

ANNEX 1:

Regional Seas input to SG's background note for the preparatory meeting of the 2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

Target 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

Status and trends

COBSEA

A revision of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI, originally adopted by the COBSEA IGM in 2008), was adopted at COBSEA IGM-24 held in Bali, Indonesia, in June 2019. A Regional technical working group on marine litter promoting the implementation of the RAP MALI, advising and assisting COBSEA countries and Secretariat, and guiding development and implementation of activities has further been established.

Wider Caribbean Regional Nutrients Reduction Strategy

UN Environment Caribbean Environment Programme (Cartagena Convention) is currently developing a Regional Nutrients Reduction Strategy under UNDP GEF CLME+ project. This is being done within the framework of the Caribbean Platform for Nutrients Management and will propose framework and priority actions for reducing the impacts from excess nutrient loads on priority marine ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean Region. The strategy will define regional standards and criteria for nutrient discharges into the marine environment.

Trash Free Waters Initiative in the Caribbean

UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme further implemented the *Trash Free Waters Initiative* in the Caribbean. The Initiative is a partnership involving the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Peace Corps, United Nations Environment Programme Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) to reduce and prevent land-based trash from entering our watersheds, coastal waters, and the marine environment. The Trash Free Waters Initiative is driven by the central tenet to catalyse local communities and governments in the Caribbean region to work together to develop marine litter policies and projects that reduce the amount of trash entering the Caribbean Sea. Partners are working with Environment Ministries in to help raise awareness of marine litter and prioritize sustainable solid waste management practices that will also benefit the economy.

Panama and Jamaica have successfully implemented community pilot projects centred on improving solid waste management practices and reducing trash from entering the coastal and marine environment. The programme resulted in the collection of over 4,500 lbs of plastic bottles and generation of over 2,500 lbs of compost in Jamaica with approximately 3,500 adults and children impacted by educational and awareness campaigns. Community members also benefitted from Livelihood/ Upcycling workshops. In Panama, approximately 450 students and the wider public were educated on the proper management of solid waste and the 3Rs, participation in a recycling fair aimed at responsible consumption and good environmental practices. Ongoing activities stimulated through this Partnership in areas of research, advocacy & awareness by the [Caribbean Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter \(GPML-Caribe\)](#) co-hosted by the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) and the Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention will continue to focus on root causes for improper solid waste management within the region.

Caribbean Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter (RAPMaLI)

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat is finalizing a Regional Marine Litter Strategy through the [\(GPML-Caribe\)](#) which will provide a strategic outline for marine litter management in the Wider Caribbean Region. This Regional Strategy supports the further implementation of the [Caribbean Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter \(RAPMaLI\)](#). [A Report on the Status of Styrofoam and Plastic Bag Bans in the Wider Caribbean Region \(WCR\)](#) summarizing the bans and key policies that have been implemented to regulate the use and production of single-use plastics and Styrofoam was designed and features [an interactive map](#) on the status of bans that can be updated periodically. Finally, the lessons from the *Trash Free Waters* is informing the design of a Regional Clean Seas Campaign for the Wider Caribbean Region and a Clean Seas Video on a Caribbean version of "Break up with Plastics" through the GEF IWEco project has been completed.

Global Ghost Gear Initiative

UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme further implemented the Global Ghost Gear Initiative on tackling abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear at global scale. The GGGI currently brings together over 80 participants across 50 unique organisations including the fishing industry, the private sector, academia, governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, is led by a Steering Group voted on by majority from and by the Global Ghost Gear Initiative's participant base. The GGGI's membership is organised into three integrated working groups to directly tackle the global ghost gear problem in the following ways: Build evidence: Collecting data locally and regionally and standardising it globally to understand ghost gear abundance, causes, impacts and trends. The evidence will then be used to prioritise solutions in hotspot areas where ghost gear is a problem.

A new proposal to facilitate activities that focus on marine-based sources of marine litter is being developed through the Caribbean Regional Marine Litter Node and will be implemented in partnership with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) will facilitate the development and implementation of precautionary /ecosystem-based approaches for sustainable use, management and conservation of marine living resources, and sustainable aquaculture which will also address ALDFG.

Ban on Plastics

Notable progress has been achieved in several Western Indian Ocean countries that have adopted policy measures in response to the marine plastics menace. Decrees banning plastics (specifically, single use bags, light-weight plastics and plastic carrier bags) have been declared in Mozambique (2016), Mauritius (2016), Kenya (2017), Seychelles (2017), and Tanzania (2019). Madagascar and South Africa declared bans or taxes before 2016.

Report on the Status of Styrofoam and Plastic Bag Bans in the Wider Caribbean Region was completed. This report summarizes the bans and key policies that have been implemented in the Wider Caribbean Region to regulate the use and production of single-use plastics and Styrofoam. This further supports the [Caribbean Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter](#), prepared by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in an effort to identify a comprehensive response to monitoring the influx of marine litter in the region.

It provides lessons for policymakers who seek to regulate the use and production of disposable plastics. The report also includes an analysis of the main impacts of pollution from Styrofoam and disposable plastics, as well as, an evaluation of the effects of ongoing regulatory measures and those planned for implementation in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The report features [an interactive map](#) on the status of bans that can be updated periodically. Through this interactive tool, Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention will be able to monitor their efforts to comply with the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities. The map will also allow countries to provide updates on national policies and regulatory measures, as well as evaluate their effectiveness to address the importation, use and disposal of plastics and Styrofoam products.

