



C1_HOR-3: Support for WES-BCA Partner Countries in Preparing their 7th National Reports (7NRs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Regional Webinar on Reporting Structures and Indicators for the 7th National Report under the Convention on Biological Diversity

Webinar Report

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WATER ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT - BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SOUTH REGION

The regional EU funded “Water Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA)” project is the continuation of WES project and capitalises on the experience of three more successful predecessor regional EU funded projects SWIM-Horizon2020 SM, SWIM SM and Horizon 2020 CB/MEP. It supports the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood Region in addressing the improvement and protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing the resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region, strengthening the formulation and enforcement of the relevant policies of the Partner Countries (PCs) and the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention. WES-BCA will enhance the capacity of relevant stakeholders in order to support them in formulating and implementing policies in the aforementioned issues, raise awareness, increase knowledge and improve public understanding, stimulating behavioural changes needed for appropriate climate action and environmental protection.

WES-BCA has two components which will run hand-in-hand:

COMPONENT I (Water, Biodiversity and Environment) with the specific objectives:

- to promote an integrated approach to biodiversity protection/restoration and pollution reduction/prevention
- to manage more efficiently scarce water resources in the Southern Neighbourhood

COMPONENT II (Communication and Outreach) with the specific objective:

- to raise awareness and better understanding by the general public (and specific segments of the population) including youth and women are promoted stimulating adoption of appropriate behaviours and attitudes towards improved climate action and effective environmental protection.

DISCLAIMER:

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ABBREVIATIONS

7NR	Seventh National Report
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
DG MENA	Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
IUCN-Med	International Union for Conservation of Nature - Mediterranean
H2020 CB/MEP	<i>Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Program</i>
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MENA	<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>
NBSAPs	<i>National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans</i>
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NR	National Report
ORT	<i>Online Reporting Tool</i>
SAPBIO	Strategic Action Programme for the conservation of BIOlogical diversity
SBE	<i>Sustainable Blue Economy</i>
SCBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
SDGs	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
SPA/BD	Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity
SPA/RAC	<i>Specially Protected Areas / Regional Activity Centre</i>
SWIM SM	Sustainable Water Integrated Management-Support Mechanism
SWIM-H2020 SM	<i>Sustainable Water Integrated Management and Horizon 2020 Support Mechanism</i>
TSCC	<i>Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centers</i>
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNEP/MAP	<i>United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan</i>
UNOC	United Nations Ocean Conference
WEFE	<i>Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems</i>
WES	Water and Environment Support in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood Region project
WES-BCA	<i>Water and Environment Support - Biodiversity and Climate Action</i>

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) in the Neighbourhood South region” project aims to improve the protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity, and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region. It seeks to strengthen the formulation and enforcement of relevant policies in the Partner Countries and support the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention.

Implemented from November 2024 to November 2027, the project covers eight Partner Countries in the Middle East and North Africa and is funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG-MENA). It promotes regional exchange of good practices and lessons learned, complemented by targeted national activities that address specific priorities. Building on the experience and achievements of its predecessor projects (WES, SWIM-H2020 SM, SWIM SM, Horizon 2020 CB/MEP), WES-BCA ensures continuity while integrating new institutional, scientific, and technical developments. Therefore, the key areas of priority covered by the phase (Nov. 2022 - Nov. 2027) is Climate Action and biodiversity. It is well-known that the Mediterranean Region is a biodiversity hotspot, and at the same time, biodiversity is under pressure and eroded in the Region. Appropriate effective actions should be undertaken at Regional and Partner Country (PC) levels.

The project is implemented through two complementary components: Component I, focusing on Water, Biodiversity and Environment, and Component II, dedicated to Communication and Outreach with an emphasis on Climate Action.

1.1 CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY - REPORTING

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) entered into force on 29 December 1993. It has three main objectives, namely the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 6 of the CBD, each Party shall “develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity” (NBSAPs) and to present to the Conference of the Parties (COP) reports on “measures which it has taken for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the Convention”. Since the entry into force of the CBD, the Parties have submitted six National Reports. Although the 5th National Report (5NR) was submitted by hundred seventy-nine (179) out of the hundred ninety-six (196) Parties, the 6th National Report (6NR) was submitted by only hundred and three (103) Parties.

COP15 of the CBD, held in December 2022, adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), containing a 2050 mission, a 2030 vision, 4 strategic goals, 23 targets as well as indicators for monitoring, financial support, and scientific cooperation. The GBF calls for the active engagement and commitments of all stakeholders. In adopting this ambitious strategic framework, the 196 Parties to the CBD agreed to align their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

with the GBF well in advance of COP16 scheduled in October 2024 and to report in their 7th National Report (7NR) in 2026 and 8th National Report (8NR) in 2029 on progress and difficulties in the implementation of their aligned NBSAPs. Parties have also agreed that all relevant stakeholders shall participate and contribute in the preparation and implementation of the aligned NBSAPs.

The Parties also decided to carry out a global review of progress in the implementation of the GBF at the COP17 to be held in Yerevan, Armenia on 19-30 October 2026. The main source of such a review will be the information contained in the 7NR submitted by the Parties. Therefore, the submission by Parties of their next report before and no later than the 28th February 2026 is crucial for the preparation of the report to be submitted by the Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD) at least one month in advance of COP17.

1.2 RATIONALE OF ACTIVITY

The Mediterranean is rich in biodiversity but faces serious threats, including habitat loss, pollution, climate change, overuse of resources, and the spread of invasive alien species. Rapid urban growth further endangers ecosystems and essential services for both nature and people. To protect biodiversity, international and regional efforts are in place.

The Kunming-Montreal GBF, adopted at COP15 in 2022, sets ambitious global biodiversity goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030, including indicators for monitoring, financial support, and scientific cooperation. Countries must set national targets, and all stakeholders are encouraged to contribute.

The European Union has long supported biodiversity conservation globally and in the Southern Neighbourhood. Guided by the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, it aims to halt biodiversity loss, restore degraded ecosystems, and promote nature-based solutions. Through regional and bilateral instruments, such as the EU Green Deal and the Regional South Programme, the EU has helped partner countries strengthen biodiversity governance, enhance protected areas management, improve data collection and monitoring systems, and build capacity for mainstreaming biodiversity into national strategies. Recently, in collaboration with Plan Bleu and IUCN-Med, the EU convened a Mediterranean regional workshop in Montpellier (June 2025) to advance Target 3 of the GBF, focused on effectively conserving 30% of marine and terrestrial areas, a key input for the preparation of the 7NRs under the CBD. Biodiversity and environmental sustainability were also reaffirmed as priorities during the 5th EU–Southern Neighbourhood Ministerial Meeting in Brussels (July 2025).

The Barcelona Convention (1976) provides a legal framework for environmental protection, while the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and SPA/BD Protocol safeguard marine and coastal biodiversity. The UNEP Regional Activity Center (SPA/RAC) in Tunisia focuses on Specially Protected Marine and Coastal Areas, while UNEP/MAP supports Mediterranean countries in translating global biodiversity commitments into regional actions. SAPBIO, developed under UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC, provides a unifying framework guiding coherent regional biodiversity actions, integrating biodiversity into sectoral policies, and fostering regional cooperation.

The Union for Mediterranean (UfM)'s mandate on Environment, Green, and Sustainable Blue Economy moves around a multi-stakeholder, multi-level governance and interdisciplinary approach underpinned by the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declarations on Environment and Climate Action and on Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE), implemented through their respective Roadmaps/Actions Plans, the so called '2030GreenerMed Agenda' and 'UfM Roadmap on SBE'. So far, strong political, technical and

financial convergence has been built around biodiversity and ecosystem restoration as part of a joint effort. As pillars of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, the progress and experience over the years of the UfM/Mediterranean countries in these priority areas is also integrated within relevant international and regional processes, including biodiversity and climate COPs, the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, the UNOC process, the BBNJ, the under-negotiation Plastic Treaty just to mention some and, more recently, the Ocean and the Med Pacts.

The SCBD serves as the global focal point supporting Parties in implementing the CBD and achieving the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It provides technical guidance, tools, and capacity-building support to assist countries in preparing their National Reports, including the 7NR. By facilitating knowledge exchange, offering reporting templates, and supporting the use of indicators, the SCBD plays a leading role in ensuring that national efforts are aligned with global biodiversity targets and that progress is effectively tracked and communicated at the international level.

