



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

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Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

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**ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY
ON SHIPS' BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT**

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides information on the outcome of the assessment of the level of implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management, pursuant to the UN Environment/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017.

Actions to be taken: Paragraph 19

Related documents: UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/8, REMPEC/WG.37/16, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, REMPEC/WG.41/6/1, REMPEC/WG.41/14, REMPEC/WG.41/INF.7, REMPEC/WG.41/INF.8

Background

1 The Seventeenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean ("the Barcelona Convention") and its Protocols (COP 17), which was convened in Paris, France from 8 to 10 February 2012, adopted the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management, including its Action Plan and Timetable (hereinafter referred to as the Mediterranean BWM Strategy) as well as the "General Guidance on the Voluntary Application of the D1 Ballast Water Exchange Standard by Vessels Operating between the Mediterranean Sea and the North-East Atlantic and/or the Baltic Sea" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.20/8, Decision IG.20/11).

2 The Mediterranean BWM Strategy is the result of the work of the Mediterranean Regional Task Force and of its Focus Groups, which were established in September 2008 with the mandate to develop a Strategic Action Plan for the region. The Regional Task Force, composed of all the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and coordinated by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), was assisted in its work by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC).

3 The general objective of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy is to establish the framework for a regional harmonised approach in the Mediterranean on ships' ballast water control and management which is consistent with the requirements and standards of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention), as outlined in its Article 13.3.

4 The Mediterranean BWM Strategy is composed of eight (8) Strategic Priorities and of an Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies eight (8) main measures to be taken at regional level, sub-regional or national level in accordance with the Strategic Priorities. The Action Plan includes a Work plan/Timetable for its implementation, which covered the years 2011-2015.

5 As reflected in document REMPEC/WG.37/16 and, in light of Strategic Priority 7, whereby the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and Action Plan should be subject to periodic review to take into account emerging issues, outcomes of Research and Development (R&D) activities and experience gained from its operation and implementation, the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, which was held in Attard, Malta, from 15 to 17 June 2015, agreed that:

- .1 a meeting is convened with the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the ongoing relevance of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy, and overall effectiveness of activities carried out under its Action Plan, amongst others;
- .2 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention continue implementing the said Strategy, including its Action Plan, irrespective of its original Timetable, with the assistance of REMPEC which plays an essential role in the coordination of the implementation of the Action Plan and also in its role as Regional Coordinating Organisation (RCO) for the implementation of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme in the Mediterranean region in collaboration with SPA/RAC;
- .3 the efforts of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in the process of ratifying the BWM Convention are coordinated with the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy.

6 More recently, the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 19), which was convened in Athens, Greece from 9 to 12 February 2016, agreed to include an assessment of the level of implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (hereinafter referred to as "the Assessment") in the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), also referred to as UN Environment/MAP (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/20).

7 The main objective of the Assessment, which was financed by the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP), is to report on the status of implementation of the said Strategy, including a review and evaluation of the on-going relevance and overall effectiveness of activities carried out under its Action Plan.

8 Following the launch of a Call for Proposals for the provision of consultancy services for the Assessment on 2 March 2016, a Consultant was recruited by REMPEC on 5 April 2016 to support it in carrying out the said assessment, in cooperation with the UN Environment/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat and SPA/RAC.

Outcome of the Assessment

9 A kick-off meeting was held with the Consultant at the REMPEC Offices in Valletta, Malta, from 7 to 8 April 2016 to discuss the content of the reference documents to be analysed, the scope of the assignment, as well as to agree on the method of work and communication channel.

10 In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the following documents were prepared with a view to assessing the level of implementation, by each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, of the Strategic Priorities of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and of the measures identified in the Action Plan to be taken at regional level, sub-regional or national level in accordance with the Strategic Priorities:

- .1 a generic Assessment Template based on the contents and structure of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy;

- .2 a specific Assessment Template for each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention as well as REMPEC and SPA/RAC, which was based on the generic Assessment Template and pre-filled with information made available by the Centre as well as that arising from existing reporting procedures, including the REMPEC Country Profiles available on REMPEC's website and the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS); and
- .3 a Synthetic Report on the Assessment, based on the response from the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

11 To that end, in August 2016, the Centre requested all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, through REMPEC Circular Letter No. 13/2016, to review, amend and complete, in track changes mode, the content of their specific Assessment Templates. Till the end of December 2016, only five (5) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention had reviewed their specific Assessment Template. Therefore, it was decided to extend the deadline for input to early 2017, which brought the number of responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to sixteen (16).

12 The Synthetic Report on the Assessment, which provides a succinct account of the general status of implementation in statistical terms, specific recommendations under each Strategic Priority of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy as well as each measure identified in the Action Plan, and general conclusions, is presented in the **Appendix** to the present document.

