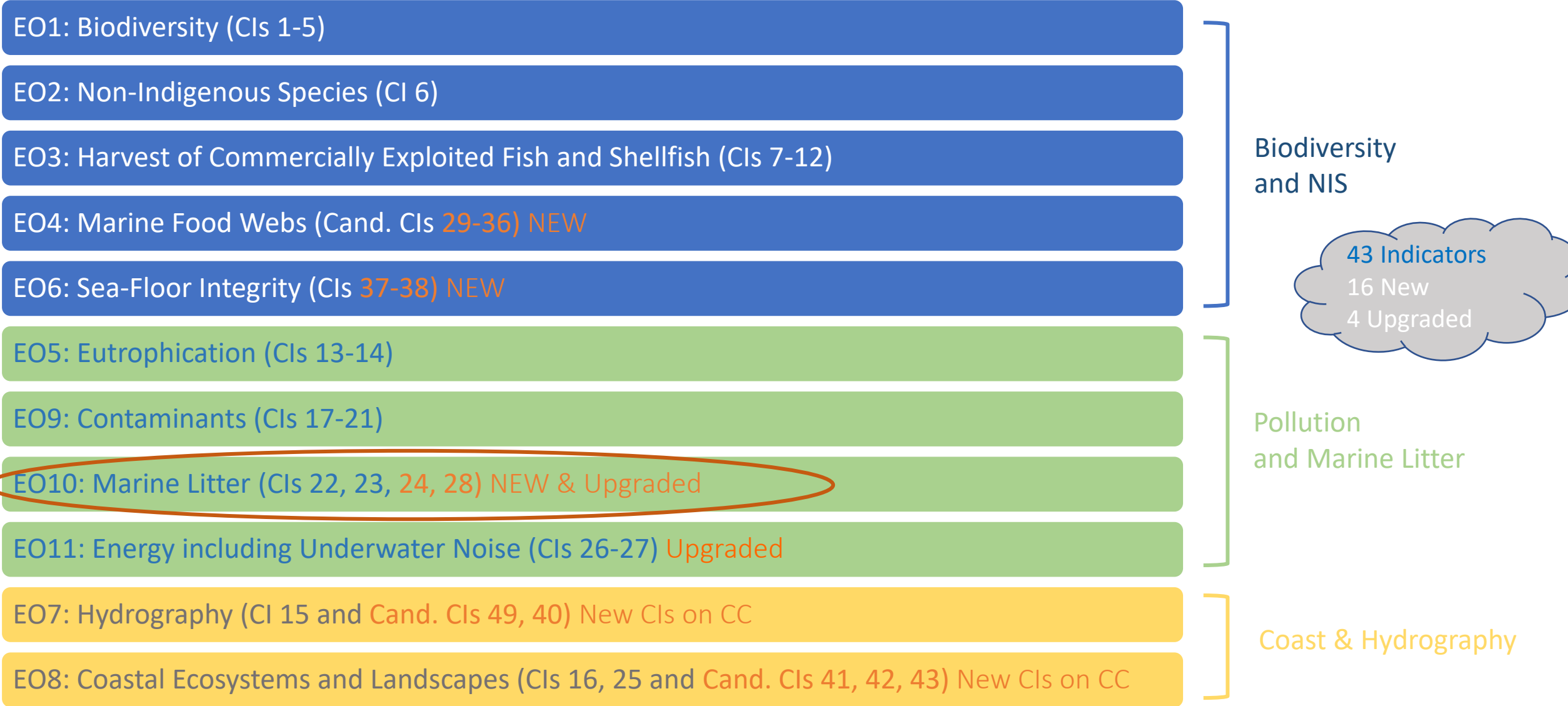
Measures and their timeline (future dates)