At the national level, many Mediterranean countries are advancing biodiversity strategies and submitting National Reports to the CBD to track progress toward global goals. The 7NR assesses national biodiversity trends, policies, and strategies, highlighting efforts to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity. Its preparation involves cross-sectoral data collection and stakeholder engagement, ensuring transparency and accountability. Despite global and regional efforts, hands-on national activities are still lagging, and countries seek guidance to address key pressures on biodiversity while reporting effectively.

The 7NR provides an opportunity for countries of the Region to demonstrate their commitment to global biodiversity conservation goals and strengthen regional efforts to protect the Mediterranean's unique ecosystems. Furthermore, the national reports play a vital role in aligning country efforts with the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Mediterranean biodiversity commitments.

In its new phase, until the end of 2027, the EU-funded WES project has prioritized Biodiversity and Climate Action as WES-BCA. WES-BCA promotes the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus as an integrated approach to sustainable resource management, highlighting ecosystems' role in supporting biodiversity, water quality, energy, and food security. Through regional and national activities, the programme fosters coordinated planning and policy, balancing resource demands while enhancing ecosystem resilience and biodiversity conservation.

Several Mediterranean countries have undertaken initiatives to achieve CBD targets, yet many WES-BCA Partner Countries have requested support in preparing and submitting their 7NRs by February 2026. Recognizing the challenges countries face in updating their CBD strategies, including the preparation of the 7NRs by February 2026, the WES-BCA project, together with the UfM, have co-developed an activity to provide targeted regional support to enhance technical and institutional capacities. The support includes guidance on reporting structures, indicators, and alignment with other international frameworks, such as the SDGs and the BBNJ Agreement. These efforts align with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and broader regional cooperation frameworks, emphasizing capacity building, data harmonization, and policy coherence.

The regional WES-BCA/UfM activity aims to foster dialogue on key biodiversity challenges, including pollutant categories, promote alignment of national efforts with regional and global frameworks, and support Partner Countries in preparing their 7NRs under the CBD.

The regional activity is entitled "**Support for WES-BCA Partner Countries in Preparing their 7NRs under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**", and falls under the WES-BCA topic 5 "**Climate Change mitigation and adaptation actions, including Water Scarcity and Biodiversity protection as priorities**", and sub-topic 5.3 "**Ecosystem and Biodiversity Protection: Maintaining Green Spaces and Restoring Urban, Peri Urban, and/or Endangered Ecosystems/Biodiversity**".

2 OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITY

The main objective of this WES-BCA/UfM activity was to provide targeted support to Partner Countries in aligning with the CBD, the Kunming-Montreal GBF, and Mediterranean biodiversity commitments (including SAPBIO), taking also into account and benefitting as much as possible from relevant regional approaches including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

Its specific objectives are to:

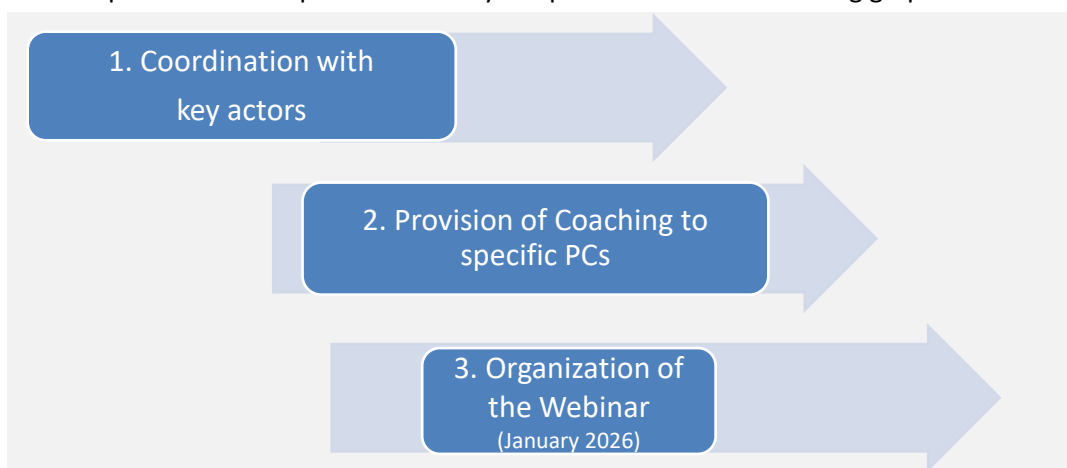
- Strengthen Partner Countries' technical capacity to align their 7NRs with CBD requirements and Mediterranean biodiversity commitments.
- Promote alignment between national strategies and regional frameworks to ensure coherence with the biodiversity commitments under the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP and its protocols), the UfM and relevant EU policies and initiatives.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange, regional cooperation and peer learning on biodiversity challenges and commitments in the Mediterranean through webinars and coaching.
- To provide a "close-to-end" opportunity and easily accessible way for the Partner Countries to clarify any questions, address uncertainties, fill in gaps and resolve challenges related to the preparation of the 7NR.

3 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

The activity comprised of the following Tasks:

- Task 1: Communications with key actors and background assessment
- Task 2: Provide Coaching
- Task 3: Organizing a Webinar on Reporting Structures and Indicators
 - *Task 3.1: Prepare a short Concept Note describing the expected results and content of the webinar*
 - *Task 3.2: Deliver an interactive Webinar*
- Task 4: Compile a synthesis report.

The main components and steps of the activity are presented in the following graphic:



4 EXPECTED RESULTS OF ACTIVITY

The expected result of the activity was to assist the participating countries to address gaps and challenges facing their preparation of the 7NR to the CBD in order to meet on time before and no later than the 28th February 2026 their contractual commitment to submit their respective 7NR focusing on the implementation of their national targets as well as on the status of implementation of their national biodiversity strategy and actions plan aligned with the Kunming-Montreal GBF adopted by the COP15 to the CBD, held in December 2022.

It was also meant to provide a platform of dialogue between the representatives of the SCBD and the participating countries (PCs) to address the technical difficulties, gaps and challenges facing the preparation of their 7NR based on the template of the report as contained in decision 15/6 of the COP and the revised template adopted by decision 16/32 in October 2024.

At the same time, the expected result of the activity was to promote an exchange of experience and best practices among the PCs on all issues related to the preparation of the 7NR as well as on Online Reporting Tool (ORT) established by the SCBD.

5 BACKGROUND ASSESSMENT

Concerning Task 1, in September 2025 a short survey was circulated among CBD Focal Points concerning the progress in the 7NR preparation and potential needs for assistance, while in December 2025, a second survey was circulated in order to identify questions, gaps and challenges they face in the preparation of the 7NR, as well as to communicate their progress. Feedback from PCs was collected and the assessment has helped refine the regional webinar agenda, inform the Q&A sessions, and guide the selection of appropriate speakers.

The first survey conducted in September 2025 revealed that the PCs were actively working on their 7NR for the CBD with several highlighted potential challenges in meeting the 28th February 2026 deadline. Based on the input of the FPs in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, at the time, the main points stressed were:

- All countries were working on their reports, most with GEF support, and all had engaged external consultants.
- National steering committees were established to oversee the process, with participation from ministries, academia, and research institutions, while wider stakeholder workshops were also foreseen.
- Most countries had only recently initiated their work, making it difficult to meet the 28 February 2026 deadline. Delays were considered as likely.
- On challenges and needs for assistance, several countries had noted that it would become clearer as the process advances. They probably would include support in ORT, data aggregation and harmonisation across biodiversity, water, soils, forests, agriculture, and fisheries, and provision of expert input to transform raw data into analyses, trends, and clear recommendations.
- Regarding NBSAPs, most countries had their strategies updated with new targets. Those were either awaiting Ministerial Approval or had recently been approved for CBD submission (e.g. Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine).
- Jordan FP indicated that the Ministry of Environment received all the support and assistance needed from the SCBD.
- Almost all countries expressed strong appreciation for our contribution to biological diversity related actions.

The second survey, circulated among CBD Focal Points, covered specific questions related to gaps and challenges faced in the preparation of the 7NR, as well as their progress in reporting process. Based on the inputs received from Focal Points of Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, the main points were:

- Concerning the focus of the webinar, all have expressed interest on Section 3, while all other Sections were also mentioned.
- Concerning the needs in technical support, the feedback included: (a) Assistance with data aggregation, harmonization and validation, (b) Methodological support on the SCBD guidelines, (c) Analysis and writing, through translation of data into clear analyses, trends, and recommendations, (d) Assistance with the development of a monitoring and implementation system for GBF-KM, (e) Development of digital tools, (f) Inclusion-related support, (g) Capacity building through training and (h) Reporting tools and structuring responses.
- Concerning the progress made in the preparation of the 7NR, it was stated that in December 2025 Morocco engaged external consultants, while Tunisia had almost finalized its 7NR.
- Concerning the interest in a follow-up individual event, all expressed interest.