Next steps

13 Theoretically, as the period for which the Mediterranean BWM Strategy was designed has passed (2011-2015), it would be required to revise it with a view to taking into account:

- .1 regional developments (e.g. the adoption of the UN Environment/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021, the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025, the Updated Action Plan concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach);
- .2 developments at the European Union level (e.g. the adoption of the Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species); and
- .3 international developments (e.g. the discussions within the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC)).

14 However, practically, the following two significant international developments in the coming months have substantive implications on the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy:

- .1 the imminent coming to an official end of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme on 30 June 2017, the implementation of which in the Mediterranean region has been coordinated by REMPEC, in its capacity of Regional Coordinating Organisation (RCO), in collaboration with SPA/RAC; and
- .2 the imminent entry into force of the BWM Convention on 8 September 2017, which will not only minimise the risk of invasions by alien species via ballast water but also provide a global level playing field for international shipping, providing clear and robust standards for the management of ballast water on ships.

15 As indicated in document REMPEC/WG.41/6/1, the number of Parties to the BWM Convention has reached to date fifty-four (54), representing 53.41 per cent of the world merchant shipping tonnage, of which ten (10) are Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

16 In this context and, on the basis of the Synthetic Report on the Assessment, especially the specific recommendations and the general conclusions detailed therein, which lead to the understanding that the Mediterranean BWM Strategy is still relevant and activities carried out under its Action Plan have so far been overall effective, the Secretariat considers that:

- .1 this is a crucial time for technical support to Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to assist with the ratification and effective implementation of the BWM Convention. To that end, it is essential that the most valuable assets and contributions (e.g. capacity building tools and technical cooperation efforts) developed within the framework of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme are sustained beyond the life of the project; and
- .2 this is not a time for strategic discussions leading to the establishment of a formal process of revision of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy, which would be time-consuming and resource-demanding for both the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention without the immediate added value required for an effective implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean region.

17 Therefore, as outlined in document REMPEC/WG.41/14, during the next biennium, the Centre proposes to focus its work in the field of ballast water management and invasive species on national activities, in collaboration with SPA/RAC where relevant, with a view to further promoting, in the Mediterranean region:

- .1 the ratification and effective implementation of the BWM Convention;
- .2 the implementation of the 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species ("the Biofouling Guidelines"), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.41/INF.7 and, by doing so, of the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships, 2001 (AFS Convention) the focus of which is, admittedly, the prevention of adverse impacts from the use of anti-fouling systems and the biocides they may contain, rather than the prevention of the transfer of invasive aquatic species through hull fouling; and
- .3 the Guidance for minimizing the transfer of invasive aquatic species as biofouling (hull fouling) for recreational craft, which further supplements the Biofouling Guidelines and is presented in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.41/INF.8.

18 In this respect, the Secretariat proposes to:

- .1 organise national workshops on the ratification and effective implementation of the BWM Convention;
- .2 organise national workshops on the effective implementation of the Biofouling Guidelines and its supplementary guidance with a view to raising awareness of the aspects and implications of the transfer of invasive aquatic species through ships' hull fouling as well as facilitating their global implementation and the minimisation of species invasions; and
- .3 assist interested Contracting Parties in developing National Ballast Water Management Strategies with a view to translating national policies into effective and efficient ballast water management practices that are consistent with national as well as international obligations and legal requirements.

Actions requested by the Meeting

19 **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document;

- .2 **comment** upon the Synthetic Report on the Assessment, which is set out in the Appendix to the present document, as deemed appropriate, especially the specific recommendations under each Strategic Priority of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and each measure identified in the Action Plan as well as the general conclusions; and
- .3 **consider** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat, as laid down in paragraphs 16, 17 and 18 of the present document, prior to onward transmission, as appropriate, to the next Meeting of the UN Environment/MAP Focal Points, for its consideration.

APPENDIX

**Synthetic Report on the assessment of the level of implementation of the
Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management**

1 INTRODUCTION

The Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management (BWM), including its Action Plan and Timetable (hereinafter referred to as the Mediterranean BWM Strategy) as well as the "*General Guidance on the Voluntary Application of the D1 Ballast Water Exchange Standard by Vessels Operating between the Mediterranean Sea and the North-East Atlantic and/or the Baltic Sea*" were formally adopted at the Seventeenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (hereinafter referred to as "the Barcelona Convention") and its Protocols (COP 17), held in Paris, France from 8 to 10 February 2012.

The Mediterranean BWM Strategy established the following general objective:

"The general objective of the present Strategy is to establish the framework for a regional harmonised approach in the Mediterranean on ships' ballast water control and management which is consistent with the requirements and standards of the BWM Convention, as outlined in its Article 13.3."