Related Article (Paragraph)	Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally committed to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines	Proposal by the Secretariat for implementation of activities with non-legally binding deadlines
Art. 7 (9)	Consider updating periodically the LBS NAPs to integrate marine litter in accordance with the provisions of this Regional Plan and other means to perform their obligations	Final updated NAPs are expected to be submitted by the CPs in 2025.
Art. 8 (11.a)	Ensure institutional coordination, where necessary, among the relevant national policy bodies and relevant regional organizations and programmes, in order to promote integration	As regulatory measures related to plastics and the informal sector under this article are planned for implementation as early as 2025, it is advised that institutional coordination is undertaken no later than 2025.
Art. 8 (11.b)	Ensure close coordination and collaboration between national, regional and local authorities in the field of marine litter management	
Art. 9 (15.1)	Apply to the extent possible instruments needed to regulate and prevent marine litter pollution including plastic waste from land-based and sea-based sources, in particular the implementation of economic instruments, bans and design requirements, EPR, safe/formal markets for recycled plastics, fiscal and economic incentives, innovative business practices, best practices to create incentives)	As marine litter prevention measures to apply circular economy for plastics, and to address land-based and sea-based sources of pollution are predominantly planned for implementation by 2025, it is advised that instruments to regulate and prevent marine litter pollution are put in place prior to 2025 in order to ensure the successful implementation of the other measures.
Art. 9 (15.3.e)	Apply enforcement measures to combat dumping, littering on the beach, illegal sewage disposal from land sources in the sea, the coastal zone and rivers	Implementation of enforcement measures related to illegal dumping is crucial for the successful prevention of marine litter from land-based sources. As these measures are mainly planned for 2025, it is advised that enforcement measures are in place prior to this date.
Art. 9 (15.3.g)	Apply enforcement measures to prevent, reduce and sanction illegal dumping and illegal littering in accordance with national and regional legislation, in particular on coastal zones and rivers	
Art. 9 (15.4.l)	Take the necessary measures to ensure that cruise ships flying their flag or entering their ports implement the procedures for minimizing, collecting, storing, processing and disposing of garbage	Deadlines for measures to prevent marine litter from sea-based sources go back to 2017. It is advised that measures related to minimizing, collecting, storing, processing and disposing of garbage from cruise ships are implemented as early as possible.
Art. 9 (15.4.m)	Take the necessary measures to promote best practices to prevent plastic waste and particularly single use plastic products in tourism and leisure activities including cruise shipping, including through regional cooperation	
Art. 9 (15.4.n)	Implement measures on prevention, response and remediation regarding litter from maritime accidents, including containers lost at sea	

Related Article (Paragraph)	Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally committed to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines	Proposal by the Secretariat for implementation of activities with non-legally binding deadlines
Art. 12 (24)	Design National Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter to include: (a) harmonization and consistency with the integrated regional monitoring programme based on EcAp; (b) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs); and (c) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs)	Deadlines for establishment and implementation of marine litter monitoring programmes go back to 2014 with deadlines as later as 2017. It is advised that in case monitoring programmes are not in place to establish these programmes and to implement monitoring activities as early as possible.
Art. 14 (27)	Prepare specific guidelines, taking into account where appropriate existing guidelines, to support and facilitate the implementation of measures provided for in articles 9 and 10 of the Regional Plan	A number of guidelines related to marine litter management have been prepared, and or under preparation. Implementation of activity should continue as long as the need for such guidelines is existent.
Art. 16 (29)	Enhance public awareness and education	Enhancement of public awareness and education is a necessary condition for the successful implementation of the measures of this Regional Plan. CPs are advised to put in place and to strengthen existing mechanisms to enhance public awareness, as early as possible, because the lack of such arrangements has detrimental effects on the successful implementation of all measures of this Regional Plan.
Art. 17 (31)	Encourage appropriate involvement of, and partnerships with, various stakeholders	Encouraging involvement and partnerships with various stakeholders is crucial for the effective implementation of the Regional Plan.
Art. 18 (33)	Cooperate directly or with the assistance of the Secretariat or the competent international and regional organizations to address transboundary marine litter cases	This is an on-going which should be pursued in each biennium.

EcAp Policy and Roadmap (2026-2035) and IMAP



EcAp Policy and Roadmap (2026-2035) and IMAP

Ecological Objective 10 (EO10): Marine and coastal litter do not adversely affect coastal and marine environment			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
10.1 The impacts related to properties and quantities of marine litter in the marine and coastal environment are minimized	10.1.1 Trends in the amount of litter washed ashore and/or deposited on coastlines (including analysis of its composition, spatial distribution and, where possible, source) (Common Indicator 22)	Number/amount of marine litter items on the coastline do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life and ecosystem services	Decreasing trend in the number of/amount of marine litter (items) deposited on the coast
	10.1.2 Trends in amounts of litter in the water column, including micro-plastics, and on the seafloor (Common Indicator 23)	Number/amount of marine litter items in the water surface and the seafloor do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life, ecosystem services and do not create risk to navigation	Decreasing trend in the number/amount of marine litter items in the water surface and the seafloor
	10.1.3 Trends in the amount of litter coming from riverine sources (Common Indicator 28)	Number/amount of litter items on riverbanks and water surface in estuaries do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life, ecosystem services and do not create risk to navigation	Decreasing trend in the number/amount of litter items deposited on riverbanks and in water surface in estuaries
10.2 Impacts of litter on marine life are controlled to the maximum extent practicable	10.2.1 Trends in the amount of litter ingested by marine organisms and in the number of individuals entangled in marine litter (Common Indicator 24)	- Amount (g) of marine litter ingested by marine organisms do not alter populations of sentinel organisms - Number of individuals entangled in marine litter do not alter populations of sentinel organisms	- Decreasing trend in the stomach content of the sentinel species. - Decreasing frequency of occurrence of sea turtles entangled in marine litter.

