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

Regional Expert Meeting on the Possible Designation of the
Mediterranean, as a whole, as a Nitrogen Oxides Emission
Control Area (Med NOX ECA), pursuant to MARPOL
Annex VI

REMPEC/WG.63/1/1
04 September 2026
Original: English

Kalkara, Malta, 7-8 October 2026

Agenda Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda and draft timetable

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Note by the Secretariat

This document provides brief information on the actions to be taken by the Meeting as well as a draft timetable for the Meeting. This timetable prepared by the Secretariat is of a tentative nature and may be modified by the Meeting, as appropriate.

Introduction

1 The Regional Expert Meeting on the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean, as a whole, as a Nitrogen Oxides Emission Control Area (Med NO_x ECA), pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, hereinafter referred to as the Meeting, is being convened in Kalkara, Malta from 7 to 8 October 2026.

2 The Meeting is being organised by REMPEC pursuant to the Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027 of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP), adopted by the Twenty Fourth 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 24), which was convened in Cairo, Egypt, in December 2025. It is financed by the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF).

3 COP 24 agreed to include the following deliverable in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027:

1.4.2.c) Technical and Feasibility Study to examine the possibility of designating the Med NO_x ECA under MARPOL Annex VI prepared under the guidance of the NO_x ECA Technical Committee of Experts (NECA TCE); as well as related roadmap prepared and validated by the relevant bodies with a view to submission to COP25.

4 The Technical and Feasibility Study to assess the relevant existing and ongoing studies, as well as to examine the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides, pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, including health and socio-economic impacts on the Mediterranean region and the individual Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, hereinafter referred to as the Final Technical and Feasibility Study, was prepared by REMPEC, in close consultation with the NECA TCE. Various consultations were undertaken during 2025, including during the Regional Expert Meeting, held in November 2025, which led to the validation and approval of the Final Technical and Feasibility Study, in January 2026 by the NECA TCE.

5 The Regional Experts Meeting held in November 2025, also recommended that REMPEC shall submit a Note, including the draft IMO MEPC Submission and the draft Roadmap, to the Seventeenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, to be tentatively held in May 2027.

6 In this context, the principal objectives of the Meeting are:

- i. to raise awareness on MARPOL Annex VI, as well as to provide for a greater understanding and appreciation of the requirements for implementation and enforcement of the Med NO_x ECA, in order to be able to lead Governments’ efforts towards ratification and more effective implementation, compliance and enforcement, both as a flag State and as a port State, including the sharing of experience and lessons learned from the designation of other similar ECAs, over the first day of the Meeting; and
- ii. to discuss the draft IMO MEPC Submission, prepared by REMPEC in close consultation with the NECA TCE, with a view to finalisation and onward transmission to the Seventeenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (to be tentatively held in May 2027).

7 All REMPEC Prevention Focal Points were invited to nominate, jointly and in consultation with their respective Governmental Focal Points and the representative(s) serving on the NECA TCE, their representatives at the Meeting. In the invitation, REMPEC highlighted that the target audience for the Meeting should be Government officials responsible for the ratification, implementation and enforcement of MARPOL Annex VI.

8 In order to assist the Meeting in its work, the following annotations to the provisional agenda provide information on the actions the Meeting will be invited to take under each agenda item.

Opening of the Meeting

9 The Meeting will open on Wednesday, 7 October 2026 at 0900 hours and is expected to close on Thursday, 8 October 2026 at 1700 hours.

Organisation of the Meeting

Rules of Procedure

10 The Rules of procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the deliberations of this Meeting.

Election of Officers

11 **The Meeting will be invited** to elect a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and a Rapporteur.

Working Languages

12 The working languages of the Meeting will be English and French. Simultaneous English/French/English interpretation services will be provided during the Meeting. All working documents will be available in both official languages of the Centre, i.e. in English and in French. Information documents will be available in their original language.

Agenda Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda

13 The agenda, as proposed in Working document REMPEC/WG.63/1 and annotated in the present document, will be proposed for adoption by the Meeting. The Meeting will also be invited to agree on a timetable to carry out its work. A draft timetable, which is of a tentative nature and may be modified by the Meeting, as appropriate, is proposed in the Annex to the present document.