Twinning arrangements between UNEP Regional Seas Conventions -*Secretariats of the Caribbean Environment Programme and the OSPAR Commission*

The Sustainable Development Goals offered two UNEP Regional Seas Conventions -*Secretariats of the Caribbean Environment Programme and the OSPAR Commission* -an opportunity to help each other in their similar objectives on protection of the marine environment of the Caribbean and the North East Atlantic respectively. This arrangement sets out the beginning of an exploratory process, initiated by the Secretariats of the two conventions, with the support of their respective Contracting Parties. The aim is to see in what areas under the work of the two conventions are there opportunities for sharing of experience and lessons learnt, for developing more formal memorandums to enhance cooperation and for potential for future joint projects. This document set out a tentative list of potential issues that may yield useful areas of collaboration and cooperation in the future. Issues identified for exploration were Protection of Biodiversity; Marine Protected Areas Cooperation; Marine Status Reporting Cooperation; Sustainable development; Marine Litter Cooperation.

Cooperation between OSPAR and the Cartagena Convention included the management of marine protected areas and improving marine litter management. Through this collaboration a regional experts workshop to develop a Regional Marine Litter Strategy was convened that also resulted in the development of a [Manual for Harmonizing Marine Litter Monitoring in the Wider Caribbean Region \(WCR\)](#) (2019). Exchanges of experiences and lessons learned as well as coordinated submission for the development of [Guidelines for the Monitoring and Assessment of Plastic Litter in the Ocean](#) (2019) will

enable a more harmonised approach to the design and analysis of sampling programmes. Future efforts will focus on partnerships relating to nutrients reduction management and regional oceans governance as well as development and implementation of community-based marine litter projects.

With support of the Network of Marine Protected Areas managers – a new Project proposal was developed to strengthen the professional and institutional capacity for marine protected areas (MPAs) management in the Wider Caribbean. The proposal aims to enhance further collaboration between OSPAR and the Cartagena Convention Secretariat by providing technical and financial assistance to MPAs in countries of both regions to achieve these goals. Activities for strengthened partnership envisaged over the next 5 years will include regional training on MPA management (in particular training on Marine Spatial Planning using a Decision Support System/coral reef restoration), exchanges to promote best MPA management practices and formalization of the CaMPAM expert group to enhance regional capacity/stakeholder engagement.

Partnerships to enhance regional ocean governance

a) Partnership on Marine Litter

UNEP Nairobi Convention further strengthened its partnership for Implementing SDG14 in the Western Indian Ocean. The overall aim of the partnership was to reduce marine pollution, demonstrate and enhance ocean governance and sustainably manage critical coastal and marine ecosystems for a prosperous Western Indian Ocean. The partnership will directly contribute to the implementation of specific targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14. Objectives include: 1. Implementation of the strategic action programme to reduce impacts from land-based sources and activities and sustainably manage critical coastal and marine ecosystems through implementation of the agreed priorities; 2. Implementation of the Western Indian Ocean strategic action programme on policy harmonization and institutional reforms towards improved ocean governance and transition to a low carbon pathway; 3. Sustainable management of shared fish resources and collaborative management of marine and coastal resources in the Northern Mozambique Channel; 4. Improved governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction to promote the blue economy pathways in the Western Indian Ocean Region.

Key achievements

- a) Follow-up to Decision CP.9/3 on 'Management of marine litter and municipal wastewater of 2018, the Nairobi Convention developed the Western Indian Ocean action plan on marine litter and microplastics. The Regional Action Plan supports achievement of SDG target 14.1 on prevention and reduction of marine pollution, of all kinds. The plan has 5 action areas:
- *Institutional Action:* Establish a regional forum to coordinate stakeholder participation in marine litter management in the form of a WIO Marine Litter Working Group. The working group held its first meeting in June 2019.
 - *Policy and Legal Action:* Review, evaluate and compare, strengthen and/or enact new jurisdictional measures to address marine litter
 - *Operational Actions:* e.g. improve port reception facilities to effectively manage ship-generated waste; eliminate, change or adapt products for environmental benefits, maintain zero pellet

loss or prohibit pellet loss, identify probable 'hotspots' of land- and sea-based sources for plastic and microplastics; maintain clean environmental compartments

- *Education and Outreach Actions:* Promote the 3 Rs (Reduction, Re-use and Recycling); encourage product labelling; establish a Clearinghouse Mechanism on effective strategies and practices for waste management
- *Monitoring, Research and Reporting Actions:* Design standard methodologies for studying, monitoring and reporting on marine litter and microplastics for the WIO region including its sources, types and impacts; update baseline data on marine litter and microplastics in the WIO region; promote research on alternative biodegradable materials
- *Capacity Development Actions:* Develop human capacity and infrastructure
- *Country Enabling Actions:* e.g. manage human behaviour on marine litter. The activities will be demonstrated in 2019-2020 in Madagascar and South Africa.

b) Partnership on regional oil and gas

The Nairobi Convention also developed a regional oil and gas capacity building programme in the Western Indian Ocean, a need made clear from the several offshore oil and gas activities and infrastructure currently underway in the region. The programme focuses on the sharing of environmental standards and regional guidelines for oil and gas exploration and exploitation, as well as on identifying common issues and key actions needed to strengthen governance in the oil and gas sector for effective mitigation of environmental impacts.

The Nairobi Convention, in collaboration with the Government of Norway, organized a regional workshop on Managing Environmental Emergencies in the Oil and Gas industry in the Western Indian Ocean in October 2017. The workshop acted as a preparatory session to lay the groundwork for environmental management for oil and gas development in the Western Indian Ocean region, with the aim of generating policy, business and civil society actions that will contribute towards the sustainable management of the oil and gas resources in the Western Indian Ocean.