Upgraded IMAP Indicators

EO10: Marine Litter

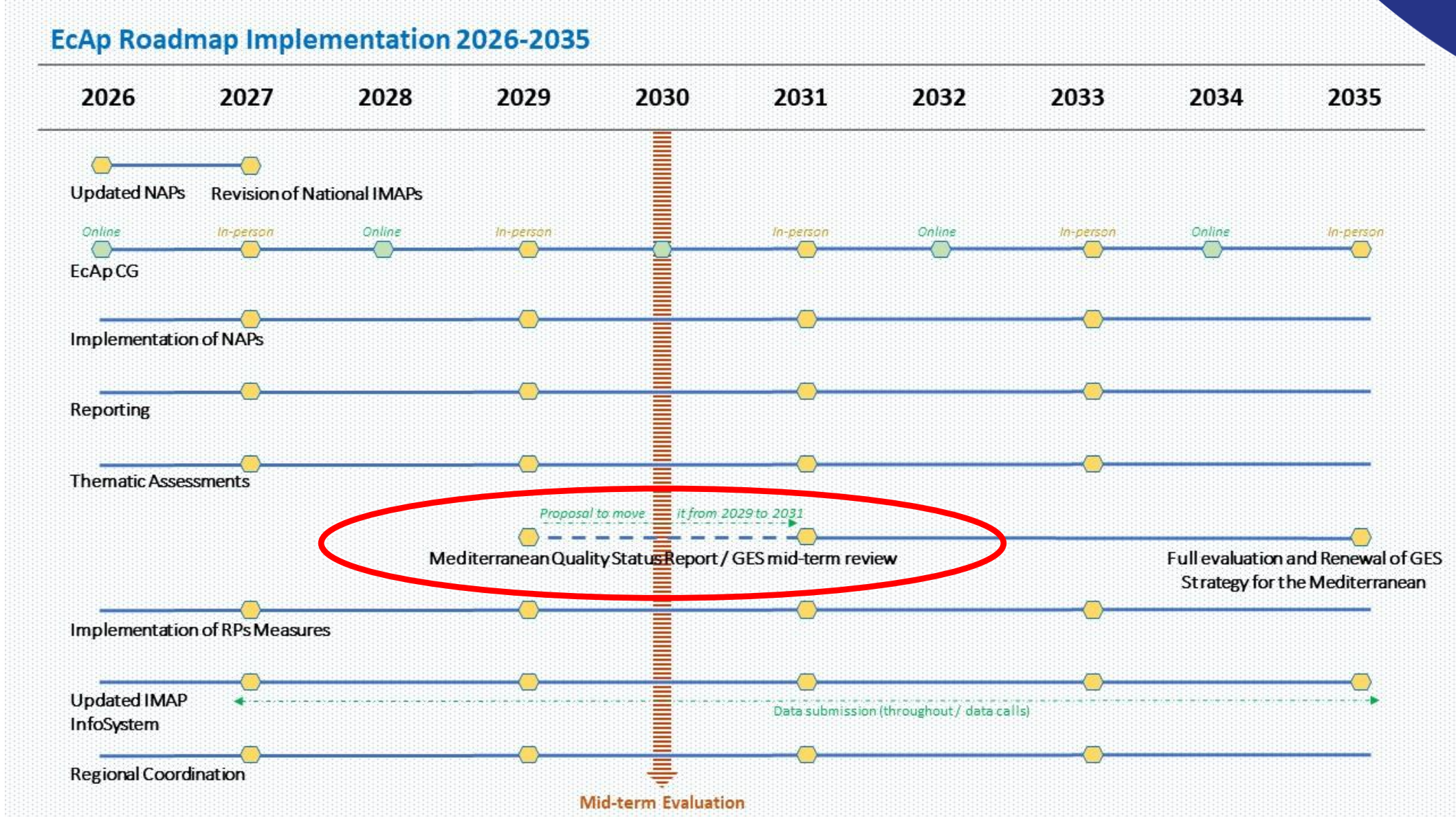
Common Indicator 24: Trends in the amount of litter ingested by marine organisms and in the number of individuals entangled in marine litter