The assessment of the PCs feedback helped refine the regional webinar agenda, inform the Q&A sessions, and guide the selection of appropriate speakers.

6 SUPPORT TO PCs FOR THE PREPARATION OF THEIR 7NRs

In parallel with the regional WES-BCA webinar held on 21st January 2026 (Conceptual Note and agenda in Annex 12.1.), jointly organized with the UfM, the SCBD, DG-MENA, and DG ENV, and subject to the available resources under task 2 “coaching”, targeted support will continue to be provided, upon request from participating countries, through on line (or if possible in-person) coaching sessions. These sessions aim to further strengthen technical and institutional capacities to ensure the timely finalization of the 7NRs, no later than 28 February 2026.

The following provides a brief overview of the key actions undertaken:

6.1 ALGERIA

Taking advantage of the field presence of the activity, the webinar was preceded by the participation of WCS-CA expert at the Biodiversity Intersectoral Committee of Algeria convened to finalize the adoption of the NBSAPs aligned with the GBF held on 24th December 2025. This event was followed by a meeting held on 8th January 2026 with the national consultant for the preparation of the 7NR. The results of this meeting were brought to the attention of the Algerian CBD focal point at a meeting held on 9th January 2026.

6.2 TUNISIA

In the context of the WES-BCA Senior Biodiversity Expert’s back -to-back mission to Tunisia, a meeting was held on 15th January 2026 with senior officials including the CBD Focal Point of the Ministry of the Environment of Tunisia. WES-BCA expert was also invited as guest keynote speaker at the opening session and contributed to the discussions during the national validation workshop of Tunisia’s 7NR (5 February 2026). More details are provided in Annex 12.2.

6.3 PALESTINE

Under Activity C1_N-PS-1, the WES-BCA project provides technical support to Palestine’s Environment Quality Authority (EQA), serving as the National Focal Point (FP), to facilitate the preparation of its 7NR to the CBD. This activity, which aligns with the KM-GBF, focuses on conducting a rapid stocktaking of existing data from the National Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) and the 2022 NBSAP to identify information gaps and prioritize technical needs and providing support for the report.

Specifically, a team of international and local experts is assisting the EQA in interpreting national and global indicators and synthesizing data into the required CBD formats to support a comprehensive assessment of Palestine’s progress toward its 17 National Targets. Furthermore, the activity’s scope includes supporting the EQA in assessing how national actions contribute to the 23 Global Targets and the framework’s long-term goals. The project also aims to assist the EQA in reporting implementation measures, such as resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement, while identifying specific technical and financial obstacles to inform future support requirements.

Activity C1_N-PS-1 is currently under implementation in collaboration with EQA, with available data being consolidated to support the drafting of the 7NR. Work is actively continuing on data synthesis, with review by EQA planned prior to submission to the SCBD.

7 WEBINAR REVIEW

The webinar on **Reporting Structures and Indicators**, falling under Task 3 of the activity, was organized on 21st January 2026. The main objective of the webinar was to provide a “close-to-end” opportunity and easily accessible way for the Partner Countries to clarify any questions, address uncertainties, fill in gaps and resolve challenges related to the preparation of the 7NR. The Conceptual Note as well as the agenda of the webinar are contained in Annex 12.1.

The Project reached out to the SCBD, as well as regional actors with a clear mandate or relevant involvement in biodiversity-related issues in the Mediterranean, including the DG-MENA, DG ENV and the UfM, in order to discuss the outline of the collaboration for this activity and agree on the scope of the Webinar to be organised. The invitation for the Webinar was sent by 11th December. A Concept Note and the Agenda of the webinar were prepared in English and French and circulated to representatives of participating countries.

The Webinar was held online to allow for the participation of the Partner Countries and the representatives of the SCBD at the same time. Indeed, 71 people attended the meeting, amongst which representatives of 7 Partner Countries, as well as Representatives of the SCBD, of the UfM, the Barcelona Convention’s SPA/RAC, DG MENA, DG Environment of the European Commission, and IUCN. The main parts of the Webinar Sessions are described in the following paragraphs:

7.1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Michael Scoullou, WES-BCA Team Leader. In his opening remarks welcoming the participants to the webinar, he recalled the crucial importance of biodiversity in the world, in general, and in the Mediterranean region, in particular. He stated that biodiversity is a capital of the region. However, biodiversity is being lost at unprecedented rate owing to tremendous pressure of anthropogenic activities affecting not only terrestrial ecosystems but also wetland and marine ecosystems. Such pressure is being aggravated by the negative impacts of climate change. Severe and intense droughts followed by flooding, and forest fires as well as ecosystem changes are aggravating the loss of biodiversity in the region with severe negative economic impacts. Loss of biodiversity, climate change and pollution are the three major crises the Mediterranean Region is facing. To respond to these challenges, the Parties of the CBD have adopted the GBF and decided that the 7NR shall focus on the review of implementation of their respective aligned national biodiversity strategies and action plans. He recalled that the main objective of this WES-BCA/UfM activity is to provide targeted support

to Partner Countries in preparing their 7NR. He added that the scope of the meeting is to help the reporting structure of the report and indicators. He informed the participants that further to the webinar, there will be bilateral coaching to countries that have expressed such a need. He concluded by stating that the task is demanding and that through this activity we shall be able to learn more from each other.

Addressing the participants, the representative of the SCBD, Mr. Lijie Cai, expressed his satisfaction to participate in the webinar and conveyed his thanks to the European Union as well as to the WES-BCA for organizing this event. He recalled that the Conference of the Parties adopted in December 2022 an ambitious GBF comprising of four (4) strategic goals and 23 targets and requested the Parties to align their respective biodiversity strategies and action plans with this framework. To date, 143 Parties have submitted their national targets and 70 Parties have submitted their updated NBSAPs. He reminded the participants that the Parties have decided to undertake a global review of the GBF at the forthcoming COP17 to be held in October 2026. It was also decided that the 7NR shall be the main source of such a global review. Therefore, the timely submission by Parties of their national report before and no later than 28th February 2026 is important. To this end, the SCBD has organized a series of regional and sub-regional workshops to provide technical assistance to the Parties to assist them to prepare their respective NR. He thanked the European Union for organizing, in September 2025, a workshop on indicators. To conclude, he mentioned that he hopes that this webinar will provide support to the countries to address questions that may not have been addressed previously.

Mr. Mahmoud Elyes Hamza, SPA/RAC Director of the Barcelona Convention, presented the Post-2020 SAPBIO¹, adopted in 2021 at the COP22, as the Mediterranean's key policy instrument to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and enable recovery by 2050. He stressed that the Programme is action-oriented, realistic, and aligned with international frameworks, notably the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, translating global targets into concrete regional objectives such as ecosystem restoration and the 30x30 target. Guided by a strong long-term vision for healthy Mediterranean marine and coastal ecosystems, SAPBIO provides a clear and measurable roadmap structured around three (3) goals, twenty-seven (27) SMART targets, and forty-two (42) actions at national and regional levels. He highlighted core implementation principles, including gap analysis, and the use of quantitative indicators tailored to the Mediterranean context and concluded by noting that the collective implementation of SAPBIO will be evaluated during 2026–2027, with results made publicly available by SPA/RAC.

In her opening remarks in her capacity as co-organizer of the activity, Mrs. Alessandra Sensi, Head of Sector, Environment, Green and Blue Economy, stated that UfM connected the previous presentations to the Euro-Mediterranean context and framed the event within the broader biodiversity conservation and restoration processes and actions under (1) Axis 3 of the UfM Greener Med Agenda, including the announcement of an upcoming webinar on restoration to be held on 27 January; and (2) the Sustainable Blue Economy Roadmap, notably in relation to maritime spatial planning, sustainable tourism, and just-launched investment projects on restoration under the BlueMed Fund. Both the GreenerMed Agenda and the Sustainable Blue Economy Roadmap directly implement the UfM Ministerial on Environment and Climate Action and the Sustainable Blue Economy Ministerial adopted

¹ Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Pst-2020 SAPBIO)

in 2021 by the 43 UfM member countries and contribute to reach the targets through their monitoring, reporting and implementing mechanisms. Links with the environmental dimensions of the EU Mediterranean Pact and the EU Ocean Pact were also highlighted. Furthermore, it was emphasized that UfM supports the coordination of the three (3) Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centers (TSCCs) established by CBD and operating in the Mediterranean region, while it also collaborates with other actors moving towards the preparation of restoration action plans and roadmaps for landscape and ecosystems in the region. The UfM representative additionally announced the upcoming UfM Working Group on Environment, planned to be held online on 15 April.