In November 2018, the Nairobi Convention organised a regional training on oil pollution shoreline clean-up assessment and response, in collaboration with UN Environment Post Conflict and Disaster Management, Geneva; Oil for Development programme, Norway; the International Maritime Organisation and the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited. The training focused on assessment and response to incidents where oil reaches the shoreline – providing an understanding of how oil affects the local environment, the different vulnerabilities present in the region and how to prioritize response actions.

A subsequent regional workshop on cooperation in preparedness and response to marine spills, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), will be held in November 2019. The workshop will bring together governments and focal points responsible for oil spill preparedness and response issues to promote the implementation of the IMO International Convention and the Protocol adopted in 2000 on oil pollution preparedness, response and co-operation to pollution incidents by hazardous and noxious substances (OPRC-HNS Protocol). The workshop will conclude a regional mutual assistance agreement for cooperation and response during a spill incident and will develop a regional plan

to implement the agreement in the Western Indian Ocean region. The meeting further plans to address the issue of the establishment of a regional centre for spill preparedness and response.

Projects

a) The Nairobi Convention's WIOSAP project

The Nairobi Convention's WIOSAP project will be implementing several demonstration projects in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) countries to address land-based sources of marine pollution. At least 10 of these on-the-ground projects have been approved by the Project Steering Committee for implementation in Seychelles, Mauritius, South Africa, Madagascar and Kenya:

Management of critical habitats

- KENYA: Towards integrated spatial planning for sustainable management of coastal and marine resources in Kilifi County, Kenya
- KENYA: Enhancing stakeholder capacity on use of ICZM as a tool for conservation of the coastal and marine environment through a demo ICZM Project in Malindi –Sabaki Estuary Area;
- MAURITIUS: Habitat restoration and attraction of seabirds to Ile aux Aigrettes
- MAURITIUS: Coral culture for small scale reef rehabilitation in Mauritius
- MAURITIUS: Vulnerability assessment of blue carbon ecosystem (Seagrass) around the island of Mauritius
- SEYCHELLES: Community-based ecological coastal rehabilitation using an ecosystem approach in Praslin, Seychelles

Management of water quality entering the marine environment

- KENYA: Improving Mtwapa Creek water quality by use of constructed wetland technology for wastewater treatment model in Shimo la Tewa Prison.
- MADAGASCAR: Strengthening regulatory framework and national capacity for monitoring effluent discharges, water, and sediments quality in coastal and marine areas of Madagascar.
- SEYCHELLES: Improving Water Quality by use of Constructed Wetland Wastewater Treatment at a Farm in Mahé Island, Seychelles.
- SOUTH AFRICA: Improvement of ecosystem health and water quality by implementing a Source to Sea based approach to tackle marine litter in five priority river systems in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa.

b) MED POL Programme

UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention Secretariat on the other hand is implementing the MED POL Programme. The objective of the Marine Litter MED project is to support UNEP MAP Barcelona Convention and its Southern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to implement key common measures provided for in the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, and the updated National Action Plans to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES). Under the European Union-

funded Marine Litter MED Project, UNEP/MAP is providing support to the southern Mediterranean countries to implement the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management. This included:

- a) Support to national regulatory framework related to non-single use of plastic bags and to promote Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia; Pilot implementation of "Fishing-for-Litter" and "Adopt-a-Beach" clean-up campaigns in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia; Implementation of national pilots related to the better management of sea-based litter in ports and marinas in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.
- b) Regional guidelines were developed for the implementation of key marine litter reduction and prevention measures, receiving attention also from other regions (e.g. Tehran Convention, Basel Rotterdam Stockholm Conventions, Black Sea Commission). Coordination among the European Regional Seas included support provided to the Black Sea Commission (BSC) for the development and adoption in October 2018 of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management for the Black Sea Region. Coordination among the regional/action plans of the other European Regional Seas is also in place, including the organization of annual Meeting among the European Regional Seas (i.e. OSPAR, HELCOM, UNEP/MAP-BC, BSC).
- c) UNEP/MAP has also played a significant role towards mainstreaming the activities provided for in the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter, through the work and activities undertaken by the Regional Seas. Two workshops have been organized, in 2017 under the Italian Presidency and in 2019 under the French Presidency.
- d) The Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean has been established in 2016 at the invitation of UNEP/MAP. It is an open-ended group based on voluntary participation of regional and international stakeholders having a clear mandate on marine litter and its proper and effective management. The Platform ensures and strengthen regional cooperation among respective partners.
- e) The Mediterranean Marine Litter Node was developed in 2019 with the support of UNEP/GPA in the framework of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML). It is the first child-Node which becomes operation aiming to develop a regional hub of knowledge and information on marine litter. The Node together with the Platform are expected to strengthen partnerships, cooperation, and synergies in the Mediterranean.

Key achievements:

- i. Most Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention have adopted national legislation on the prevention of marine litter through sectorial policies with incidence in the marine environment such as waste management and protection and the integrated management of the coast.
- ii. Some countries have also put in place national legislation and policies for recycling, pilot projects on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and initiatives for reducing the use of single-use plastic bags, tackling the major marine litter items found in the Mediterranean.
- iii. Important progress has been achieved with regards to the better management of sea-based marine litter, and particularly in relation to better management of marine litter in ports and marinas, as well as the implementation of Fishing-for-litter measures.

Capacity building

A two-day regional training workshop on the LBSA Protocol of the Nairobi Convention was held in December 2018. Organized in collaboration with the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities (GPA), the workshop highlighted global, regional and national interventions in combating land-based sources and activities in the coastal and marine environment of the WIO region and the challenges in combating pollution of receiving waters. Monitoring tools developed by the GPA for managing marine pollution, including the Technology Matrix for Wastewater; the Nutrient Management Toolbox; and the Ecosystem health score card was made available to the countries and practitioners for possible adoption to support interventions and to promote shared learning across the region. Updates on efforts leading to the ratification of the LBSA Protocol were received from each country. Countries in the region are at different stages of implementation of interventions of the LBSA Protocol and this provides an opportunity for promoting shared learning and for addressing national challenges. The meeting targeted regional experts and policy makers. The workshop also validated the regional action plan on Marine Litter.