New IMAP Indicators

EO10: Marine Litter

Common Indicator 28: Trends in the amount of litter coming from riverine sources

Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035)





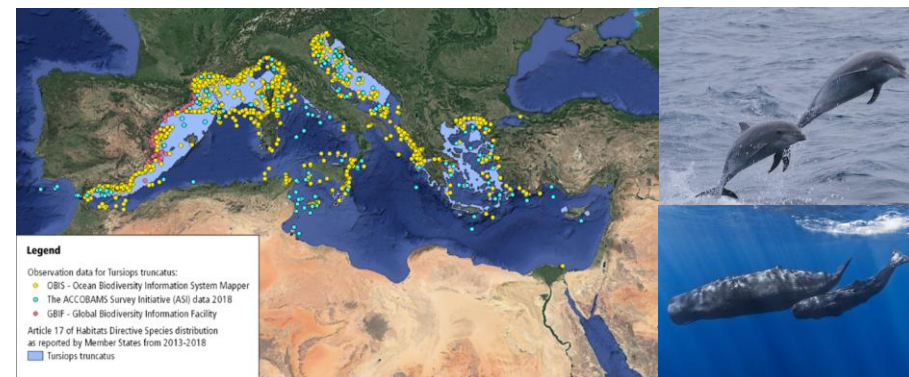
Progress Towards GES Assessment

E01- Biodiversity

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E01	CI1	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓	B1 – Coralligenous Habitat B2 – Maerl/Rhodolith Habitat B3 – Posidonia oceanica Meadows <u>Habitat</u>	✓	Presence across full distributional range / Loss of habitat extent (surface area)
	CI2 – Benthic	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓		✓	Site-based metrics, condition indices, thresholds, extent values / Partial data, limited monitoring, expert judgement
	CI2 – Pelagic	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	✓	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	Not yet defined
	CI3 – Marine Mammals	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓	BA1 – Line Transect Distance Sampling – Marine Mammals & Turtles BC1 – Photo-Identification – Marine Mammals BC2 – Acoustic Sampling – Marine Mammals BM1 – Monk Seal BB4 – Distribution – Marine Birds BT3 – Marine Habitat (Plane/Boat/UAV) – Marine Turtles BT4 – Marine Habitat (Telemetry) – Marine Turtles	✓	Cetacean: Stability or expansion of species' rang / Compared to 2021 ACCOBAMS distribution maps. Monk seal: Presence in natural range / Country group classification + sighting/breeding records
	CI3 – Birds	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓		✓	Presence of seabirds in natural range (breeding and non-breeding) / Compared to historical baselines or previous assessments
	CI3 – Reptiles	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓		✓	Map nesting and feeding areas / Compare with previous assessments / Watch for habitat abandonment.

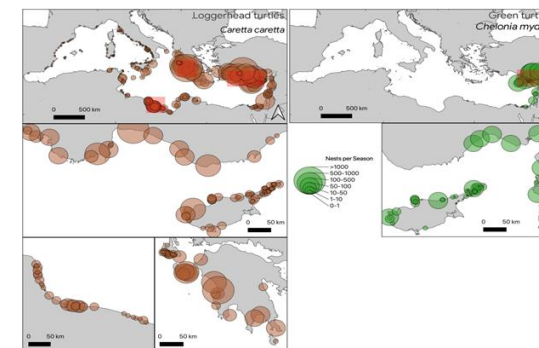
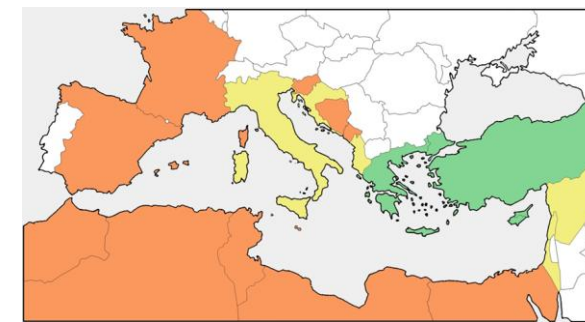