In her address welcoming the participants to the webinar, Ms. Nadja Steinfort, International Relations Officer, DG Environment F3, European Commission, stated that it is a priority for the European Union to support countries for the implementation of their commitments and to enhance capacity and the EU support to WES-BCA is an indication of such a commitment. She highlighted the importance of the global implementation review of progress of the GBF as well as the need to enhance efforts for achieving the objectives of the GBF. She concluded that EU stands ready to offer support for capacity building to the countries of the south region as biodiversity is important for the EU.

Mr Youssef Tadros, Programme Manager, DG MENA, European Commission, in addressing the participants stated that the 7NR is not only a reporting exercise but a capacity building tool. However, countries are facing challenges as the reporting is complex and difficult and it is for this reason that support has been provided to WES-BCA project. He added that it is also for this reason that it is important to strengthen capacity building and enhance regional cooperation. In concluding, he addressed a message to the participants to use this opportunity to address the remaining gaps and exchange their respective experience.

7.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE WES-BCA PROJECT AND ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Under this agenda item, Mr. Anis Ismail, Environment Key Expert at WES-BCA, presented a detailed overview and activity of the “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) in the Neighbourhood South region” implemented during the period of November 2024 to November 2027. He stated that the project, funded by the EU DG MENA with the participation of eight(8) participating countries from North Africa and Middle-East and a budget of 7 million euros, aims to improve the protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity, and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region. It seeks to strengthen the formulation and enforcement of relevant policies in the Partner Countries and support the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention. It strives to enhance the capacity of relevant stakeholders in order to support them in formulating and/or implementing policies in the issues of relevance to the project which aims also to raise awareness, increase knowledge and improve public understanding, stimulating behavioural changes needed for appropriate climate action and environmental protection. The project is implemented through two complementary components: Component I, focusing on Water, Biodiversity and Environment, and Component II, dedicated to Communication and Outreach with an emphasis on Climate Action. He added that WES-BCA is the continuation of the WES project (2019-2024) and also capitalises on the experience of previous successful EU funded regional projects (SWIM-Horizon2020 SM, SWIM SM; Horizon 2020 CB/MEP). He

also presented the objective of the joint WES-BCA and UfM as well as the objective of the webinar and its expected results.

7.3 STATUS OF PREPARATION OF THE 7NR OF THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND NATURE OF THE TECHNICAL SUPPORT EXPECTED

Under this agenda item, a detailed presentation on the preparation of the 7NR of the European Union and the activities of the Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centre (TSSC) was made by Ms. Nadja Steinfort, International Relations Officer, DG Environment F3, European Commission. She made a detailed presentation on the status of the preparation of the 7NR of the European Union, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and its forty-five (45) EU targets as well as the EU efforts aimed at developing national monitoring plans for the implementation of GBF. She indicated that these on-going efforts are being coordinated by the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD), while highlighted the essential role of the TSSC support in the developing of the indicators, as well as that of the regional dialogues. In this regard she presented the work in progress for the preparation of indicators. She indicated that four (4) GBF headline indicators are ready to be included in the 7NR, four (4) are partially ready, five (5) are awaiting finalization of global methodology, while two (2) indicators are not relevant for the EU. The majority of GBF headline indicators are at different stages of preparation and there is work in progress towards the 8NR to be submitted in 2029. A small number of component and complementary indicators are also used, as well as the aforementioned EU indicators (national indicators), which serve as proxies, while work is ongoing to further develop the remainder of the headline indicators. She also shared with the participants the main emerging findings by stating that the implementation of the aligned EU strategy with the GBF has resulted in significant enhanced EU legislation and policy frameworks, including adoption of new legislation and policy frameworks as well as integration of biodiversity objectives into other EU policies and increased financing for biodiversity under the Multiannual Financial Frameworks. In conclusion, she stated that the implementation of the strategy has yet to deliver results on the ground.

Ms. Carla Danelutti, IUCN Regional Programme Coordinator, made a presentation entitled “Towards a coordinated technical and scientific support mechanisms for the implementation of the GBF in the Mediterranean region”. She recalled that decision 15/8 of the conference of the Parties “established a technical and scientific cooperation mechanism comprising a network of regional and sub-regional support centres to be coordinated by a global coordination entity” (TSSC). She indicated that the role of TSSC is, inter-alia, to provide one-stop service for technical knowledge, tools and expertise; facilitate joint research, technology development and transfer, sharing and learning and mobilize financial resources. She mentioned that in the Mediterranean region, three (3) different centers have been established that assist countries that are part of the Mediterranean region. The European countries are assisted by the KCBD, in partnership with RBINS and IUCN Med, the North African countries by the Observatory of the Sahel and Sahara (OSS) and the Middle East countries by IUCN regional office for West Asia. She presented also the governance as well as the activities of these TSSCs. Concluding, the future goals for the TSSCs of the Mediterranean region were presented, among which are a stronger focus on support for the next reporting period and assurance of coherence and synergies between the three (3) TSSCs and the EU frameworks and international programs active in the region.

7.4 TOUR DE TABLE

In introducing this agenda item, the chair of the webinar invited, by alphabetical order, the representatives of the participating countries to share the status of the preparation of their 7NR and to seize the opportunity of the representatives of the SCBD participation to raise questions, and seek clarification on any technical issue related to the preparation of their 7NR. Under this agenda item the representatives of the following six (6) participating countries took the floor:

The representative of Algeria informed the participants that the preparation of the 7NR is moving in good rate. To this end, a national event on indicators is being convened. He shared with the participants the difficulties to understand and gather data related to indicators. He concluded by stating that capacity building is required.

The representative of Egypt informed the participants that the preparation of the 7NR is proceeding very well and a GEF project implemented by UNDP on “BIOFIN” has been adopted. He highlighted the crucial importance of finance as the need is ten (10) times higher than the figures on the table. He indicated that the indicators are the main difficulty faced by his country in preparing the report. He highlighted the positive role played by NGOs and youth. He added that Egypt has finalised its NBSAPs aligned with GBF containing twenty-one (21) national targets to be implemented through sixty-two (62) projects. He stated that it is necessary to be realistic as action is needed based on figures. He said that if you want to restore 20% of wetland ecosystem you should know how much is needed and how to do it. He concluded by urging more support to NGOs taking into account their crucial role in implementing small and medium sized projects in an efficient manner.

The representative of Israel stated that the preparation of the 7NR is challenging as the process is very complex. She indicated that indicators have not yet been finalized and the methodology is adding more workload. She insisted on the need to focus on key indicators and to select more convenient indicators. She concluded on the need to receive support at the early stage of the process and not at the end.

The representative of Lebanon informed the participants that under the GEF/UNDP project the preparation of the 7NR started in August 2025. An assessment on data collection and identification of key stakeholders was conducted. He added that the selection of key indicators will be finalized before February and that data gaps are challenging.

The representative of Morocco stated that an inclusive participatory process guiding the preparation of the national targets was initiated in 2024 and a consulting firm was selected. He added that the issue of indicators is challenging owing to the lack of relevant data. He concluded by highlighting the difficulty arising from the short period available and the need for validation by all relevant stakeholders. The issue of metadata was also raised as well as the difficulty to define different categories of agriculture sustainability. The question of relying on national metadata was raised.

The representative of Spain stated that regarding the issue of indicators the main difficulty is related to the methodology as well as the calculation of indicators. She raised the question of having freedom for alternatives if the recommended indicators cannot be used. Regarding headline Indicator A2 related to extension of ecosystems, she asked if it concerns only natural ecosystems or if it includes also semi-natural ecosystems. She also asked if freedom is allowed to use past years data in case of the non-availability of data of the year.

7.5 RESPONSE BY THE SCBD

In response to the questions raised by webinar participants, the representative of the SCBD noted that the issues discussed were consistent with those raised during the regional and sub-regional workshops on the preparation of the 7NR organized by the Secretariat. He emphasized that headline indicators are considered as core indicators; however, Parties are not restricted to their exclusive use and may complement them with additional national or regional indicators, as appropriate.