Designation and enhancement of implementation of the Baltic Sea as NOx Emission Control Area for ships and public-private partnership

HELCOM countries have committed to cutting 80% of NOx emissions from ships operating in the Baltic Sea in order to combat the problem of eutrophication in the region. HELCOM together with its partners will promote the green shipping technology and use of alternative fuels to further reduce harmful exhaust gas emissions and greenhouse gases from ships.

The International Maritime Organization approved the Baltic Sea NOx Emission Control Area (NECA) proposal by the HELCOM countries in 2016 with an effective date of 1 January 2021. The North Sea NECA has been agreed in parallel.

Eutrophication, caused by excessive inputs of nutrients, is a serious environmental concern and a priority for action by the Baltic Sea countries working in HELCOM. The measure will result in reduction of 22,000 tons of annual total nitrogen deposition to the whole region, as a combined effect of the Baltic and North Seas NECAs. Out of this, 7,000 tons is estimated to be reduced directly to the sea surface.

The NECA regulations target new ships built on or after 2021 and do not address existing ships. A two-decade long period of fleet renewal is needed before the regulation will show the full effect. Parallel work to promote the green shipping technology and use of alternative fuels, as means of compliance with NECA, will be undertaken by HELCOM and in the region to facilitate emission reductions ahead of the regulatory schedule.

A regional public-private partnership on green technology and alternative fuels for shipping called HELCOM GREEN TEAM has been established for this purpose. The NECA regulation brings a new momentum and a demand to intensify the public-private partnership. The new work plan of the partnership, adopted in 2017, aims to promote public and private co-operation at national and Baltic Sea levels to enhance development and uptake of green technology and alternative fuels in shipping, including LNG. The work will be undertaken jointly by HELCOM countries in co-operation with other regional governmental and non-governmental organizations, the industry and research community.

One of the main benefits of these new regulations are to reduce eutrophication of the Baltic Sea due to nitrogen input, but significant health effects on the coastal populations are also expected as a result of the reduced emissions from shipping. Baltic Sea countries have jointly achieved progress for its implementation within the HELCOM's group on green ship technology and alternative fuels (HELCOM Green Team), which held its first meeting in September 2017. Green Team is promoting public and private co-operation at national and Baltic Sea levels to enhance development and uptake of green technology and alternative fuels both for existing ships, but also to achieve the above-mentioned NOx emission requirements for new ships. Some of the first results in this regard have been the development of a reporting mechanism to find out the main barriers, obstacles and challenges hindering the development and investments in green technology and alternative fuels in the Baltic Sea. The aim is to have structured and transparent collaboration between the public and private sector for a safer, more environmentally friendly and energy efficient transport by sea. The annual Green Team reporting will be used to share information and experiences, eliminate regulatory bottlenecks and to find common, workable and sustainable solutions. A revised HELCOM Recommendation on economic incentives has also been developed by the Green Team and approved by the HELCOM Maritime Working Group for adoption by HELCOM 40-2019. The HELCOM Maritime Working Group is also regularly following up matters related ships' emissions in the Baltic Sea, including national enforcement of MARPOL Annex IV and other instruments in order to enhance their implementation. Furthermore, regional projects have been launched that can support the implementation of the commitment, such as EU co-funded Environmental Impact of Low Emission Shipping: Measurements and Modelling Strategies (EnviSuM), which has e.g. developed an overview of alternative fuels for shipping in the Baltic Sea region.

Target 14.2: By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

Status and trends

COBSEA

COBSEA is on track to delivering commitments pledged during the UN Ocean Conference 2017. Action points included adopting a new Strategic Direction for COBSEA. The COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022 were adopted at the Second Extraordinary Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) of COBSEA in April 2018.

Under the Strategic Directions, COBSEA will support participating countries to:

- address land-based marine pollution with a focus on nutrients, sediment and wastewater; as well as marine litter and microplastics;
- strengthen marine and coastal planning and management, with a focus on ecosystem-based management approaches including Marine Protected Areas and Marine Spatial Planning;
- share marine environmental management experiences and policies towards strengthened regional governance.

COBSEA is additionally on track in regards to producing a COBSEA SDG Implementation Outlook. The Outlook identifies how COBSEA will support participating countries with the implementation and monitoring of ocean-related SDGs and associated targets. The report will lay the foundation of articulation of COBSEA's contribution to the UN Ocean Conference 2020. The first draft of the Outlook will be discussed with COBSEA participating countries at a workshop in November 2019.

Two UNEP GEF projects are underway in the context of the East Asian Seas Action Plan: The USD 15M project 'Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea', which addresses the habitat, land-based pollution and regional coordination components of the Strategic Action Programme, is starting in 2019; and the USD 3M project 'Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand', which implements the fisheries component of the Strategic Action Programme, executed by SEAFDEC.

COBSEA has contributed to the resource base for ecosystem-based marine and coastal planning and management. This has included technical tools as well as establishing a network of national institutions and resources persons, such as working groups on coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass, coastal wetlands and fishery refugia established in the context of developing and implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea.