Agenda Item 2: Compliance with NO_x Tier III standards

14 Under this agenda item, the REMPEC consultant will provide an overview of the technical, regulatory and enforcement aspects of compliance with the NO_x Tier III standards under MARPOL Annex VI. The presentation will introduce the principles of NO_x formation in marine internal combustion engines and the key machinery components relevant to NO_x emissions, followed by an overview of the main compliance methods, including Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR), Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) and alternative fuels. The session will also provide an update on recent developments from the engine manufacturers' perspective and will include an interactive Q&A and/or poll to facilitate discussion among participants.

15 The presentation will also address the practical implementation and enforcement of the NO_x Tier III requirements, including the documentary evidence necessary to demonstrate compliance, such as certificates, records and technical files. Particular attention, will be given to the survey regime, including the relevant provisions of the HSSC Guidelines and the role of Recognised Organisations. The session will further examine the transposition of MARPOL Annex VI requirements into the regulatory frameworks of flag States, including the roles and responsibilities of Administrations, the obligations arising under regulation 13 on NO_x emissions and regulation 17 on port reception facilities, as well as the role of Port State Control in the enforcement of the applicable requirements.

16 The interactive session will provide an opportunity to consider practical case studies illustrating the integration of NO_x Tier III compliance requirements into the regulatory frameworks of flag States, including communication and cooperation with national shipowners. Participants will be invited to share their national expertise, concerns, expected barriers and lessons learned through practical examples and/or targeted questions. The session will conclude with an exchange of views on the main issues raised and the key conclusions identified.

17 **The Meeting will be invited** to take note of the information provided and to exchange views and share relevant national experience, as well as to comment as deemed appropriate.

Agenda Item 3: Other aspects related to regulation 13 and NO_x Tier III standards

18 Under this agenda item, the REMPEC consultant will provide an overview of other aspects related to regulation 13 of MARPOL Annex VI and the implementation of the NO_x Tier III standards. The presentation will explain the importance of the ship's date of construction and the applicable three-date criteria for determining the requirements applicable to a ship, as well as the principle of non-retroactivity in the application of the NO_x emission standards.

19 The session will also address specific cases that may require particular consideration, including ships constructed prior to 1999 and the application of the Approved Method, the specific considerations applicable to the yachting industry, and issues related to access to shipyards located within NO_x Emission Control Areas (NECAs). A recap will be provided on the relevant exemptions and Alternative Design Arrangements under MARPOL Annex VI, including the circumstances in which these provisions may be applicable.

20 The presentation will also provide an overview of relevant reference materials and bibliography, including the use of applicable IMO guidelines and other relevant technical and regulatory documents to support the consistent interpretation and implementation of regulation 13 and the NO_x Tier III requirements.

21 **The Meeting will be invited** to take note of the information provided and to exchange views and share relevant national experience, as well as to comment as deemed appropriate.

Agenda Item 4: IMO ITCP Capacity-building Programmes and MARPOL Annex VI

22 Under this agenda item, Ms Györgyi Gurban, IMO representative, will provide an overview of the IMO ITCP capacity-building programmes relevant to MARPOL Annex VI and the implementation of measures addressing air pollution and climate change from international shipping. The presentation will provide information on the IMO climate and clean air portfolio, with particular focus on the IMO-EBRD-WB FIN-SMART initiative and its relevance to supporting countries in addressing the technical, institutional and financial aspects of the transition towards cleaner shipping.

23 The presentation will also highlight available capacity-building and technical cooperation opportunities and consider how these may support the effective implementation and enforcement of an Emission Control Area (ECA), including the associated institutional, technical and regulatory requirements.

24 The session will be followed by a discussion on the funding and financing needs associated with the implementation and enforcement of an ECA, providing an opportunity for participants to identify potential challenges, financing gaps and possible sources of support.

25 **The Meeting will be invited** to take note of the information provided, to exchange views on capacity-building, funding and financing needs related to the implementation and enforcement of an ECA, and to comment as deemed appropriate.