The Mediterranean BWM Strategy is composed of eight (8) Strategic Priorities and of an Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies eight (8) main measures to be taken at regional level, sub-regional or national level in accordance with the Strategic Priorities. The Action Plan includes a Work plan/Timetable for its implementation, which covered the years 2011-2015.

As the period for which the Mediterranean BWM Strategy was designed has passed, it has been considered necessary to conduct an assessment of the current status of implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention as well as by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC). In fact, the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, which was convened in Athens, Greece from 9 to 12 February 2016, agreed to include an assessment of the level of implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (hereinafter referred to as "the Assessment") in the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), also referred to as UN Environment/MAP. This activity is financed by the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and is being implemented by REMPEC in cooperation with the UN Environment/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat and SPA/RAC.

The Assessment involved consultations carried out by REMPEC with the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention during the period from July 2016 to April 2017. A generic Assessment Template was developed to form the basis for the consultations. Specific Assessment Templates were then generated for each Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, populated with available information on the activities conducted towards implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy. A specific Assessment Template was also developed for REMPEC and SPA/RAC to capture activities coordinated and implemented at regional level. Through the consultation process, the information was reviewed and validated, and where relevant, additional information was provided by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, REMPEC and SPA/RAC.

The Assessment presented hereunder is structured, for ease of reference, according to the eight (8) Strategic Priorities, including the relevant action points, from the Mediterranean BWM Strategy. Each action is followed by a succinct account of the general status of implementation in statistical terms, including any relevant recommendations.

Finally, it is also worth noting that none of the data presented herein is associated to any Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention in particular. However, notice should be taken of the fact that formal responses were received from sixteen (16) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention following REMPEC's request for input as contained in REMPEC Circular Letter No. 13/2016 dated 29 July 2017. The Annex to this report provides a direct account of the responses received relative to each of the questions contained in the specific Assessment Templates.

2 ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND RELATED ACTIONS

Strategic Priority 1: Support international instruments developed to minimize the introduction of invasive alien species in the Mediterranean

“The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention support the work for the minimization of the introduction of invasive alien species being carried out by the relevant organisations and forums, particularly the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and are committed to take all appropriate actions toward the ratification of the BWM Convention for its entry into force as soon as possible.”

Action 1. Ratify the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention)

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to form a national policy working group to lead the process towards the ratification of the BWM Convention;
- b) to draft the instrument of ratification for adoption through the proper channels with their respective Government system; and
- c) to develop national legislation including fines for violators, which will give effect to the BWM Convention once ratified, as well as secondary regulations and technical arrangements for its enforcement.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

At the time of reporting, a total of ten (10) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention had ratified the BWM Convention. Of these, eight (8) provided responses to REMPEC's request for input. In total, sixteen (16) responses were received from Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in the form of completed specific Assessment Templates.

- a) As part of the process of ratification of the BWM Convention, countries may or may not have formed a national policy working group to lead the process. While some of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have formed such groups and subsequently ratified the BWM Convention, others are currently in the process of doing so. Although eight (8) of the sixteen (16) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that provided responses to REMPEC's request for input indicated that they have formed a national policy working group to lead the process of ratification, only five (5) of them have completed the process of ratification. The other three (3) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have therefore confirmed that the process is formally underway through a national policy working group. A further two (2) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated that internal progress is being made towards ratification.
- b) Ten (10) of the sixteen (16) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that responded confirmed that the instrument of ratification has been drafted for adoption through the proper governmental channels. This includes eight (8) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have already ratified the BWM Convention and two (2) that intend to do so imminently.
- c) In response to the question regarding the development of national legislation to give effect to the BWM Convention, five (5) of the sixteen (16) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that responded confirmed that such legislation has been established. Interestingly, three (3) of these are Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that are still in the process of ratifying the BWM Convention.

Further to the national actions taken, as described above, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted a regional action plan concerning species introduction and invasive species, which urges them to develop national laws to appropriately domesticate the provisions of related international treaties, guidelines and codes.

Recommendations

- i. Contracting Parties that have not yet initiated the process of ratification or implementation of the BWM Convention are encouraged to consider the benefits, as well as the available mechanisms for technical support, and to take steps towards ratification and/or implementation.
- ii. Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have ratified but not developed national legislation to domesticate the provisions of the BWM Convention are encouraged to recognise the imminent date for entry into force of the BWM Convention, and consider steps towards development of appropriate regulatory measures.
- iii. Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that have taken significant preparatory steps towards preparing for implementation of the BWM Convention are encouraged to consider undertaking the formal process of ratification, including deposition of the appropriate instrument with IMO.
- iv. Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are recommended to reconfirm their commitments to a standardised regional approach to BWM under the auspices of the Barcelona Convention, and with the support of REMPEC in collaboration with SPA/RAC where relevant.
- v. REMPEC, in collaboration with SPA/RAC where relevant, may encourage further ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention within the region by continuing to provide assistance where possible to Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to enhance national and sub-regional efforts.