Ecosystem Approach Roadmap (EcAp) in the Mediterranean

UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention Secretariat implemented the Ecosystem Approach, in coherence with the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive (EU MSFD). With the ultimate objective of achieving the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea, the project aims to support the Southern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to implement the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap agreed in Decision IG. 21/3, with a focus on the establishment of integrated monitoring programmes in line with the Decision IG.22/7 on Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP). The implementation of this Decision will enable for the first time an integrated quantitative monitoring and assessment of the status of the Mediterranean Sea and coast on a regional basis, covering biodiversity, non-indigenous species, coast, hydrography, pollution and marine litter. In addition, the project addresses some specific challenges of the EcAp Roadmap implementation, and as such aims at strengthening science-policy interface, addressing sub-regional implementation needs, and responding to data and information needs in the Mediterranean region.

Achievements in relation to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap (EcAp) in the Mediterranean include *inter alia*:

- Publication of the [2017 Quality Status Report of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast](#), which is the first, region-wide agreed common indicator-based assessment of the Mediterranean sea and coast, covering both biodiversity, fisheries, non-indigenous species, pollution, marine litter, coast and hydrography;
- Development in Southern Mediterranean Countries of national monitoring and assessment programmes, in line with new requirements of the UNEP/MAP Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP);

- Successful implementation of a sub-regional joint pilot in the Eastern Mediterranean (Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey) which resulted in a draft sub-regional monitoring plan for Eastern Mediterranean countries.

With a view to securing continued support for implementation of the EcAp Roadmap, and more specifically for the Integrated IMAP of the Southern Mediterranean, the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC)-financed project *the Mediterranean implementation of the Ecosystem Approach, in coherence with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive* (herein after referred to as EcAp MED II project 2015-2019), was launched in 2015 (2,7 million EUR) and extended to December 2019. The main objective of the EcAp MED II project was to assist the Southern Mediterranean countries to develop IMAP-compatible national monitoring programmes (national IMAPs) in line with the IMAP timeline.

The project undertook national capacity assessments for all EcAp MED II beneficiary countries and in order to assist in achieving integration at the regional scale of monitoring and assessment, the project outputs were structured to provide support, including the strengthening of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) and the development (to pilot stage) of an IMAP-compatible information system (IMAP Info system).

Notable EcAp MED II outputs included the development of national integrated monitoring programmes in line with regional IMAP common indicators in all project beneficiary countries for biodiversity, fisheries, Non-Indigenous Species (NIS), coast and hydrography; specific capacity assessments with regard to needs for IMAP implementation in each country; a funding strategy which focuses on the Southern Mediterranean and makes an analysis of potential available funding resources to further EcAp efforts in the region; as well as an enhanced Science-Policy Interface (SPI), together with policy documents to support and guide the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The project also realized the development of a data management system (Info System) at pilot level.

Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonisation and Institutional Reforms (WIO LME SAPPHIRE) project

UNEP in partnership with UNDP are executing the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonisation and Institutional Reforms (WIO LME SAPPHIRE) project. The overall objectives are to achieve effective long-term ecosystem management in the Western Indian Ocean LMEs in line with the Strategic Action Programme as endorsed by the participating countries. The project is expected to catalyse policy harmonisation and institutional reforms at both national and regional levels so that the countries will jointly and effectively improve the ecosystem health of the offshore waters.

The Strategic Action Programme for the sustainable management of the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems (WIO LME SAP) calls for joint actions by all 9 Western Indian Ocean countries on the following areas: 1) Ecosystem Assessment and Monitoring, 2) Science Based-Governance and Adaptive Management, 3) Community engagement in Stress Reduction, 4) Private Sector engagement in Stress Reduction and 5) Capacity building and training. WIO LME SAPPHIRE project will support the countries to take actions on all those areas so that they will make progress on the WIO LME SAP implementation.

The WIOSAP project, executed by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, developed a number of guidelines (in May 2019) for implementation of related on-the-ground initiatives for healthy marine environment in the Western Indian Ocean. These include:

- Seagrass ecosystem restoration guidelines in response to incidents of seagrass degradation and loss
- Mangroves ecosystem restoration guidelines
- Guidelines on methodologies for the valuation of coastal and marine ecosystems
- Climate change vulnerability assessment toolkit for near-shore marine socio-ecological system in the Western Indian Ocean;
- Guidelines on Environmental Flows Assessments in the context of coastal and marine socio-ecological systems, and the land-sea socio-ecological dynamics.

The Nairobi Convention also developed the Western Indian Ocean Regional Outlook on Marine Protected Areas. The Marine Protected Areas Outlook provides regional baselines on protected areas in response to the call under SDG target 14.5 to conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas by 2020. A regional Critical Habitats Outlook will be launched in 2020, addressing SDG target 14.2 on sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems

As part of Nairobi Convention's SAPPHIRE project (implemented by UNDP and executed by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat), the project held a series of partnership workshops on oceanographic data and scientific research in 2019. National data centres, scientists, policy makers, and partners identified priorities of countries in using, managing and owning their coastal and marine data findings. The stakeholders agreed on mechanisms and partnerships to improve data collection, sharing, and archiving. The SAPPHIRE project has initiated an ambitious process to revise the national status of marine environment diagnostic analyses (MEDA) reports that are necessary to inform policy and decision making within National Action Plans (NAP). NAPs are the mechanism through which transboundary policy reform can be operationalized and realized in national policy harmonization or change.

Science to Policy Platform

The Nairobi Convention organized the Western Indian Ocean regional science to policy workshop in May 2019. The meeting sought to establish and operationalize the Science to Policy Platform as a core structure within the Nairobi Convention. The proposed Scientific Technical and Advisory Panel (STAP) was mainstreamed into the Science to Policy Platform whose membership was expanded to include other sectors and experts such as river basin management experts and social scientists.