Photos: SPA/RAC, Simone Modugno



E01 - Biodiversity

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E01	CI4 – Marine Mammals	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓	BA1 – Line Transect Distance Sampling – Marine Mammals & Turtles BC1 – Photo-Identification – Marine Mammals BC2 – Acoustic Sampling – Marine Mammals BM1 – Monk Seal BB1 – Mediterranean Shag Survey	✓	Cetacean: Abundance stable or increasing; IUCN LC status / Based on ACCOBAMS design-based estimates; trends vs baseline. Monk seal: Stable/increasing population /Based on breeding colonies and expert input.
	CI4 – Birds	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓	BB2 – Gulls and Terns Survey BB3 – Shearwaters Survey BT3 – Marine Habitat (Plane/Boat/UAV) – Marine Turtles BT4 – Marine Habitat (Telemetry) – Marine Turtles	✓	Population sizes (e.g., breeding pairs, counts at sea) / Evaluated against modern baselines and thresholds. Monitor index nesting sites annually / Use nationwide nesting estimates every 6 years / Integrate ancillary data (e.g., strandings, bycatch) to validate trends.
	CI4 – Reptiles	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓		✓	Category system for nesting levels: Category 1: Established and dense nesting (e.g., 75% of nesting occurs in 7+ sites). Category 2: Sparse but established nesting. Category 3: New, emerging nesting sites. Category 4: Absent or sporadic nesting.



E01 - Biodiversity

	GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E01	CI5 – Marine Mammals	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓		Cetacean: Low mortality, balanced population, stable calves / Currently no thresholds; monitored using proxies (e.g. Tursiops, Balaenoptera). Monk seal: Balanced age, sex, pup survival
	CI5 – Birds	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓	BC3 – Population Demographic Characteristics – Marine Mammals BM1 – Monk Seal BB1 – Mediterranean Shag Survey BB2 – Gulls and Terns Survey BB3 – Shearwaters Survey BT5 – Nesting and Demography – Marine Turtles	Survival, reproductive success, adult:juvenile ratio / Based on field data and indirect indicators (e.g., bycatch, predation, pollution effects)
	CI5 – Reptiles	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	✓		Bycatch assessments in key fisheries (offshore & coastal). Monitor hatchling emergence success and sex ratios (temperature-dependent). GES Criteria: Mortality does not worsen nationally. Emergence Success Thresholds: Loggerhead: >65% Green turtle: >75% Sex Ratio: Not more than 95% female per country.