Strategic Priority 2: Maintain capacity-building activities and initiatives in the Mediterranean region

“The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention stress the need to continue efforts made in the region to enhance capacity building, knowledge transfer and training of personnel after the GloBallast Partnerships Project terminates, and to involve relevant international and regional co-operation mechanisms, non-governmental organisations and agencies for the continuation of the process initiated.”

Action 5. Enhance expertise; facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building in the Mediterranean region

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to investigate the possibility of including training programmes and other capacity-building activities in the regular programme of work of the relevant Regional Activity Centres of MAP;
- b) to seek and secure support, individually or through REMPEC, from the IMO Technical Cooperation Division (TCD), or other international organizations for national, sub-regional or regional training courses and other capacity-building actions in support of activities of the Action Plan;
- c) to disseminate protocols and tools for standardization of technical approaches that could be used to conduct regional and national activities;
- d) that countries with specific expertise on ballast water management related activities help organise national, sub-regional or regional training sessions; and

- e) to replicate such training on a national level through the establishment of a national training programme on ballast water management activities.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

Generally substantial engagement and progress was evident from the responses provided by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with respect to BWM activities designed and implemented to enhance capacity and awareness and to transfer knowledge to national authorities. The numerous workshops funded and organised by the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme, with the support of REMPEC and SPA/RAC, as well as those organised through the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), have been useful in developing initial technical capacity for various aspects of BWM within the participating agencies of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that were in attendance. However, most Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that participated in such workshops indicated an ongoing need for such technical support at regional and national levels.

- a) The SPA/RAC has provided technical support and capacity development activities related to biological sampling and monitoring for invasive species consistent with the goals of the Action Plan. While this was only reflected in two (2) of the sixteen (16) responses received from Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, it is nonetheless clear that several countries in the region have benefited from the incorporation of these capacity building activities in the regular programme of SPA/RAC.
- b) Seven (7) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have sought or attained support for training courses at national or sub-regional levels, related to the implementation of the Action Plan. This included the support for participation of national representatives in regional and sub-regional capacity development workshops targeting various aspects of BWM implementation.
- c) The information provided by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicates that some efforts have been underway at national levels to engage specific relevant agencies or stakeholders in various aspects of BWM. However, only two (2) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have confirmed that they disseminated the protocols and tools related to standardisation of BWM at national or regional levels. At the regional level, SPA/RAC has actively disseminated to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention guidance tools related to the control of alien species introductions and the assessment of risks from invasive species.
- d) Five (5) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated that there is specific expertise related to BWM within their national institutions and universities. This expertise appears to be largely focused on the biological and ecological aspects of BWM and marine invasive species, although, in some cases, this extends to technical support tools for management.
- e) Training courses on BWM activities have been held within the region to the benefit of several of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. Eight (8) of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that responded have replicated such training events or assisted with the running of externally supported training events in their country.

Recommendations

- i. To develop mechanisms to support further training and capacity building activities specific to the technical components of the BWM Convention at national, sub-regional and regional levels. In particular, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention noted the need to support capacity for developing Port State Control (PSC) measures, including Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) procedures.

- ii. To assess the capacity for BWM implementation at national level and develop a comprehensive report demonstrating areas of technical competence and areas requiring further support. This will assist regional and international bodies in providing relevant capacity development interventions.

Strategic Priority 3: Develop advanced knowledge on environmental condition of the Mediterranean and ships' mediated introduction of invasive alien species

"The Contracting Parties promote, individually or through regional co-operation, research and development programmes in the field of invasive alien species and ships' ballast water management, as means to enhance knowledge and help setting scientific grounds on which best measures on controlling the transfer of invasive alien species can be based. The Contracting Parties also agree that results of such scientific work should be made available to all interested public."

Action 6. Enhance public awareness on ships' ballast water and invasive alien species issues

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to use IMO GloBallast Public awareness materials and translate these to local languages for dissemination at national level;
- b) to carry out national seminars and workshops to raise awareness among the various stakeholders involved; and
- c) to develop local case studies that may be used effectively for awareness and leveraging support within the Mediterranean region and its sub-regions.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

The commitment to increasing public awareness on BWM and invasive species issues has been well demonstrated through the information provided by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. While several national authorities have undertaken activities to promote the transfer of knowledge, and to replicate regional workshops at national levels, these efforts have nonetheless been limited, and it is apparent that more effort still is required to reach and inform a broader set of stakeholders implicated in comprehensive BWM implementation.