In July 2018, the Convention had organised a Science to Policy meeting, which provided concrete policy recommendation to the decisions of the ninth Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties (August 2018) on marine litter, amendment of the Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora, and on development of marine protected areas and critical habitats outlooks. Other policy and science gaps identified ranged from the contribution of critical habitats to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), sustainable ports development, innovative approaches to dealing with land-based pollution,

threats from ocean acidification, building partnership for coastal cities, to anthropogenic underwater noise pollution in the marine environment.

The Science to Policy Platform was defined in a meeting held in October 2016 as a "A multi-stakeholder platform comprising of representatives of formal and informal knowledge generating institutions, practitioners, policy makers, communities and the private sector within the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region which serves as an intermediary body to bridge the gaps between science, policy and practice. The terms of reference, membership, operating principles and deliverables of the platform were also identified. The platform will continue to deliver assessment tools and guidelines, assessment reports, synthesis reports and their summaries for policymakers, technical papers and policy recommendations for decision making.

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU, CMS)

UNEP Nairobi Convention further implemented the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU, CMS). A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was concluded with the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) in March 2019 to provide a framework of cooperation and facilitate collaboration with the Nairobi Convention in areas of common concern and interest. SWIOFC and Nairobi Convention will henceforth collaborate in:

- Management of current and emerging negative environmental impacts that can affect fisheries
- Promotion of the application of Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) and Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) for the sustainable use of marine resources
- Promotion and application of area-based management tools such as EAF, MSP, ICZM in identification and protection of vulnerable marine areas in the region
- Adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change
- Promotion of policy coordination between the fisheries and environment sector
- Support States in the development, promotion and implementation of Blue Economy / Blue Growth Initiative, approaches and strategies

CLME+ 10-year Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and Regional State of Convention Area Report (SOCAR)

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat has initiated the development of an internal Strategy that will support the implementation of the CLME+ 10-year Strategic Action Programme (SAP) that will also support the development of a Regional Ocean-Based Strategy. As part of the coordination, the Secretariat is part of the Interim Coordination Mechanism for Regional Oceans Governance in the Caribbean Large Marine ecosystem and North Brazil Shelf and supporting the development of a Permanent Coordination Mechanism.

In support of the SAP Strategy for protecting the coastal and marine environment, the Secretariat finalized a [Regional State of Convention Area Report \(SOCAR\) \(2019\)](#) for the Wider Caribbean which provides an assessment of marine pollution based on country specific data. The SOCAR will contribute to the region's first report on the State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOME).

Along with the SOCAR is the preparation of the [State of Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean \(SoMH\) and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 -2030 \(RSAP\)](#) to be completed in 2020.

Strengthening the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan to support ocean-related SDGs

The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan is an ambitious programme to restore the good ecological status of the marine environment by 2021, adopted in HELCOM in 2007. The commitment is to strengthen the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, based on the ecosystem approach, to fulfil the 2030 Agenda in the Baltic Sea.

Until 2016, about 60% of the agreed joint regional actions in the Plan had been carried out, with successes in setting up a nutrient reduction scheme, curbing airborne emission and discharges from shipping, tackling some hazardous substances, piloting ecosystem approach in maritime spatial planning, and covering 11.8% of the Baltic with marine protected areas. All these examples showcase the added value of a regional approach, addressing more than one target of SDG 14 in a coherent way. Policy making based on commonly agreed principles and best available science, paired with a transparent and participatory stakeholder involvement, as well as partnerships for integrated management of human activities, are proven factors underlying these HELCOM achievements.

40 regional actions are still to be completed. Between 30 and 65 percent of the national actions of the Baltic Sea Action Plan have been accomplished by the countries.

HELCOM will continue implementation of these agreed actions that will contribute to the implementation of SDG 14. For instance, this includes:

- speeding up the implementation of the marine litter regional action plan, continuing its battle against eutrophication and planning towards the elaboration of a regional action plan on underwater noise, to fulfil SDG 14.1,
- ensuring close cooperation on any maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea area and management plans for all marine protected areas, to fulfil SDG 14.2 and 14.5,
- supporting sustainable agricultural practices, to contribute to SDG 2.4, and ecosystem-related fishery measures, towards SDG 14.4 and 14.6.

More generally, HELCOM will strive for more resilient marine ecosystems to be better prepared for human-induced climate change challenges. It will also promote further regional development of socio-economic analyses to create tailor-made connecting points between implementation of different SDGs.

For years, HELCOM has developed regional indicators and assessments to measure the environmental status of the Baltic Sea, which can also be used for the future regional work on the implementation of SDGs.

The adoption of the Baltic Sea Action Plan was the first bold attempt by a regional marine protection convention to implement the ecosystem approach. The protection of the marine environment in the Baltic Sea is no longer seen as an event-driven pollution reduction approach to be taken sector-by-sector. Instead, the starting point is the ecosystem itself, and a shared concept of a healthy sea with a good ecological status. This vision determines the need for further reductions in pollution loads, the extent of various human activities, as well as the conservation of marine biodiversity, and where needed and possible, the restoration, of the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea Area. The cross-sectoral plan identifies the specific actions needed to achieve agreed targets within a given timeframe for the main environmental priorities.

The work to strengthen the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) to support ocean-related SDGs is ongoing in line with the decisions of the 2018 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting. The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, held under the EU chairmanship in HELCOM, re-affirmed the strong commitment of the Contracting Parties to strengthen the implementation of the BSAP by 2021. The Meeting re-iterated their determination to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its water- and ocean-related goals and targets and committed to using those goals and targets as a framework in updating the BSAP. New commitments have also been made by the Contracting Parties to support reaching the goals and objectives of the BSAP, in relation to SDG 14.1 and 2.4 such as:

- to elaborate by 2020 a Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy;
- To develop and apply a risk assessment framework in HELCOM for measures aiming at managing internal nutrient reserves in open sea;
- To combat marine litter through coordinated implementation of the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan,
- To develop an action plan and regionally coordinated actions on underwater noise by 2021.