Agenda Item 5: Experience and lessons learned from the designation of other NO_x ECAs

26 Under this agenda item, the REMPEC consultant will present experience and lessons learned from the designation and implementation of other NO_x Emission Control Areas (NO_x ECAs), based on relevant MEPC documents and available reference material. The presentation will address perceived shortcomings, effects on the maritime sector, fleet replacement and renewal, and anticipated reductions in air pollution.

27 Practical case studies will be presented on fleet retrofitting, conversion and renewal, as well as Port State Control (PSC) inspections, including relevant MoU Concentrated Inspection Campaigns (CICs) and available statistics from classification societies. Participants will be invited to share their national experience through interactive questions and short exercises, with a focus on national fleets and maritime sectors potentially affected by a NO_x ECA.

28 **The Meeting will be invited** to take note of the information provided, to exchange views and share relevant national experience and lessons learned, and to comment as deemed appropriate.

Agenda Item 6: Review of draft IMO MEPC submission on the designation of the Med NO_x ECA under MARPOL Annex VI

29 Under this agenda item, REMPEC will recall the IMO process for the submission and consideration of MEPC resolutions, including the expected timelines, in accordance with the draft roadmap, as contained in the Annex to the Final Technical and Feasibility Study, and present the draft IMO MEPC submission contained in document REMPEC/WG.63/6, together with the Report of the NECA TCE (REMPEC/63/INF.3) and the Final Technical and Feasibility Study (REMPEC/63/INF.4). The presentation will outline the general principles guiding the preparation of the draft MEPC submission and summarise the progress of the NECA TCE, including how the comments and feedback received have been addressed.

30 The Meeting will undertake a detailed, paragraph-by-paragraph review of the draft IMO MEPC submission contained in REMPEC/WG.63/6, with reference, as appropriate, to the NECA TCE Report and the Final Technical and Feasibility Study, with a view to agreeing on any amendments required and finalising the submission for further consideration by the 17th Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points, to be tentatively held in May 2027.

31 **The Meeting will be invited** to review and provide guidance on next steps to finalise the draft IMO MEPC submission, take note of the supporting documents, and agree on conclusions, recommendations and a roadmap for further action, with a view to their referral to the 17th Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points, and to comment as deemed appropriate.

Agenda Item 7: Conclusions and recommendations

32 Under this agenda item, the Rapporteur will present the draft conclusions and recommendations, which result from the Meeting discussions, as set out in Working Document REMPEC/WG.63/WP.1.

33 **The Meeting will be invited** to review, amend, as appropriate, and adopt the conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting.

Any Other business

34 **The Meeting will be invited** to consider any other relevant matters that may be raised under this agenda item.

Closure of the Meeting

35 Following the completion of Agenda Item 7, the Meeting will be invited to engage in an open discussion to review and reflect on the key themes addressed throughout the meeting. The session will include the collection of feedback forms, a review of deliberations on the implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, and an opportunity for participants to share perspectives and recommendations.