- a) Only one (1) of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that responded reported having used and translated awareness materials provided by the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme. Despite this, it was apparent from the information provided that the technical materials provided by the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme have been well received, useful and, in some cases, disseminated to relevant stakeholders.
- b) Eight (8) of the sixteen (16) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that provided information indicated that awareness raising workshops have been effectively used to engage the interests of local stakeholders.
- c) While only two (2) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention confirmed having specifically developed local case studies, it is apparent from the information provided that some of the national and sub-regional projects related to BWM and marine invasive species have produced synthesised data (e.g. species-specific awareness and management plans) that have effectively functioned as case studies to catalyse awareness and further support. Nonetheless, more attention on the development and application of local case studies may help build a stronger foundation of support through interested parties and stakeholders.

Recommendations

- i. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should consider the development of comprehensive national and sub-regional awareness raising and knowledge transfer activities, based on and, making effective use of, the full range of materials and tools provided by the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme, as well as other available resources.

Action 7. Set-up a web-based Mediterranean mechanism for exchanging information

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to establish a web based Regional Information System based on the structure outlined in Annex IV;
- b) to explore possible options and functionalities of the system and decide upon the body responsible for coordinating the development of the web-based Regional Information System;
- c) to set-up a Steering Committee for this project; and
- d) to explore possible options and decide upon the body responsible for hosting and maintaining the web-based Regional Information System.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

- a) The schematic of a Regional Information System (RIS) outlined in Annex IV of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy is intended to assist with centralisation of various essential components of the BWM process that have regional implications (e.g. risk assessment, ballast water reporting forms, shipping routes), while providing an information database on species, technical expertise and national authorities. Although the proposed centralised system has not yet been realised, some of the components (e.g. species and port survey data, risk assessment) have been incorporated into national and sub-regional approaches. Further to this, SPA/RAC conducted a feasibility study in setting-up a regional mechanism for collecting, compiling and circulating information on marine alien species in the Mediterranean (MAMIAS, <http://www.mamias.org/m/web>). The web-based system centralises and makes available essential data to assist BWM and compliment the proposed RIS.
- b) Two (2) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated that efforts have been made to explore options for the development and coordination of the proposed RIS.
- c) These two (2) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention also indicated that local Steering Committees have been formed to facilitate the process, however these may be focused on national and/or sub-regional aspects or components of the system.
- d) No decision has been made regarding the body responsible for hosting and maintenance of the proposed system, once it is developed. The two (2) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that responded positively to this query noted that some effort has been made in this regard.

Recommendations

- i. To assess the specific needs relative to various aspects of BWM implementation for the RIS, including all the components detailed in Annex IV of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy. This should highlight national and sub-regional web-based or linked systems that provide functionality in support of or in place of that which is proposed in the original RIS schematic.

- ii. To develop an updated and revised recommendation for a regional information and decision support system or tool, focusing on areas identified to be of common regional priority to assist with a standardised approach to BWM. It is further recommended that the outcome from the IMO/GloBallast Expert Workshop on developing a Risk-based Decision Support System for cost effective Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) of the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention be incorporated, as related to supporting information systems both globally and within the region.

Strategic Priority 4: Use risk assessment as a reliable tool to assist in ballast water management decision-making and in compliance, monitoring and enforcement procedures

“The Contracting Parties consider risk assessments at national, sub-regional or regional level, as an appropriate tool to guide on ballast water management measures and are committed to establish surveys and monitoring programmes including reporting and alert mechanisms.”

Action 3. Establish a solid Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) system in the Mediterranean region

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to adapt their existing Port State Control & CME systems to integrate the harmonized BWM CME procedures; and
- b) to establish and maintain up-to-date a regional communication system possibly within a clearing house mechanism (CHM), to allow exchange of experience and tracking of violations utilizing existing control agreements such as the Paris MoU and the Mediterranean MoU on Port State Control.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

- a) Only one (1) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention has taken steps to adapt existing PSC systems and pilot CME approaches in line with harmonised BWM procedures, as agreed in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy. Nonetheless, comments received from other Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated some concerns regarding the application and standardisation of CME procedures (e.g. sampling of ballast tanks) and the need for further technical support and guidance on these issues in the region.
- b) Two (2) of the sixteen (16) responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated that they have established and maintained a regional CHM, although no further details have been provided. It was however indicated that the issue of regional communications related to CME for BWM should be approached under the auspices of the Mediterranean Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on PSC.

Recommendations

- i. To support for and replicate the IMO/GloBallast training course on CME as well as to increase the uptake of technical support tools related to risk assessment and CME.

- ii. To engage at national and regional levels with the IMO and international partners involved with the ongoing process to develop an international risk-based support system to assist CME in the context of BWM (ref. 2016 Report of the IMO/GloBallast Expert Workshop on developing a Risk-based Decision Support System for cost effective Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) of the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention).
- iii. To develop further recommendations for uptake at the next meeting of the Mediterranean MoU on PSC related to regional communication mechanisms to support implementation of harmonised BWM procedures.