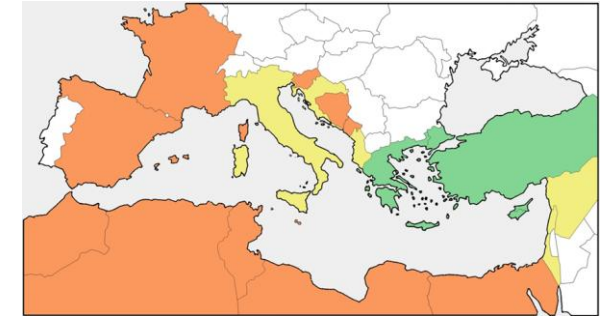


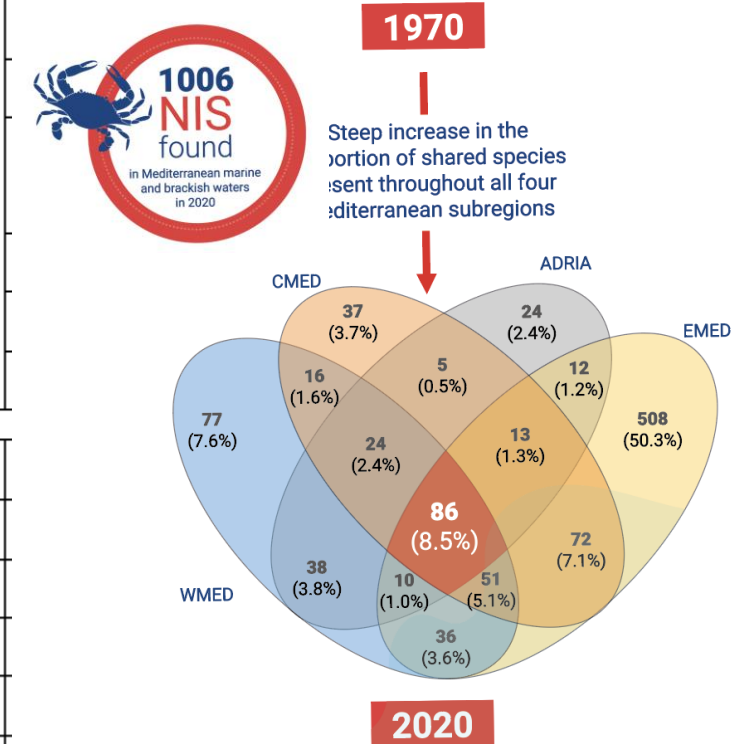
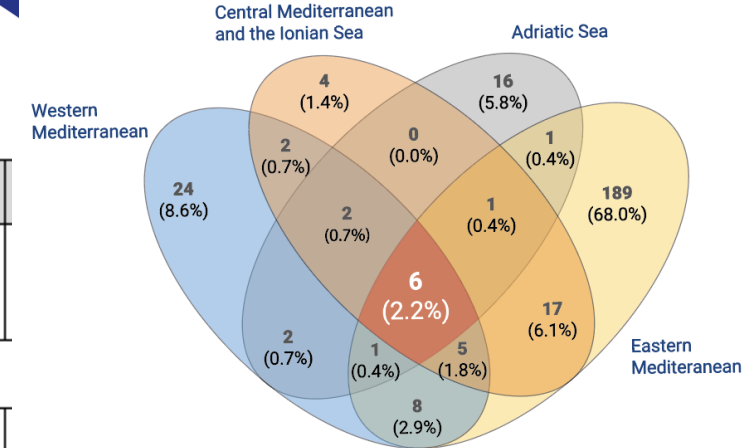
Photo: SPA/RAC

E02 (NIS) – E03 (FISH) – E04 (MFW)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E02	CI6	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.514/10	✓	I1 – Non-Indigenous Species	✓	Time series, abundance, distribution, ecological impacts / Partial data, species lists, expert knowledge

E03	CI7	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	Quantitative stock assessments using standardized data and population dynamics models / Semi-quantitative or qualitative proxy indicators when full assessments are not available.
	CI8	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	CI9	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	CI10	✓	n/a	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	CI11	✓	n/a	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	CI12	✓	✓	(by 2027) WG.444/6/Rev.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	

E04	cCI29	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined
	cCI30	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined
	cCI31	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined
	cCI32	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined
	cCI33	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined
	cCI34	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined
	cCI35	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined
	cCI36	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet defined

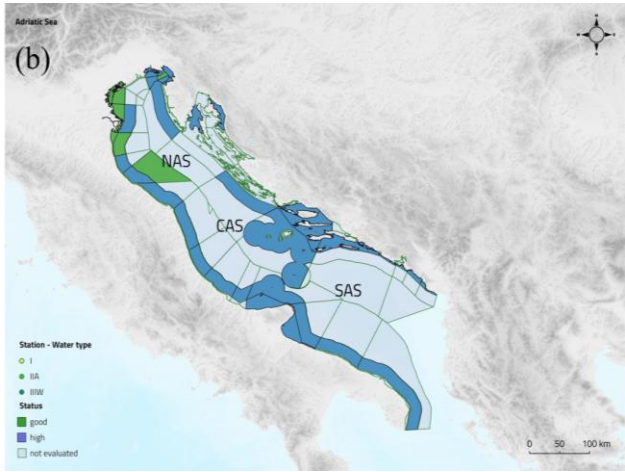
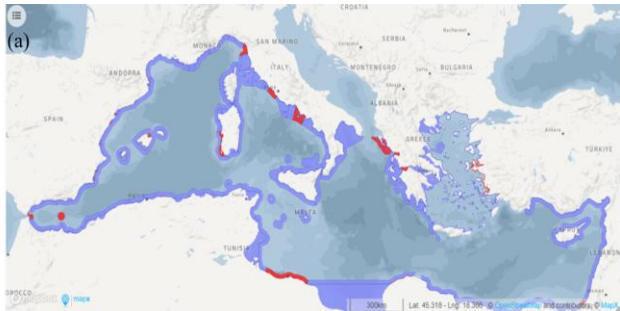


E06 (Sea-Floor Integrity)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E06	CI37	✓	✓	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet fully defined (similar to CI1 and CI2)
	CI38	✓	✓	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	Not yet fully defined (similar to CI1 and CI2)