In cases where data for headline indicators are not available, Parties have four options: they may use national data, global data, or data available through the ORT, which is linked to global data tracks. Alternatively, Parties may indicate that data are not available or that a specific indicator is not relevant at the national level. In both cases, a detailed explanatory description of the situation will be required.

Regarding situations where available data are similar to, but do not exactly match, a headline indicator, Parties may use disaggregated data by providing a relevant subset of information. Proxy data may also be used, provided that a clear explanation of the variation is included in the report. Such information may also be submitted as a national indicator. It was stressed that the provision of clear explanations is of importance, as a review progress of the monitoring framework has been initiated, with one of the tasks being to report on how and if the headline indicators have been used. By indicating the lack of information and providing relevant information, a deeper analysis and discussion on what can be done will be enabled.

With respect to Indicator A2, it was confirmed that reporting on semi-natural ecosystems is acceptable, including through disaggregation. This approach is also applicable to other indicators and can be supported by the Global Ecosystem Typology developed by IUCN and other partners.

Concerning temporal coverage, the Secretariat indicated that, ideally, data should cover the period from 2022 to the present. However, it is acknowledged that this may not be feasible for all countries, and partial data coverage is acceptable, provided it reflects national circumstances.

As for indicator calculations, the values to be included in the National Report should be entered directly into the ORT once; no calculations are required within the tool itself. Once entered, these values will automatically populate relevant sections of the report, thereby reducing the reporting burden.

On capacity-building needs, it was highlighted that for each headline indicator, the metadata includes a responsible organization and designated contact persons. Parties facing challenges related to headline indicators are encouraged to contact these focal points directly and may also reach out to the SCBD, which can provide support or facilitate connections with relevant experts.

The Secretariat further noted that no Party has yet submitted its National Report, although several are expected to do so soon, with many planning to submit either the full report or parts thereof by the deadline. It was also confirmed that Parties may acknowledge the contributions of organizations within their reports. Additionally, organizations and stakeholders, including NGOs, may submit their commitments through the designated online platform, the Nature Commitments Platform.

Finally, the representative highlighted that a significant number of Parties have identified the need for increased financial support to enable effective implementation of the indicators and that this issue remains a key item on the agenda of upcoming meetings under the Convention.

7.6 CLOSING REMARKS

Under this agenda item, the following summary of the debate as well as the way forward was presented. The importance of submitting on time the 7NR was recognized by all participating countries in spite of the complexity and challenges of the process. It was recognized that the information to be contained in the 7NR will be the main source of the global implementation review of the GBF on the agenda of the COP17 to be held in October 2026. Accordingly, and in addition to the issue of indicators and the required participation and engagement of all relevant stakeholders, the 7NR is the first of its kind. In this regard, the crucial role of relevant stakeholders and in particular youth and NGOs was highlighted. It was also noted that the 7NR is not only a reporting requirement but also a tool to address gaps in the implementation of the GBF at national level and enhance the implementation of three interrelated objectives of the CBD. The complexity of the process and in particular the issue of indicators as well as the challenge of the short period of time were emphasized. The fact that the region of the Mediterranean is not a United Nations region but rather an eco-region and countries divided in three different systems is a challenge for enhancing regional cooperation was highlighted. It was admitted that it is not only important to develop policy and regulatory frameworks, but it is crucial to implement them. In this regard the importance of finance as well as capacity building were emphasized. The importance of support at an early stage rather than at the end of the process was stressed. It was also noted that the 7NR and 8NR due in 2026 and 2029, respectively, are part of a continuum. The participants welcomed the willingness of the SCBD to continue assisting them during the final stage of the preparation of their 7NR and welcomed the continued support, upon request, to continue offering its support. They expressed their gratitude for the support of the European Union, including the WES-BCA project.

In his concluding remarks, the representative of the SCBD considered the webinar as a rich event and encouraged the participating countries to not hesitate to contact the SCBD by email to seek further clarification and share their difficulties and gaps.

In his concluding remarks, the chair of the webinar noted that the activity of the project is an important step to address a number of central policy problems to ensure the protection of biodiversity. It is taken place at a specific geopolitical circumstance and demonstrates the importance of biodiversity and in particular for the Mediterranean region. He noted the difficulties, in particular in the southern part of the Mediterranean, to meet the challenges. He also noted the willingness of the countries to do their best and stressed that their commitments need to be supported. In this regard, he reiterated the willingness of the project to continue providing, upon request, support to the participating countries to assist them in meeting their contractual commitments. He expressed his gratitude for the continued support of the European Union, the UfM for the co-organization and all partners, speakers and contributors of the webinar.

8 ELEMENTS OF THE WORKSHOP IMPLEMENTATION

No. of presentations on examples/case studies (sharing of experiences, good practices, etc.)	6
No. of international speakers from the Region	7
No. of international speakers from the EU	5
No. of training-oriented presentations (on concepts, methodologies, etc.)	1
No. of interactive/participatory activities (open discussions, brainstorming sessions)	1

9 PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

47 participants attended the webinar including representatives from WES-BCA PCs, the EU and other countries, as well as partner organizations, including representatives of the SCBD. Participating countries were represented by government officials, Focal Points of the CBD, the UfM, the Barcelona Convention and consultants.

Training Workshop Participant's profile

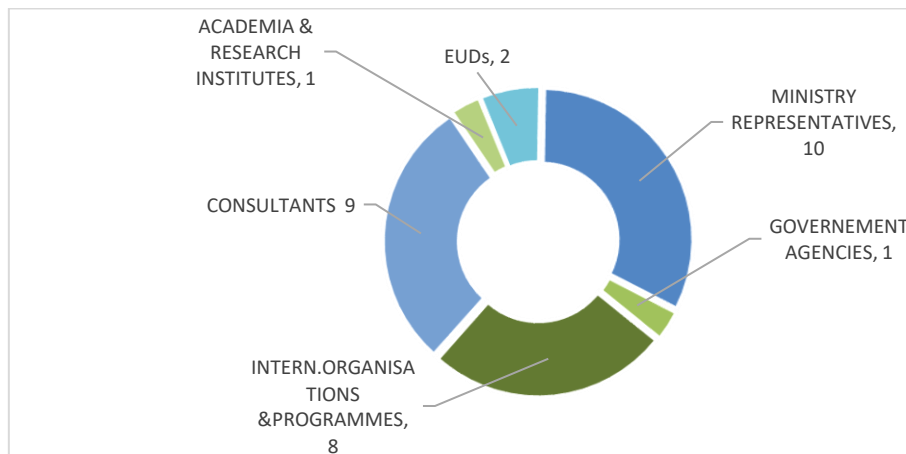


FIGURE 9-1: REPRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS PER TYPE OF INSTITUTION

10 STATISTICS GENDER AND YOUTH

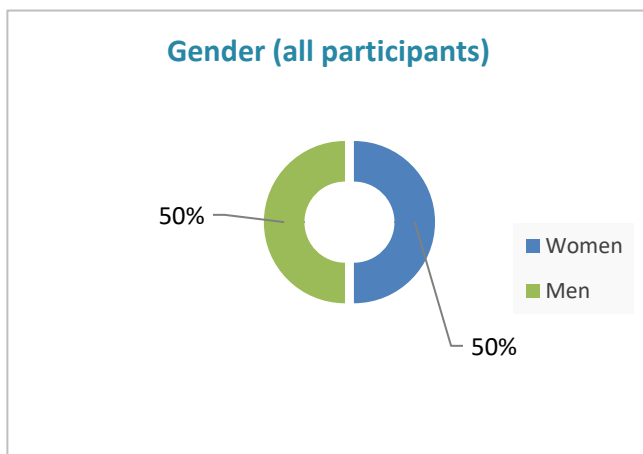


FIGURE 10-1: GENDER (ALL PARTICIPANTS)

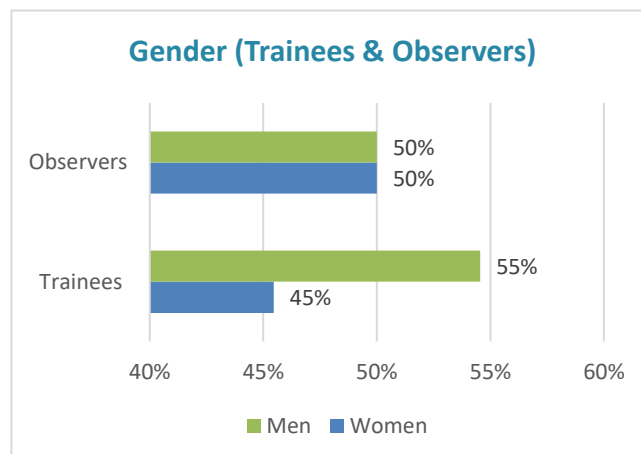


FIGURE 10-2: GENDER (TRAINEES AND OBSERVERS)