36 The report of the Meeting will be prepared by the Secretariat and circulated after the Meeting.

37 The Meeting is expected to be closed by the Chairperson on Thursday, 8 October 2026 at 1700 hours.

Annex
Draft Timetable

Day One	Wednesday, 7 October 2026	Speaker
08:30-09:00	Arrival and registration of participants	
09:00-09:15	Opening of the Meeting - Welcome and opening remarks by REMPEC - Organisational matters - Election of Officers: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur	REMPEC
09:15-09:30	Agenda Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda - Introduction to workshop programme - Roundtable introduction of facilitators and participants	Chairperson, REMPEC and participants
09:30-10:15	Agenda Item 2: Compliance with NO_x Tier III standards Part 1: Technical aspects - NO_x formation and internal combustion engines, key machinery components - Tier III compliance methods (EGR, SCR, alternative fuels) - Engine manufacturers perspective and recent development - Conclusion in the form of a Q&A or interactive poll	Ms Marie Caillerie (REMPEC consultant) and participants
10:15-10:45	Agenda Item 2: Compliance with NO_x Tier III standards Part 2: Implementation and enforcement - Documentary requirements (certificates, records, files) - Survey regime, including the HSSC Guidelines and the role of Recognised organizations	Ms Marie Caillerie (REMPEC consultant)
10:45-11:15	Comfort Break	
11:15-12:30	Agenda Item 2: Compliance with NO_x Tier III standards Part 2: Implementation and enforcement (cont.) - Transposition of MARPOL Annex VI requirements into flag States regulatory framework: - Roles and responsibilities of Administrations (list of obligations) - Regulation 13 (NO_x) and regulation 17 (port reception facilities) - Enforcement: Port State Control	Ms Marie Caillerie (REMPEC consultant)
12:30-14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-15:00	Agenda Item 2: Compliance with Tier III NO_x standards Part 3: Interactive session - Case studies: Example of a Tier III compliance regime integrated in one/two flag States requirements, and communications with national shipowners - Participants will be invited to engage and share their national expertise, concerns, expected barriers, or lessons learned, by means of a questionnaire, practical examples, or orientated questions - Sharing conclusions and comments	All facilitators and participants
15:00-15:45	Agenda Item 3: Other aspects related to regulation 13 and NO_x Tier III standards - Importance of the ship date of construction, 3-date criteria - Principle of non-retroactivity - Special cases: ships built prior 1999 and the Approved Method; yachting industry; access to shipyards in Tier III NECA - Recap on Exemptions and Alternative Design Arrangements - Reference material and bibliography; use of relevant IMO guidelines	Ms Marie Caillerie (REMPEC consultant)
15:45-16:15	Comfort Break	
16:15-17:30	Agenda Item 4: IMO ITCP capacity-building programmes and MARPOL Annex VI - Presentation by IMO representative - Information on the IMO climate and clean air portfolio, in focus: IMO-EBRD-WB FIN-SMART - Discussion on funding and financing needs related to implementation and enforcement of an ECA	Ms Gyorgyi Gurban, IMO Representative
17:30	End of Day 1	

Day Two	Thursday, 8 October 2026	Speaker
09:00-09:30	Review of Day 1 learning points Participants will discuss the main learning points of Day 1	All facilitators and participants
09:30-10:45	Agenda Item 5: Experience and lessons learned from the designation of other NECA - Based on MEPC documents (Perceived shortcomings, effects of existing and planned NECA, impacts of fleet replacement, anticipated reductions in air pollution) Case studies and practical review - Practical case of a fleet retrofitting / conversion / renewal - Practical cases related to PSC inspections (review of MoU CIC and statistics from class societies) - Participants will be invited to engage and share their national experience, focused on their national fleets and maritime sectors impacted, engaging with participants through interactive questions or mini exercises - Conclusion	All facilitators and participants
10:45-11:15	<i>Comfort Break</i>	
11:15-12:30	Agenda Item 6: Review of the draft MEPC submissions on the designation of a Med NO_x ECA under MARPOL Annex VI Part 1 Background - Recalling the IMO process for MEPC resolutions, expected timelines - Presentation of the different documents to be submitted (main submission and INF. On collation of NECA TCE comments), general principles guiding the drafting and choices made - Synthesis of progress in the NECA TCE correspondence group - Confirmation that all feedback or comments received in the NECA TCE CG were integrated	All facilitators and participants
12:30-14:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
14:00-15:30	Agenda Item 6: Review of the draft MEPC submissions on the designation of a Med NO_x ECA under MARPOL Annex VI (cont.) Part 2 Reviewing the documents in detail - Detailed review (paragraph by paragraph), with changes if required, for the draft document to be submitted to MEPC - Finalisation of the IMO MEPC submission	All facilitators and participants
15:30-16:00	<i>Comfort Break</i>	
16:00-16:30	Agenda Item 6: Review of the draft MEPC submissions on the designation of a Med NO_x ECA under MARPOL Annex VI (cont.) Part 3 Conclusion, recommendations and timeline for submission - Summary of key recommendations from the Meeting - Roadmap/timeline of the forthcoming actions	All facilitators and participants
16:30-16:45	Agenda Item 7: Conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting Feedback, group discussion and deliberations - Feedback forms to be collected - Review and deliberations - Group discussion	Rapporteur and Chairperson All facilitators and participants
16:45-17:00	Closing of Meeting Closing remarks	REMPEC and Chairperson
17:00	End of Meeting	