Action 4. Establish a survey, biological monitoring and risk assessment system for Mediterranean ports

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to develop a regionally standardised biological sampling and monitoring protocol for use of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in building the necessary biological and environmental databases to support the IAS management objectives;
- b) to collaborate, preferably following sub-regional approaches where relevant, on biological survey and monitoring activities, including to promote and ensure sharing of technical capacity, resources and results;
- c) to seek institutional support at the national level to conduct port biological surveys and plans for monitoring, as part of their national strategy for ballast water and IAS management;
- d) to adapt and use the regional CHM for sharing of data related to port surveys and ongoing biological monitoring; and
- e) that a regional-level risk assessment should be produced based on the information made available through biological surveys, as well as the shipping movement and ballast water discharge databases.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

Based on relatively strong scientific capacity in the region, there has been good progress with respect to surveys and monitoring of biological invasions in the Mediterranean waters. Although some sub-regions have been particularly well surveyed and studied, other areas remain without up-to-date or comprehensive inventories of extant marine species.

- a) It is apparent that several standardised guidelines or protocols exist for biological sampling and monitoring applicable to invasive species in the Mediterranean. These have been developed under the auspices of different authorities targeting management of marine biodiversity, protected areas, invasive species, and also as related to the monitoring of particular invasive species. In some cases endorsed methods and protocols have been adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for application in sampling and monitoring programmes, particularly in instances where collaboration within sub-regions has been evident. Regional guidance has also been provided for standardisation of survey and monitoring approaches through SPA/RAC via the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) roadmap and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance.
- b) The information received from five (5) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention confirms that significant collaboration has taken place at national and sub-regional levels, with respect to the development and implementation of biological sampling and monitoring programmes. External expertise has been welcomed in support of strengthening species information and ecological implications of invasions.

- c) Six (6) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention provided information related to port biological surveys and ongoing monitoring activities for invasive marine species. Given the advanced state of some of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and the sub-regional monitoring programmes they are conducting, it is apparent that 'hubs' of expertise may be available to help replicate and/or assist other areas in the Mediterranean where progress on this issue has not been evident.
- d) Although two (2) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated that regional CHM mechanisms had been developed, none of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention provided information to suggest that these were included in their current activities related to biological sampling and monitoring.
- e) Given the information stated above, a regional risk assessment process has not yet been conducted or possible, however sub-regional and national initiatives have explored the role of risk assessment in BWM implementation, especially as related to prioritisation of CME and PSC procedures.

Recommendations

- i. To explore opportunities for further roll out or replication of programmes (e.g. sub-regional and national initiatives) and sharing of expertise and knowledge related to sampling and monitoring of marine species in the Mediterranean.
- ii. To identify, through the use of existing information systems and databases, current gap areas for comprehensive baseline information on marine species. To subsequently develop recommended actions for the engagement of the appropriate regional and sub-regional bodies to support the targeting of such gap areas for increased monitoring effort.
- iii. To incorporate the updated regional biological information from sampling and monitoring programmes into an appropriate (e.g. Geographic Information System or GIS) data layer for integration with a regional risk assessment system designed specifically to support BWM.

Strategic Priority 5: Decide upon voluntary regional arrangements in the Mediterranean and ensure sub-regional and national strategies are in line with these

"The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention work collaboratively to adopt regional voluntary arrangements concerning ballast water management in the Mediterranean region, consistent with the requirements and standards set in the BWM Convention."

See actions under Strategic Priority 6

Strategic Priority 6: Consider other regional seas strategies and initiatives

"The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are committed to enhance and maintain cooperation with the neighbouring regions of the Mediterranean Sea and with other relevant regional agreements in order to ensure that the measures adopted are consistent with other ballast water management regional arrangements."

Action 2. Adopt harmonised arrangements for ballast water exchange in the Mediterranean region

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to adopt as soon as possible harmonized voluntary arrangements for ballast water exchange in the Mediterranean region (Annex 2 of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy); and
- b) to notify all interested parties of the adoption of harmonized voluntary arrangements for ballast water exchange in the Mediterranean sea through notices to shipping and instructions to surveyors.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

Five (5) of the sixteen (16) responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention confirmed that the harmonised voluntary arrangements for ballast water management in the Mediterranean region (Annex 2 of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy) had been adopted and that notifications of such had been disseminated, referencing IMO Circular BWM.2/Circ.39 dated 20 August 2012, as well as a Joint Notice to Shipping prepared by the Barcelona, Helsinki and OSPAR Conventions informing the shipping industry of the arrangements. However, the said IMO Circular and Joint Notice relate to the General Guidance on the Voluntary Interim Application of the D1 Ballast Water Exchange Standard by vessels operating between the Mediterranean Sea and the North-East Atlantic and/or the Baltic Sea, which was adopted concurrently by COP 17 with the Mediterranean BWM Strategy. Both the voluntary arrangements and guidance have an interim character and they will no longer apply when a ship is in a position to apply the D-2 Standard of the BWM Convention, or latest when the said Convention comes into force and a ship has to apply the D-2 Standard.