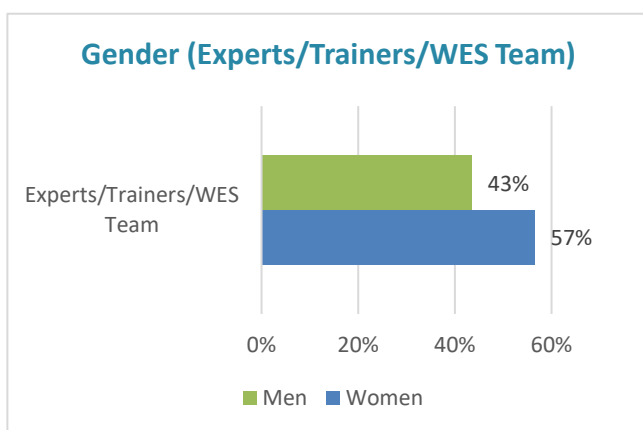


FIGURE 10-3: GENDER (EXPERTS/TRAINERS/WES-BCA TEAM)

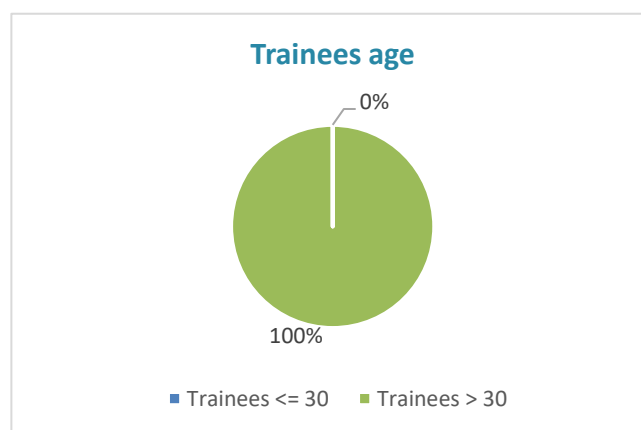


FIGURE 10-4: TRAINEES - AGE

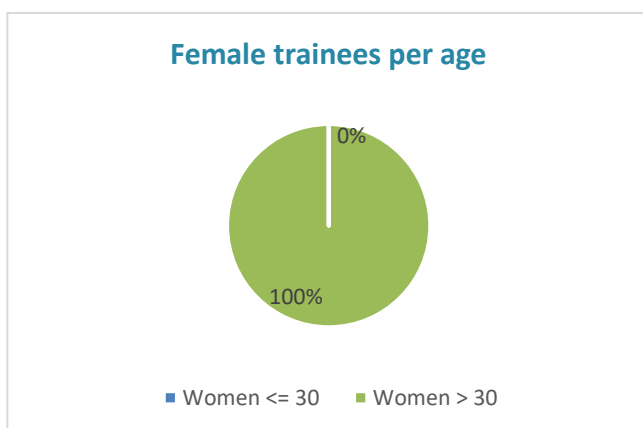


FIGURE 10-5: FEMALE TRAINEES - AGE

The youth statistics are based on the information provided by the participants. Please note that relevant information was not available for all participants.

11 CONCLUSIONS & OVERALL ASSEMENT

The webinar on the preparation of the 7NR fulfilled fully its expected results. It brought together the countries of the region to exchange information on the status of preparation of their 7NR and to share their respective gaps and difficulties. It offered a forum for the participating countries to seek clarification and technical support by the SCBD. The webinar was considered a rich event by the representative of the SCBD.

12 ANNEXES

12.1 Concept note and agenda



WES-BCA
Water and Environment Support -
Biodiversity and Climate Action
in the Neighbourhood South region



Funded by
the European Union



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Support for WES-BCA PCs in Preparing their 7th National Reports (7NRs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

WES-BCA Activity: C1_HOR-3

Regional Webinar on Reporting Structures and Indicators for the 7NRs under the CBD

Co-organised by WES-BCA and UfM in cooperation with the SCBD

Wednesday 21 January 2026
15:00 - 18:30 CET (09:00 - 12:30 EST) Online

Concept Note and Agenda

Introduction to the project

The “Water and Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) in the Neighbourhood South region” project aims to improve the protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity, and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region. It seeks to strengthen the formulation and enforcement of relevant policies in the Partner Countries and support the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention.

Implemented from November 2024 to November 2027, the project covers eight Partner Countries in the Middle East and North Africa and is funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG-MENA). Building on the experience and achievements of its predecessor projects (WES, SWIM-H2020 SM, SWIM SM, Horizon 2020 CB/MEP), WES-BCA ensures continuity while integrating new institutional, scientific, and technical developments. It promotes regional exchange of good practices and lessons learned, complemented by targeted national activities that address specific priorities.

The project is implemented through two complementary components: Component I, focusing on Water, Biodiversity and Environment, and Component II, dedicated to Communication and Outreach with an emphasis on Climate Action.

General background

The Mediterranean is rich in biodiversity but faces serious threats, including habitat loss, pollution, climate change, overuse of resources, and the spread of invasive alien species. Rapid urban growth further endangers ecosystems and essential services for both nature and people. To protect biodiversity, international and regional efforts are in place.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted at COP 15 in 2022, sets ambitious global biodiversity goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030, including indicators for monitoring, financial support, and scientific cooperation. Countries must set national targets, and all stakeholders are encouraged to contribute. In this context, the EU extended the WES project into WES-BCA (Biodiversity and Climate Action) for November 2024 – November 2027.

The European Union has long supported biodiversity conservation globally and in the Southern Neighbourhood. Guided by the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, it aims to halt biodiversity loss, restore degraded ecosystems, and promote nature-based solutions. Through regional and bilateral instruments, such as the EU Green Deal and the Regional South Programme, the EU has helped partner countries strengthen biodiversity governance, enhance protected areas management, improve data collection and monitoring systems, and build capacity for mainstreaming biodiversity into national strategies. Recently, in collaboration with Plan Bleu and IUCN-Med, the EU convened a Mediterranean regional workshop in Montpellier (June 2025) to advance Target 3 of the GBF, focused on effectively conserving 30% of marine and terrestrial areas, a key input for the preparation of the 7NRs under the CBD. Biodiversity and environmental sustainability were also reaffirmed as priorities during the 5th EU–Southern Neighbourhood Ministerial Meeting in Brussels (July 2025).

The Barcelona Convention (1976) provides a legal framework for environmental protection, while the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and SPA/BD Protocol safeguard marine and coastal biodiversity. The UNEP Regional Activity Center (SPA/RAC) in Tunisia focuses on Specially Protected Marine and Coastal Areas, while UNEP/MAP supports Mediterranean countries in translating global biodiversity commitments into regional actions. SAPBIO, developed under UNEP/MAP and SPA/RAC, provides a unifying framework guiding coherent regional biodiversity actions, integrating biodiversity into sectoral policies, and fostering regional cooperation.

The Union for Mediterranean (UfM)'s mandate on Environment, Green, and Sustainable Blue Economy moves around a multi-stakeholder, multi-level governance and interdisciplinary approach underpinned by the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declarations on Environment and Climate Action and on Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE), implemented through their respective Roadmaps/Actions Plans, the so called '2030GreenerMed Agenda' and 'UfM Roadmap on SBE'. So far, strong political, technical and financial convergence has been built around biodiversity and ecosystem restoration as part of a joint effort. As pillars of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, the progress and experience over the years of the UfM/Mediterranean countries in these priority areas is also integrated within relevant international and regional processes, including biodiversity and climate COPs, the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, the UNOC process, the BBNJ, the under-negotiation Plastic Treaty just to mention some and, more recently, the Ocean and the Med Pacts.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) serves as the global focal point supporting Parties in implementing the CBD and achieving the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It provides technical guidance, tools, and capacity-building support to assist countries in preparing their National Reports, including the 7th National Report (7NR). By facilitating knowledge exchange, offering reporting templates, and supporting the use of indicators, the SCBD plays a leading role in ensuring that national efforts are aligned with global biodiversity targets and that progress is effectively tracked and communicated at the international level.