In relation to SDG 14.2 and 14.5, such as:

- To take actions to improve the status of species, biotopes and habitats that are threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List;
- To strive for full achievement of Aichi Target 11 regarding the management, ecological representativeness and connectivity of the HELCOM MPA network;

In relation to 14.4 and 14.6, such as:

- To strengthen coordination and cooperation mechanisms with fisheries bodies active in the Baltic Sea Region, in particular Baltfish, and the Baltic Sea Advisory Council.

UNEP Regional Seas SDG 14 Outlook Report

The Regional Seas Programme, a UN Environment flagship programme promotes the use of regional mechanism for the conservation of the marine and coastal environment since its establishment in 1974. It focuses on promoting regional ocean governance to deliver the global oceans agenda and respond to emerging issues, new policies and initiatives. This approach makes the Regional Seas Programme unique as it provides an opportunity for global issues to be addressed at a manageable regional scale hence its region-specific activities.

As such, UNEP Regional Seas are in a unique position to facilitate progress towards achieving national, regional and global targets that are required to meet the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. Acting as convening and coordinating bodies, Regional Seas can help develop and implement solutions that are tailored to specific regional challenges, build capacity across a region and support action at national and regional levels. The coordinating role of the Regional Seas is particularly relevant considering the connectivity of the ocean and the resulting interdependencies between countries and different marine sectors.

The Regional Seas SDG 14 Outlook Report aims to:

- a. Using best available scientific information, illustrate the progress made towards achieving SDG 14 Life Below Water (and other relevant global targets) and explore the role of Regional Seas in supporting progress. The report will focus primarily on **SDG Target 14.2.1** on proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches, **SDG Target 14.5.1** on coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas, and also **Aichi Biodiversity Target 11** to conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas by 2020.
- b. The report will provide a framework for measuring progress towards ecosystem-based management at a Regional scale, exploring the use of different area-based management measures, including Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The degree of overlap between MPAs and critical habitats or key biodiversity features will be analysed to better understand the contribution of MPA towards ecosystem-based management. Additionally, the extent to which marine and coastal habitats and area-based management measures feature within national and regional commitments or submissions to global or regional MEAs will be explored to assess current efforts and highlight further action by Countries and/or Regional Seas to support further progress towards SDG (and other) Targets. This information may be used to contribute towards the formulation of future targets, and also serve to illustrate the important role/utility of the Regional Seas.
- c. It will explore and assess the main obstacles or challenges to Countries or Regions achieving the desired state under the SDG Targets by 2030. In particular, assessing gaps in data and information, policy and management. The report will aim to catalyse discussion relating to gaps in funding, recognising that at present, available information is limited. The main purpose of highlighting such gaps is to propose recommendations, based on the best-available scientific evidence, relating to the establishment of further commitments from Countries and Regions, for example, to enhance knowledge and information sharing through partnerships.
- d. The report will serve to support the discussion at the 2020 High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (life below water) in Lisbon, Portugal whose overarching theme is 'Scaling Up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions'. The report will demonstrate the important contributions of the Regional Seas Programme to multiple programs such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) etc. and in supporting national actions within regional frameworks, that address regional priorities and contribute to achieving global goals and targets.

14.4. By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics

Status and trends

Collaboration between UNEP Regional Seas Programme and Regional Fisheries Organizations

i) MoU between UNEP/MAP and FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan-Barcelona Convention Secretariat and FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. The MoU between UN Environment/MAP-Barcelona Convention and GFCM addresses the following five areas of cooperation:

- a) Promotion of ecosystem-based approaches for the conservation of marine and coastal environment and ecosystems, and the sustainable use of marine living and other natural resources;
- b) Mitigation of the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on the marine habitats and species by the use of best available techniques in fisheries and the development of sustainable aquaculture;
- c) Identification, protection and management of marine areas of particular importance in the Mediterranean (hot spots of biodiversity, areas with sensitive habitats, essential fish habitats, areas of importance for fisheries and/or for the conservation of endangered species, coastal wetlands);
- d) Integrated maritime policy with a special emphasis on marine and coastal spatial planning, and integrated coastal zone management, and other integrated zoning approaches, with a view to mitigate cumulative risks due to reduced access and availability of space affected by multiple and increasing conflictive uses;
- e) Legal, institutional and policy related cooperation.

This partnership has proven as a fruitful instrument to support the delivery of SDG 14 in a coordinated manner at the regional level in the Mediterranean. This partnership has been widely recognized as a best practice of regional cooperation through the following achievements:

- a) bilateral meetings and mutual participation in meetings of relevance;
- b) collaboration between the respective Compliance Committees; respective contribution to assessment studies and monitoring process;
- c) sub-regional pilot for the monitoring of the non-indigenous species related to fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean;

- d) preparation of a “Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection and Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity Among the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS, GFCM, IUCN-Med and UNEP/MAP”;
- e) FAO-GFCM recommendations to ensure compatibility with the Barcelona Convention SPA/BD Protocol, etc.

ii) MoU between UNEP Nairobi Convention and Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC)

The Nairobi Convention also concluded an MoU with the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) in March 2019 to provide a framework of cooperation and facilitate collaboration with the Nairobi Convention in areas of common concern and interest. The Convention also expects to conclude MoUs with Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC) among others. Mediterranean Action Plan also formalized a joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection and Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity among the Secretariats of ACCOBAMS, GFCM, and IUCN-Med submitted for discussion at the MAP Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019) for possible signing during the 21st Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP21 – Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019). Cartagena Convention also signed MoU with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) for mutual development and implementation of several strategies including precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches, fisheries management and recovery plans for commercially important marine species, etc.