Recommendations

- i. To review the ongoing applicability of the harmonised voluntary arrangements for ballast water management in the Mediterranean region as well as the General Guidance on the Voluntary Interim Application of the D1 Ballast Water Exchange Standard by vessels operating between the Mediterranean Sea and the North-East Atlantic and/or the Baltic Sea, in consideration of the imminent entry into force of the BWM Convention and associated implementation timeframes relative to the application of the standard described in regulation D-1 or regulation D-2 thereof.

Strategic Priority 7: Keep the Strategy and Action plan under review and assess their implementation progress

“The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention call for regular meetings with the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the ongoing relevance of the Strategy, and overall effectiveness of activities carried out under the Action Plan, and that the work accomplished in the various regional seas regarding the management of ballast water is on the agenda of meetings and forums gathering the various regional Secretariats and agreements.”

Action 8. Incorporate the Action Plan evaluation within the Barcelona Convention reporting system and procedure

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, agreed

- a) to mandate REMPEC to coordinate and assist with the implementation of the Action Plan in the region, in collaboration with the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) where relevant;
- b) that REMPEC will inform its meetings of Focal Points, which take place every two years, on the status of implementation of the Action Plan, for subsequent transmission to the Ordinary Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols; and

- c) to provide REMPEC with the relevant information on national-based activities with the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the ongoing relevance and overall effectiveness of activities carried out under the Action Plan.

Assessment of the current status of implementation

Several activities have been coordinated at the regional level to assist with the implementation of specific components of the Action Plan of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy. As the appropriate regional body identified in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy, and as the Regional Coordinating Organisation (RCO) of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme, REMPEC, in collaboration with SPA/RAC where relevant, has provided coordination and facilitation support for many of these activities, including technical workshops and training events. REMPEC has also coordinated the process of monitoring and evaluating the progress made with respect to implementation of the Action Plan adopted under the auspices of the Barcelona Convention.

- a) One (1) of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated that it had mandated REMPEC to coordinate and assist with the implementation of the Action Plan in the region. The responses received generally reflect an understanding by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention of the active role REMPEC is playing in supporting the implementation of the Action Plan, in collaboration with SPA/RAC where relevant.
- b) The assessment of the status of implementation of the Action Plan has been conducted by REMPEC and summarised in the present synthetic report.
- c) Two (2) of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention indicated that they have previously provided REMPEC with relevant information on national activities, as per the commitments of the Action Plan. A total of sixteen (16) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention provided information in support of the Assessment summarised in the present synthetic report.

Recommendations

- i. Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention should continue to provide information to REMPEC, as and when relevant, regarding national and regional activities in support of the implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy.
- ii. In light of the expired timeframe of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and its Action Plan, it is recommended that available options are considered to reconfirm the commitments of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to the regional standardised approach to BWM detailed in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy, while potentially extending the timeframe for the Action Plan. Consideration should also be given to any relevant regional agreements that have been developed or updated since the adoption of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy, such as the Updated Action Plan concerning Species Introduction and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea, which should be seen together with the Guidelines for controlling the vectors of the introduction into the Mediterranean of non-indigenous species and invasive marine species as well as the Guide for risk analysis assessing the impacts of the introduction of non-indigenous species.

Strategic Priority 8: Work on the identification of adequate resources to implement activities under the Strategy and Action Plan

“The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention long-term objective is to ensure the sustainability and continuity of activities from self-financing sources within the region.”

Assessment of the current status of implementation

None of the responding Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention provided information indicating progress towards the identification or development of resources or sustainable mechanisms to support ongoing activities of the Action Plan. However, there were indications that consideration is being given to this at national level, with a view to achieving sustainable BWM implementation. It was also noted that the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme would be terminating in June 2017, shortly before the entry into force of the BWM Convention, and that there was a need to consider the development of mechanisms and partnerships to continue the provision of technical support to the region, with the ongoing assistance of REMPEC and SPA/RAC. Further suggestions were made that REMPEC and SPA/RAC should continue to collaborate, as well as with EMSA, where possible, to assist Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with the implementation of BWM in the region.