At the national level, many Mediterranean countries are advancing biodiversity strategies and submitting National Reports (NRs) to the CBD to track progress toward global goals. The 7th National Report (7NR) assesses national biodiversity trends, policies, and strategies, highlighting efforts to

conserve and sustainably use biological diversity. Its preparation involves cross-sectoral data collection and stakeholder engagement, ensuring transparency and accountability. Despite global and regional efforts, hands-on national activities are still lagging, and countries seek guidance to address key pressures on biodiversity while reporting effectively.

Introduction to the activity

Recognizing the challenges countries face in updating their CBD strategies, including the preparation of the 7NRs by February 2026, the WES-BCA project, together with the UfM, have co-developed an activity to provide targeted regional support to enhance technical and institutional capacities. Assistance includes guidance on reporting structures, indicators, and alignment with other international frameworks, such as the SDGs and the BBNJ Agreement. These efforts align with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and broader regional cooperation frameworks, emphasizing capacity building, data harmonization, and policy coherence.

The regional WES-BCA/UfM activity aims to foster dialogue on key biodiversity challenges, including pollutant categories, promote alignment of national efforts with regional and global frameworks, and support Partner Countries in preparing their 7NRs under the CBD. WES-BCA promotes the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus as an integrated approach to sustainable resource management, highlighting ecosystems' role in supporting biodiversity, water quality, energy, and food security. Through regional and national activities, the programme fosters coordinated planning and policy, balancing resource demands while enhancing ecosystem resilience and biodiversity conservation.

In its new phase, until the end of 2027, the EU-funded WES project has prioritized Biodiversity and Climate Action as WES-BCA. Several Mediterranean countries have undertaken initiatives to achieve CBD targets, yet many WES-BCA Partner Countries have requested support in preparing and submitting their 7NRs by February 2026. In consultation with the CBD Secretariat, UfM, DG-MENA, and DG ENV of the European Commission, this activity facilitates integration of national biodiversity strategies with regional frameworks and strengthens national capacities to effectively prepare and submit the 7NRs.

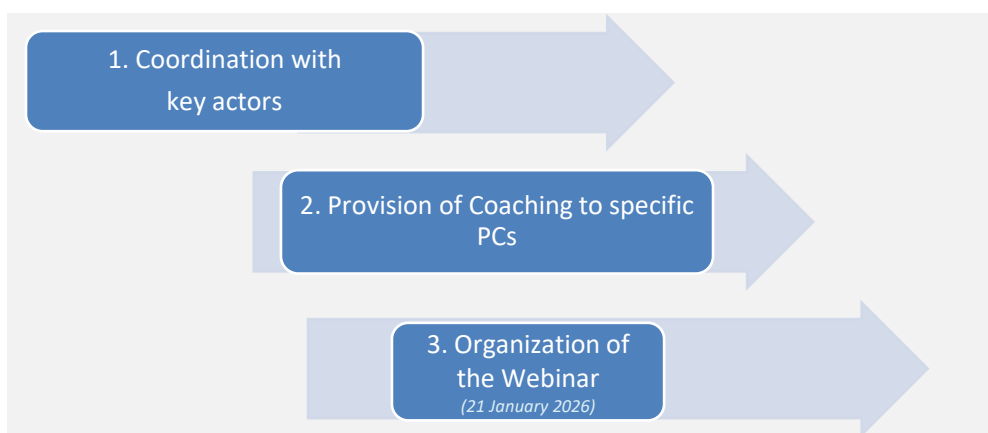
Objectives of the regional activity

The main objective of this WES-BCA/UfM activity is to provide targeted support to Partner Countries in aligning with the CBD, the Kunming-Montreal GBF, and Mediterranean biodiversity commitments (including SAPBIO), taking also into account and benefitting as much as possible from relevant regional approaches including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Its specific objectives are to:

- Strengthen Partner Countries' technical capacity to align their 7NRs with CBD requirements and Mediterranean biodiversity commitments.
- Promote alignment between national strategies and regional frameworks to ensure coherence with the biodiversity commitments under the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP and its protocols), the UfM and relevant EU policies and initiatives.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange, regional cooperation and peer learning on biodiversity challenges and commitments in the Mediterranean through webinars and coaching.

Overall structure of the regional activity

The main components and steps of the regional activity are indicated below:



An important component of the activity, alongside the webinar and coaching process, is a Background Assessment to identify recent challenges, gaps, and priorities in biodiversity reporting. Feedback from Partner Countries has been collected through a short questionnaire. The Assessment has helped refine the regional webinar agenda, inform the Q&A sessions, and guide the selection of appropriate speakers. Following the webinar and coaching sessions, a synthesis report will be prepared to summarize the activity's progress, outputs, outcomes, and key lessons learned.

Objective of the Webinar

The Webinar will be providing a “close-to-end” opportunity and easily accessible way for the Partner Countries to clarify any questions, address uncertainties, fill in gaps and resolve challenges related to the preparation of the 7NR. In December 2025, a survey was circulated among CBD Focal Points to identify questions, gaps and challenges they face in the preparation of the 7NR, as well as to communicate their progress. These points will be forwarded, in due time, to the CBD Secretariat and the other co-organizers to be clarified by the experts during the Webinar.

Stakeholders invited to the Webinar

Participants are: the Focal Points of the Convention of Biological Diversity, the WES-BCA and other Environment and Water Focal Points, as well as Consultants appointed to support the national efforts for the preparation of the 7NR (if applicable) and other Ministry Representatives or Stakeholders particularly involved in the CBD reporting in the Partner Countries.

Support for WES-BCA PCs in Preparing their 7th National Reports (7NRs) under the CBD
(WES-BCA Activity: C1 HOR-3)

Regional Webinar on Reporting Structures and Indicators for the 7NRs under the Convention on Biological Diversity

Co-organised by WES-BCA and UfM in cooperation with the SCBD

Wednesday 21 January 2026

15:00 - 18:30 CET (09:00 - 12:30 EST) Online

AGENDA

14:30-15:00	Connection to the platform Participants join and test audio/video connections
15:00-15:35 35 min	Opening remarks - Prof. Michael Scoulllos, Team Leader, WES-BCA - Mr. Lijie Cai, Programme Management Officer, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity - Mr. Mahmoud Elyes Hamza, SPA/RAC Director, Barcelona Convention - Ms. Alessandra Sensi, Head of Sector, Environment, Green and Blue Economy, UfM - Ms. Nadja Steinfort, International Relations Officer, DG Environment F3, European Commission - Mr. Youssef Tadros, Programme Manager, DG MENA, European Commission
15:35-15:40 5 min	Introduction to the WES-BCA project and activity overview Mr. Anis Ismail, Environment Key Expert, WES-BCA
15:40 – 17:30 110 min	Brief updates on the preparations of the 7NR and TSSCs in the Mediterranean - Ms. Nadja Steinfort, European Commission - Ms. Carla Danelutti, IUCN Regional Programme Coordinator Tour de table by the participating countries, in alphabetical order, on their preparations and the nature of support expected
17:30-18:15 45 min	Questions and answers on the 7NR preparation and the use of the 7NR On-line Reporting Tool Mr. Kieran Noonan-Mooney and Mr. Blaise Fonseca, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
18:15-18:30 15 min	Follow-up actions and closing Remarks - Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Senior Biodiversity Expert, WES-BCA - Prof. Michael Scoulllos, Team Leader, WES-BCA

For more information: www.wes-bca.eu



12.2 Report on the Validation Workshop of the 7NR under the CBD of Tunisia (05/02/2026)

Support for WES-BCA PCs in Preparing their 7th National Reports (7NRs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

WES-BCA Activity: C1 HOR-3

Report on the validation workshop of the 7NRs under the CBD of Tunisia

Thursday, 5th February, 2006

Introduction

The national validation workshop of Tunisia's Seventh National Report (7NR) under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held in Tunis on 5 February 2026. This workshop was the third national consultation organized under the UNDP/GEF-supported process for the preparation of the 7NR. The two previous national workshops were held in September and December 2025, respectively. The overall objective of the workshop was to finalize and formally validate the draft Seventh National Report through a participatory and inclusive process, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, prior to its official submission to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. A total of 58 participants, including 31 women, attended the workshop. Participants included senior officials from relevant ministries and national institutions; national focal points of the CBD, its Protocols, and other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); as well as representatives of civil society organizations, environmental NGOs, academia, and scientific institutions. The specific objectives of the workshop were to: Present the main findings and messages of the Seventh National Report; Review, discuss, and confirm the data and assessments contained therein; and Collect feedback, comments, and recommendations from participants to ensure national ownership and technical robustness of the report.