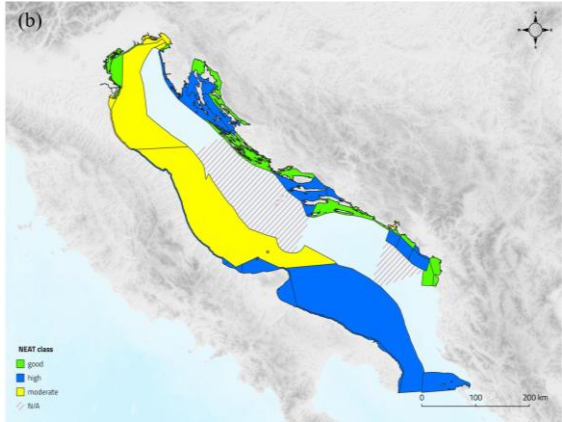
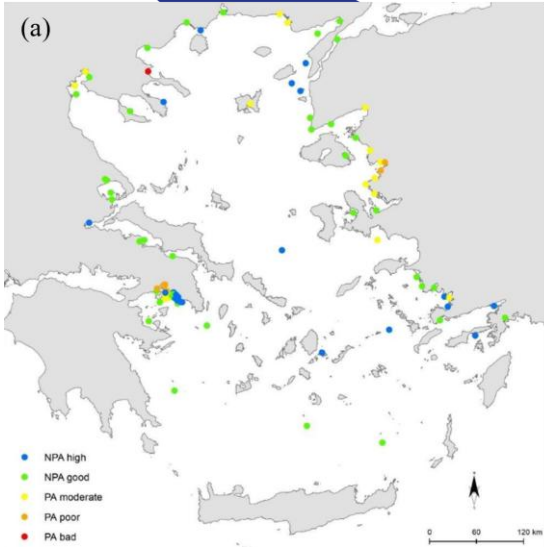
E05 (Eutrophication)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E05	CI13	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 3	✓	✓	✓	Assessment methods – Four methods were identified as relevant within the QSR, of which two were applied: the simplified EQR (using the satellite-derived data across MED) and the NEAT assessments (in the Adriatic Sea).
	CI14	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 3	✓	✓	✓	



E09 (Contaminants)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E09	CI17	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 3	✓	✓	✓	Assessment methods – 2 methods were identified as relevant within the QSR, of which: (a) the CHASE+ was applied at different levels, conditioned with data availability, within the 2 sub-regions; and (b) the NEAT assessments in 2 sub-regions, different level, conditioned with data availability.
	CI18	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 3	✓	✓	✓	Assessment methods - In the absence of reported data, a Scientific Literature-Based Environmental Assessment was applied for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. A total of 24 studies were retrieved from the scientific literature. The assessment was based on information regarding the response of analyzed biomarkers to anthropogenic stressors.



E09 (Contaminants – Oil Spills)

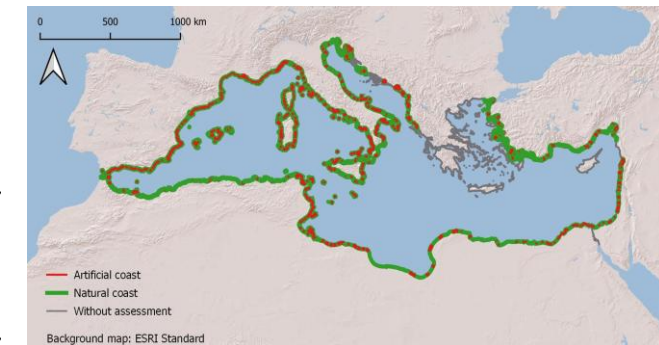
	GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
CI19	✓	✓	✓	n/a (by 2027)	✓	n/a (by 2027)	- The environmental assessment was based on the combination of several datasets – MEDGIS-MAR and Lloyd's (large pollution events) and CleanSeaNet data (minor incidents/spills or illicit discharges). Weighting factors were applied to account for differences among the sources, and the temporal variation in the average number of spills. - The Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC instructed REMPEC to present to the next CORMON Pollution Meeting (2026) recommendations for the implementation of CI19 (identification/designation of responsible authorities overseeing the monitoring of accidental spills from shipping and Oil and Gas offshore activities, and effective information on stations, list of contaminants).
CI20	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 3	✓	✓	✓	An alternative assessment methodology was applied, based on literature sources, due to the absence of in situ monitoring data that should have been reported by the countries.

