



# Activity number C1\_REG-4

Support for WES-BCA PCs in the Mediterranean for the  
monitoring and reporting programs for marine litter  
prevention and mitigation

## Synthesis Note

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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:**

*This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the WES-BCA Project and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|                         |                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>CB/MEP</i>           | Capacity Building / Mediterranean Environment Programme          |
| <i>CI22</i>             | Common Indicator 22                                              |
| <i>CI23</i>             | Common Indicator 23                                              |
| <i>CI24</i>             | Common Indicator 24                                              |
| <i>EO10</i>             | Ecological Objective 10                                          |
| <i>EU</i>               | European Union                                                   |
| <i>IMAP</i>             | Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme                   |
| <i>IMAP Info System</i> | UNEP/MAP reporting and data management platform                  |
| <i>PCs</i>              | Partner Countries                                                |
| <i>QA/QC</i>            | Quality Assurance / Quality Control                              |
| <i>RPML</i>             | Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean   |
| <i>SM</i>               | Support Mechanism                                                |
| <i>SWIM</i>             | Sustainable Water Integrated Management                          |
| <i>UfM</i>              | Union for the Mediterranean                                      |
| <i>UNEP/MAP</i>         | United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan |
| <i>WES</i>              | Water and Environment Support                                    |
| <i>WES-BCA</i>          | Water and Environment Support – Biodiversity and Climate Action  |
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## 1 CONTEXT OF THE ACTIVITY

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Marine litter remains a major pressure on Mediterranean coastal and marine ecosystems and continues to affect biodiversity, coastal landscapes, fisheries, tourism and the broader blue economy. In recent years, important progress has been made in the region through the development of policy and technical frameworks under the UNEP/MAP Ecosystem Approach, Ecological Objective 10 (EO10), the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP), and the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (RPML).

Within this context, WES-BCA Activity C1\_REG-4 aimed to support Partner Countries in the Mediterranean in strengthening marine litter monitoring and reporting programmes for prevention and mitigation. The activity was designed for decision-makers, practitioners and regional partners and sought to promote a more coherent and practice-oriented implementation of EO10, with particular attention to reporting readiness, data use and links to decision-making.

The activity also aimed to facilitate regional exchange of experience, identify practical gaps and needs, and support a stronger alignment of national efforts with IMAP and related regional frameworks.

## 2 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

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The activity was implemented through five main steps.

- **Task 1: Kick-off meeting**

The activity was launched through a remote kick-off meeting with WES-BCA experts and regional and country representatives. The meeting helped introduce the activity, clarify the workplan and methodology, and agree on the timing, scope and overall implementation framework of the webinar and related deliverables.

- **Task 2: Background assessment and preparatory work**

A desk-based review was carried out to assess the current state of marine litter monitoring and reporting in the WES-BCA partner countries and to compile the initial evidence base for the activity. This work led to the preparation of a Background Document that provided the policy, technical and institutional baseline for the subsequent assessment process.

- **Task 3: Stakeholder outreach and preparatory exchanges**

Relevant institutions and experts were contacted in preparation for the webinar and the broader assessment. Structured questionnaires tailored to different actors were circulated before and after the webinar. However, the number of responses received was too limited to support a systematic comparative analysis across countries and indicators, and questionnaire inputs were therefore used only as supplementary background input.

- **Task 4: Regional webinar**

A regional online webinar on Mediterranean monitoring and reporting programmes for marine litter prevention and mitigation was held on 3 February 2026. The webinar brought together representatives of Partner Countries, regional institutions, project actors and experts to exchange experience on

regional frameworks, national implementation, selected case studies and practical challenges related to EO10 monitoring and reporting.

- **Task 5: Regional Assessment Report and synthesis**

Building on the Background Document, the webinar discussions and the broader desk-based review, a Regional Assessment Report was prepared. The report provides a regional overview, country profiles for the WES-BCA partner countries, a synthesis of key findings and gaps, action-oriented recommendations, and a proposed way forward for future support.

### 3 MAIN OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

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The activity produced three main outputs: a Background Document, a regional webinar report, and a Regional Assessment Report. Together, these outputs provide an updated overview of marine litter monitoring and reporting in the WES-BCA region and a stronger evidence base for future regional and national action.

A key outcome of the activity was the confirmation that significant progress has already been made across the region, particularly for CI22 (beach and coastline litter). At the same time, the assessment showed that implementation remains uneven across countries and indicators. CI23 (litter in the water column and on the seafloor) is less consistently operationalised and often depends on specialised capacities and project support, while CI24 (litter interactions with marine organisms) remains the least developed indicator overall, although regional protocols and country pilots now provide a clearer basis for future implementation.

Another major outcome was the recognition that the main challenge is no longer only whether monitoring activities exist, but whether the resulting data are sufficiently harmonised, quality-assured, validated, reported and used for decision-making. In many cases, useful datasets are already being generated, but the institutional arrangements needed to consolidate, analyse and report them regularly remain uneven. The activity therefore highlighted that reporting readiness is often weaker than monitoring activity itself.

The activity also reinforced the value of regional exchange and practical good practice examples. Experiences presented during the webinar showed that marine litter monitoring can be organised through different models, including national systems, project-based pilot actions, decentralised local-operator networks and participatory approaches, provided that harmonised methods, standard metadata and adequate quality assurance are in place.

Overall, the activity contributed to a clearer regional understanding of the current state of marine litter monitoring and reporting, the main cross-cutting gaps, and the priority directions for future support. The main priority areas identified include stronger national coordination for monitoring and reporting, improved use of the IMAP Info System, continued support for the operationalisation of CI23 and CI24, reinforced QA/QC and data management arrangements, and stronger links between monitoring results, mitigation planning and decision-making.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

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A key lesson learned from the activity is that the Mediterranean region already has substantial policy frameworks, technical guidance and practical experience to support marine litter monitoring and reporting. The main need now is to make these existing systems work more effectively in practice, especially by strengthening data flows, reporting pathways, institutional coordination and the use of marine litter data for policy and planning.

Future follow-up support should therefore focus not only on monitoring activity itself, but on the full chain from data generation to QA/QC, validation, reporting and decision-making. In this sense, the activity has provided both a clearer assessment of current implementation and a practical basis for future regional cooperation and targeted support under IMAP EO10.