14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

Status and trends

COBSEA

A project on ‘Including coral reef resilience and vulnerability to climate change in marine spatial planning in Malaysia’ supported by UN Environment Programme and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and implemented by SymbioSeas, WWF and COBSEA successfully concluded in 2019. The project developed and demonstrated an approach to improve marine spatial planning for a more climate resilient network of marine protected areas (MPAs), by integrating climate vulnerability considerations in planning and zoning processes. It provides a model that can be used and replicated more broadly in the region and beyond.

Representative and effectively managed Marine Protected Areas and network of MPAS

UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) is currently implementing a project titled *“Towards an ecologically representative and efficiently managed network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas”*. The project aims to put in place a connected, ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean which ensures the long-term conservation of key elements of the marine biodiversity and gives significant support to the sustainable development of this region. The project builds on an innovation approach seeking to: 1) strengthen MPA Regional Coordination and Networking to ensure long-term networking and capacity building of MPAs in the Mediterranean and set up an ad hoc Group of Experts focused on Mediterranean MPA issues, under the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Protocol; 2) establish new MPAs through their identification and characterization in order to extend the existing regional network and enhance its ecological representativeness; 3) improve MPA Management namely through the development, implementation and monitoring of management, zoning and fisheries management plans, communication tools and socio-economic benefits assessments etc.; 4) identify and test innovative approaches to ensure the financial sustainability of MPAs; and 5) promote governance and management of MPAs through stakeholders engagement and co-management or participatory management approaches.

Recent monitoring and assessment work by the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system under its Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) has demonstrated the positive impacts of Mediterranean MPAs and networks of MPAs on several biodiversity-related ecological objectives defined towards the achievement of the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean. Recognizing MPAs as one of the most effective measures to ensure long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean, and in line with the SPA/BD Protocol, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted the *“Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to Achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean”* in 2016 aimed at guiding and harmonizing their efforts towards achieving Aichi Target 11 (Decision IG.22/13). This work builds on and is complemented by regional regulations and spatial management measures, including several EU Directives and efforts led by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO-GFCM).

The establishment of a connected, ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored network of Mediterranean MPAs contributes to the long-term conservation of key elements of the marine biodiversity and gives significant support to the sustainable development of the region through the following achievements:

- Collection and analysis of data on Mediterranean MPA coverage and management towards an updated version of the Mediterranean database on MPAs (MAPAMED) and the elaboration of the report on the status of MPAs in the Mediterranean;
- Establishment of an Ad hoc Group of Experts for MPAs in the Mediterranean (AGEM) to provide scientific advice and technical assistance to UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC and the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention;
- At national level, ecological characterization of three marine sites suitable to be declared as MPAs in Lebanon, elaboration of management plans of the Sallum MPA (Egypt), the Jbel Moussa future MPA (Morocco) and the North-Eastern part of Kerkennah Islands future MPA (Tunisia).

Identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA) in the Baltic Sea

The EBSAs are expected to contribute to fulfilling the regional goal of drawing up and applying maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea region which are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem approach.

Marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea are taken into account in maritime spatial planning. The areal coverage of HELCOM Marine Protected Areas reached almost 12% of the Baltic Sea in 2016.

EBSA can provide further useful information that can be used for actions to safeguard the species and habitats in these areas including within spatial planning processes as may be decided individually or collectively by the countries concerned. Other potential benefits of EBSA are new possibilities for bilateral collaboration and protection of transboundary marine areas.

Identification of EBSAs will be done according to the established scientific criteria adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Baltic EBSA workshop was held on 20–24 February 2018, in Helsinki, Finland, hosted by Finland and with financial support by Finland and Sweden. The workshop was convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in collaboration with HELCOM. The workshop was attended by experts from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Sweden, as well as from a number of organizations.

Nine EBSAs in the Baltic Sea were described by the workshop. Five of these areas are transboundary areas, covering waters of two or more countries. Altogether, the described EBSAs cover 23% of the Baltic Sea waters.

The report of the Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs in the Baltic Sea (EBSA workshop) was reviewed at the CBD Twenty-second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 22), 2-7 July 2018 in Montreal. Subsequently the report was forwarded to the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 14), 17-29 November 2018, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, where the identified areas was considered and the meeting requested the Executive Secretary of the CBD to include the summary reports in the EBSA repository, and to submit them to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and its relevant processes, as well as Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations.

Listing and conservation of sharks and rays

Between 2017 and 2019, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat through its Marine Biodiversity Programme supported activities by regional fisheries bodies and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) for conservation of sharks and rays. This was achieved through the application of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Protocol's criteria for listing species in the Annexes to the Protocol on species of regional concern. These have included the Nassau grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*) and the nine species of sharks and rays listed under the SPAW Protocol (recent additions have included flagship species such as the Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) and the Giant Oceanic Manta Ray (*Manta birostris*).

A Memorandum of Cooperation was also signed with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism in May 2018 which is expected to further such coordination in areas of mutual interest.

With support of the Regional Activity Centre for the SPAW Protocol (SPAW-RAC), the Secretariat is participating actively in relevant for a such as the 2nd Meeting of the Advisory Committee/ 2nd Workshop of the Conservation Working Group of the CMS Sharks MoU which took place in 2017.

Another partnership aims to establish a Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network (CaribWEN) to tackle illegal trafficking of wildlife which includes many sharks and ray species.