E09 (Contaminants)

	GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
CI21	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 3	✓	✓	✓	The methodology was developed based on the GES/non-GES classification (in line with the criteria established in 2012) for countries reporting data through the IMAP Information System (IMAP IS).

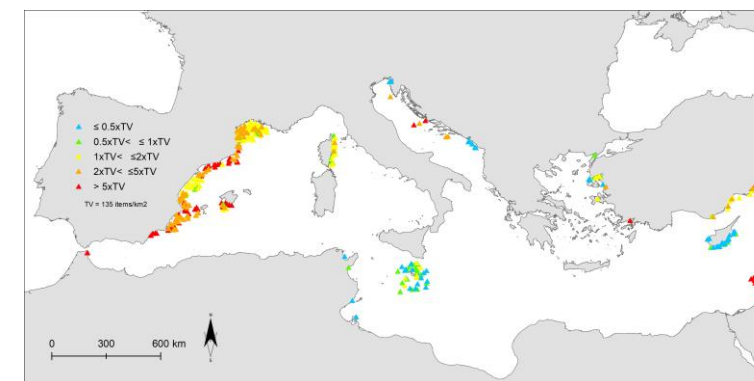
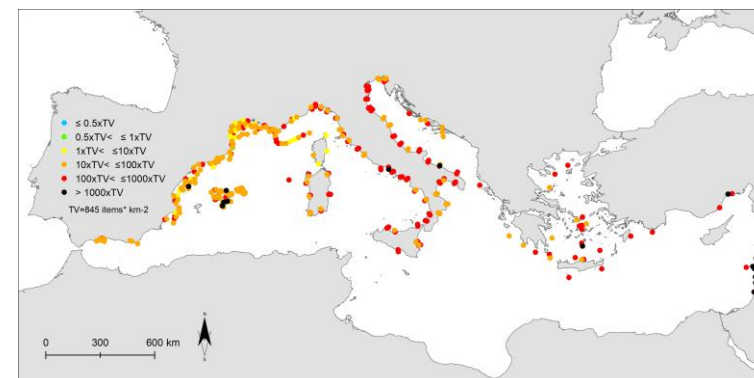
E07 – E08 (Coast & Hydrography)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E07	CI15	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 - App. 5	n/a (by 2027)	✓ (H1)	✓	Assessment based on available scientific literature and data, mainly deriving from MERCATOR OCEAN
	CI39	✓ (by 2027)	✓ (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a
	CI40	✓ (by 2027)	✓ (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2027)	n/a
E08	CI16	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 - App. 6	✓	✓	✓	- Country-specific / stand-alone assessment criteria - Guidance document for application of assessment criteria - Baseline status and periodic assessment reports
	CI25	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 - App. 6	n/a (by 2026)	n/a (by 2026)	n/a	n/a
	cCI41	✓ (by 2027)	✓ (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a	n/a
	cCI42	✓ (by 2027)	✓ (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a	n/a
	cCI43	✓ (by 2027)	✓ (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a (by 2029)	n/a	n/a



E010 (Marine Litter)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E010	CI22	✓	✓	✓ WG.439/12 (by 2027)	130 items/100m (2021)	M1: beach macro-litter	n/a	Beach macro: x5 GES/nonGES categories classification based on TV
	CI23	✓	✓	✓ WG.439/12 (by 2027)	38 i/km² 0.000845 i/m² (2023)	M2: seafloor macro M3: floating microplastics	Floating microplastics	Seafloor macro-litter: x5 GES/nonGES categories classification based on TV Floating Microplastics: x6 GES/nonGES categories classification based on TV
	CI24	✓	✓	✓ WG.439/12 (by 2027)	0.01gr dry weight ML ingested Entanglement: 9% affected sample (2025)	MLT1: ingestion and entanglement	Ingestion and entanglement	n/a
	CI28	✓	✓	n/a (by 2027)	n/a (by 2029 tbc)	n/a (by 2027)	- Floating macro (visual observations) - Macro on riverbanks - Micro on river outlets - Micro/nano with water pumps	n/a



E011 (Underwater Noise)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E011	CI26	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 4	✓	n/a	n/a	The assessment methodologies were developed based on the progress made in establishing thresholds within the EU TG Noise framework, including their adapted application and the classification of GES versus non-GES within IMAP.
	CI27	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 4	✓	n/a	n/a	

Thank you !



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