Opening remarks

The national validation workshop was opened by Ms. Verena Linneweber, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP in Tunisia. In her opening remarks, she emphasized that the presence of key personalities who have shaped the international biodiversity agenda alongside national institutions responsible for biodiversity reflects a shared conviction: biodiversity is not a sectoral issue, but a governance, development, and long-term sustainability issue. She highlighted the particular importance of the Seventh National Report, stressing that it is not merely a reporting requirement, but also a mirror of Tunisia's biodiversity trajectory, a tool for accountability, and an instrument for collective learning. The 7NR enables the assessment of progress achieved, the identification of gaps, and the better orientation of future action. Ms. Linneweber recalled that the preparation of the report followed a participatory and inclusive process, mobilizing national institutions, focal points of environmental conventions, the scientific community, civil society organizations, and technical partners. The successive national workshops contributed to enriching the report's content, consolidating data, and strengthening national ownership. She further noted that, substantively, the 7NR highlights notable progress achieved by Tunisia, including the strengthening of its institutional and strategic framework for biodiversity, improved integration of biodiversity considerations into several sectoral policies, and continued efforts in the conservation of terrestrial, marine, and coastal ecosystems. The report indicates that Tunisia's protected area network now covers nearly 17% of its terrestrial territory and approximately 6% of its marine and coastal areas. It also documents progress in wetland management, forest and steppe ecosystem conservation, and the gradual integration of biodiversity into agricultural and fisheries systems. At the same time, the report underscores persistent pressures on biodiversity that directly affect ecosystem services, particularly for vulnerable populations. It highlights the importance of capacity development, improved information and

monitoring systems, and the central role of scientific research. Growing attention to gender integration in biodiversity policies is also reflected. Governance, coordination, and financing emerge as key cross-cutting issues. She concluded by reaffirming UNDP's commitment to continue supporting Tunisia, alongside national institutions, civil society, academia, and partners, to ensure that the findings and lessons of the report are translated into concrete and measurable actions on the ground

In his opening intervention, the representative of the WES-BCA project presented the key messages of a recent publication by a United Kingdom executive agency entitled "Biodiversity Loss, Ecosystem Collapse and National Security." He emphasized that, much like climate change, biodiversity loss is increasingly recognized as an issue of global peace and security, and has become part of high-level international political agendas. He noted that this perspective strongly reinforces the vision of Tunisia's new National Biodiversity Strategy, aligned with the goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which recognizes that biodiversity loss is not only an environmental issue, but also a development, economic, and security concern. In this context, Tunisia has made the fight against biodiversity loss a national priority. He recalled that Tunisia was among the first developing countries to submit its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2025–2030, aligned with the GBF, to the international community during COP16 in October 2024. He stressed that the present workshop clearly demonstrates Tunisia's determination to be among the first developing countries to submit its Seventh National Report ahead of the 28 February 2026 deadline. He congratulated Tunisia on this exemplary achievement and thanked UNDP for its continued support. He reiterated the commitment of the EU-funded WES-BCA project to continue supporting Tunisia in all areas within its mandate. (See Annex I).

Following these interventions, the CBD National Focal Point of Tunisia took the floor. After thanking UNDP and WES-BCA for their support, he recalled that the Seventh National Report is an official monitoring and reporting instrument required under the Convention on Biological Diversity. It enables Tunisia to assess, in a structured manner and based on updated data, the progress achieved over the past six years. He emphasized that the report also serves as a strategic analytical tool to identify achievements, challenges, and gaps, assess the integration of biodiversity into sectoral policies, and guide future priorities. The alignment of Tunisia's NBSAP with the Global Biodiversity Framework aims to integrate the new global goals and targets for the 2030 and 2050 horizons, repositioning biodiversity as a central pillar of sustainable development closely linked to climate, agriculture, water, and land-use planning policies. He further highlighted that, in recognition of Tunisia's commitment to species recovery and biodiversity conservation, and its efforts to implement GBF Target 4, Tunisia was awarded the "Reverse the Red" medal by IUCN during the World Conservation Congress held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in October 2025

Presentations of the main findings of the 7NR

Under this agenda item the four following presentations were made:

- Context and objectives of the Seventh Report;
- Overview of the work framework, preparation process, and structure of the Seventh Report;
- Results of the assessment of progress made in achieving national biodiversity objectives;
- Gender mainstreaming in biodiversity

The presentations were followed by an in-depth discussion. Participants raised concerns regarding the complexity of indicators, noting that many national objectives and targets are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and that a single indicator cannot fully capture progress or remaining gaps. Issues related to data availability, data updating, and the strengthening of monitoring, follow-up, and evaluation systems were also discussed. Participants requested clarifications from the WES-BCA representative on the methodology used to assess and rank progress in accordance with the CBD

reporting template, as well as on the linkages between the Seventh and Eighth National Reports and the upcoming global implementation review of the GBF by COP17

Closure of the Workshop

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants formally validated Tunisia's Seventh National Report, which will be officially submitted to the CBD Secretariat by mid-February 2026. In line with CBD Secretariat guidance, Tunisia has already submitted partial information through the Online Reporting Tool. The CBD National Focal Point reiterated his request for WES-BCA support in the preparation of a draft ministerial preface and a draft conclusion for the Seventh National Report.

Opening Statement of the representative of WES-BCA at the Validation Workshop of Tunisia's Seventh National Report to the CBD- Tunis, 5 February 2026

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A few days ago, more precisely on 20 January, an executive body responsible for overseeing the United Kingdom's external and internal security services, MI5 and MI6, published a report entitled "Biodiversity Loss, Ecosystem Collapse and National Security." This 14-page report, which went largely unnoticed amid the turbulence of today's geopolitical developments, provides compelling evidence that all of the so-called essential ecosystems of our planet, without exception, are in a state of advanced collapse—particularly the Amazon, the Congo Basin, the Heart of Borneo, the Himalayas, coral reefs, and mangroves.

This collapse is generating even greater geopolitical and economic instability, political polarization, as well as an intensification of conflicts and competition over natural resources, accompanied by migration waves and heightened risks of pandemics. The report specifies that this collapse, even when geographically distant from the United Kingdom, constitutes a serious threat to the country's national security. Indeed, the United Kingdom imports 40% of its food from abroad.

Much like climate change, this report places biodiversity loss squarely on the agenda of issues relating to global peace and security. As early as 1986, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, suggested—through an official correspondence addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations—that climate change should be placed on the agenda of the Security Council as an issue falling under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on international peace and security. It was also at the initiative of the United Kingdom that the first meeting of the United Nations Security Council on climate change was held in 2007, followed by two other ministerial-level meetings in 2009 and 2011. Since then, climate change has become a standing item on the agenda of United Nations meetings of Heads of State and Government worldwide.

This report comes at a timely moment to reinforce the vision of Tunisia's new National Biodiversity Strategy for 2015–2030, aligned with the strategic goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework, which states that "biodiversity loss is not only an environmental issue, but also a development, economic, and SECURITY issue." It is for this reason that Tunisia, as stated in this new strategy, has made "the fight against biodiversity loss a national priority."

It is in the name of this national priority that Tunisia was among the first developing countries to submit, in October 2024, to the international community at COP16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, its new National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2025–2030, aligned with the objectives of the Global Biodiversity Framework. The development of this new strategy was marked by a transparent, inclusive, and participatory process, with the involvement and commitment of all

stakeholders, without exception. To date, Tunisia is among the 70 Contracting Parties, out of 186, to have submitted such a strategy.

Your meeting today clearly demonstrates Tunisia's determination to fully meet its contractual commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and its intention to be among the first developing countries to submit its Seventh National Report on the status of implementation and progress achieved under the new strategy, ahead of the deadline of 28 February 2026.

I therefore wish to extend my warmest congratulations to you on this exemplary achievement, despite the extremely short timelines that were imposed, as well as the complexity of the agreed process.

I would also like to thank the United Nations Development Programme for its support throughout the preparation of this report, and for its renewed commitment—expressed by its representative present here today, Ms. Verena Linneweber, Deputy Resident Representative—to continue assisting Tunisia in the implementation of its new strategy and its national objectives and targets.

I would also like to reiterate the determination of the decision-makers of the Water, Environment, Support/Biodiversity, Climate and Actions (WES-BCA) project, funded by the European Union and represented in Tunisia by Mr. Anis Ismail, present here today, to continue supporting Tunisia in all areas within its mandate.

I wish you every success in your deliberations and thank you for your kind attention.