Recommendations

- i. Several Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention provided comments requesting further provision of technical support (e.g. capacity development activities, financing mechanisms, guidance tools) for BWM implementation at national level from regional and international institutions. It is therefore recommended that a project is developed to conduct a region-wide technical capacity assessment for BWM implementation, leading to the development of a technical support programme to compliment the actions and initiatives already underway in the region.
- ii. A partnership-based regional sustainability plan may be developed to highlight and secure mechanisms for facilitation and support (including funding) for ongoing activities in support of BWM in the Mediterranean region.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The Assessment has demonstrated that significant effort has been made at national and regional levels to support ratification and effective implementation of the BWM Convention. The programmes of work of the IMO, UN Environment/MAP, REMPEC, SPA/RAC and the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have ensured that well organised and effective capacity development and technical support initiatives drawing from international best practices are being put in place to compliment the goals of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and Action Plan. These efforts should be recognised and commended as they have provided a solid base of expertise within the region and a foundation for further replication.

However, as the entry into force of the BWM Convention draws closer, it is nonetheless apparent that there remains much work to be done to increase the level of ratification of the BWM Convention in the region, as well as the degree to which its provisions are implemented by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. It is clear from the Assessment that technical capacity needs in the region will continue to require specific attention over coming years, likely through increased roll-out of targeted training and technical support mechanisms (e.g. guidelines, decision support tools, protocols, etc.). The collaborative role of international organisations, regional bodies, and national administrations will be essential in assisting with the development and organisation of appropriate initiatives and actions throughout the region, as well as in sourcing sustainable funding mechanisms to support the process.

Considering that the timeframe for the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and Action Plan has expired, it is essential that the way forward is considered in a manner to be most effective and consistent with the general objective of establishing a framework for a regional harmonised approach to BWM in the Mediterranean. Through the present assessment, it is clear that the eight (8) strategic priorities of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy remain relevant to the ongoing needs of the region and the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. Some minor considerations may be necessary as related to specific actions (e.g. consistency with implementation timeframes of the BWM Convention, as related to voluntary regional arrangements and the phasing out of the D-1 Ballast Water exchange standard), however the overall framework adequately addresses the priority areas for ongoing implementation, regional cooperation and technical assistance. It may therefore be considered reasonable to extend the timeframe of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and Action Plan to allow more time for these commitments to manifest effectively.

Should the effective period of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy be extended, this will allow for increased effort to be focused on the current gaps identified in the present synthetic report as well as increased integration with other regional frameworks with relevance to BWM (e.g. Updated Action Plan concerning Species Introduction and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea). However, given the urgency created by the imminent entry into force of the BWM Convention as well as the forthcoming closure of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme, it would be advisable to consolidate and coordinate key actions and programmes, consistent with the recommendations of this report, to target key areas where capacity and technical expertise are urgently required to support BWM implementation. Regional and sub-regional approaches may be effective in ensuring consistency and cooperation between Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and can be facilitated through the existing regional bodies that have demonstrated successful support for the Mediterranean BWM Strategy and Action Plan. Collaboration between the regional bodies in support of such programmatic approaches should be further supported through the relevant international and regional funding mechanisms.

Annex

Strategic Priority (SP) / Action (A)		CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	CP6	CP7	CP8	CP9	CP10	CP11	CP12	CP13	CP14	CP15	CP16	% Yes
SP1/A1	a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Other	Yes	Other	No	Yes	Yes	Other	Yes	No	50
	b)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other	Yes	No	63
	c)	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Other	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Other	No	31
SP2/A5	a)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Other	No	No	No	No	No	Yes		No	13
	b)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Other	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	44
	c)	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Other	No		No	13						
	d)	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Other	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	31
	e)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	50
	f)	No	Yes	No	Other	No	No	No	No	Other	No	No	No	No	Yes		No	13
SP3/A6	a)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No		No	6
	b)	No	Yes	Yes	Other	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Other	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	50
	c)	No	Yes	No	No	Other	No	Other	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	13
SP3/A7	b)	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	No		No	13
	c)	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No		No	13							
	d)	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No		No	13							
SP4/A3	a)	No	Yes	No	Other	No	No	No	No	Other	No	No		No	No		No	6
	b)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Other	No	No	No		No	Yes		No	13
SP4/A4	b)	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		No	No		No	31
	c)	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	No	Yes	No	38
	d)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No		No	0
SP5, SP6/A2	a)	No	No	Yes	Other	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	No		No	31
	b)	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	No		No	31
SP7/A8	a)		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Other		No	No		No	6
	c)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		No	No		No	13
SP8	a)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Other		No	No		No	0
General	a)	Resp.	Resp.	Resp.					Resp.	Resp.		Resp.	Resp.		Resp.		Resp.	
	b)		Resp.						Resp.			Resp.			Resp.			
	c)	Resp.	Resp.	Resp.	Resp.				Resp.	Resp.	Resp.		Resp.	Resp.		Resp.		Resp.