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Agenda item 3: Status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) in the Mediterranean

Report on the status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol)

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I - Preamble

In its Decision IG.22/16, the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP19) (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2017) requested the Secretariat “to undertake an analysis of the information mentioned in the national reports in order to draft a report addressing the general status of progress in the region, on the legal, institutional and technical points of view, in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, if any”.

In response to this request, and in the spirit of the paragraph 2 (ii) of Article 18 of the Barcelona Convention, the coordinating Unit and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) invited the Focal Points for SPA/BD to provide a report, for the period running from January 2016 to December 2017, on the application of the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol).

The present report has been prepared for the Fourteenth Meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity, based on the information contained in the reports submitted by twelve Contracting Parties for the biennium 2016-2017, as at 17 May 2019. The present report provides, an overall analysis and overview of the key findings, as well as some statistical analysis.

The reporting format is the one revised and adopted by the 20th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Decision IG 23/1) and includes the following parts:

- Part I: Legal and Regulatory measures
- Part II: Specially Protected Areas (SPAs)
- Part III: Specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance (SPAMIs)
- Part IV: Endangered and threatened species
- Part V: Monitoring
- Part VI: Enforcement measures
- Part VII: Implementation of regional action plans (RAPs)
 - RAP for the conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) (COP Decision IG 21/4)
 - RAP for the conservation of Bird Species (COP Decision IG 21/4)
 - RAP for the conservation of Cetaceans (COP Decision IG 22/12)
 - RAP for the conservation of Marine Vegetation (COP Decision IG 20/6)
 - RAP for the conservation of Monk Seal (1985 COP Decision)
 - RAP for the conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles (COP Decision IG 21/4)
 - RAP on Dark Habitats (COP Decision IG 21/4)
 - RAP for the conservation of Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions (COP Decision IG 22/12)

Starting from this biennium, Parties have access to a new reporting system, with an updated reporting format, including for the first time, reporting on the two Regional Action Plans on Dark Habitats and Coralligenous.

As in the previous reporting periods, not all Parties have submitted their reports in time. For 2016-2017 reporting exercise, twelve reports have been submitted, either using the online reporting system or by email directly to SPA/RAC.

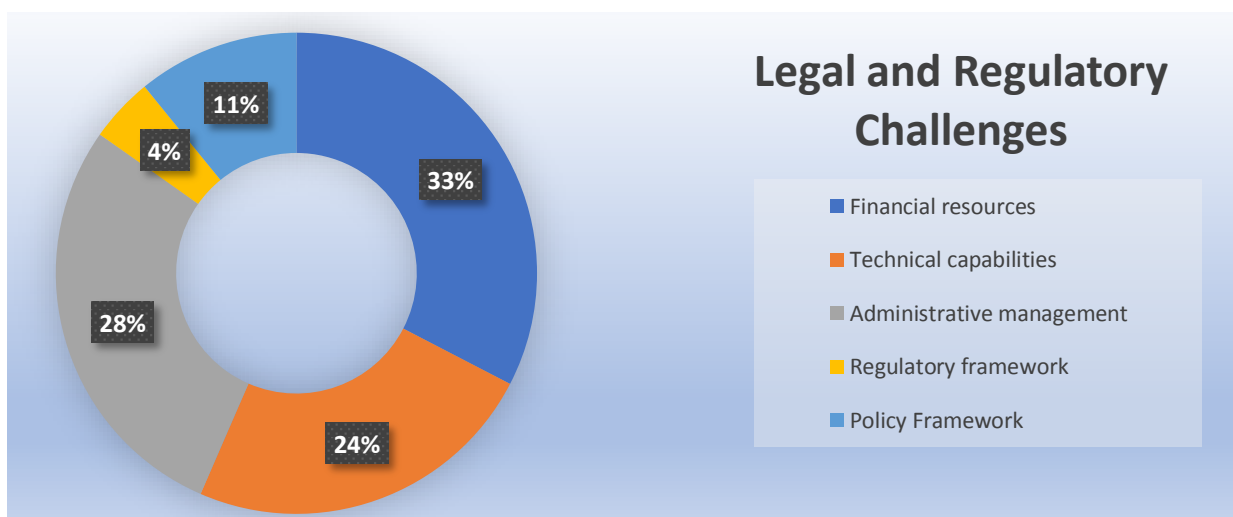
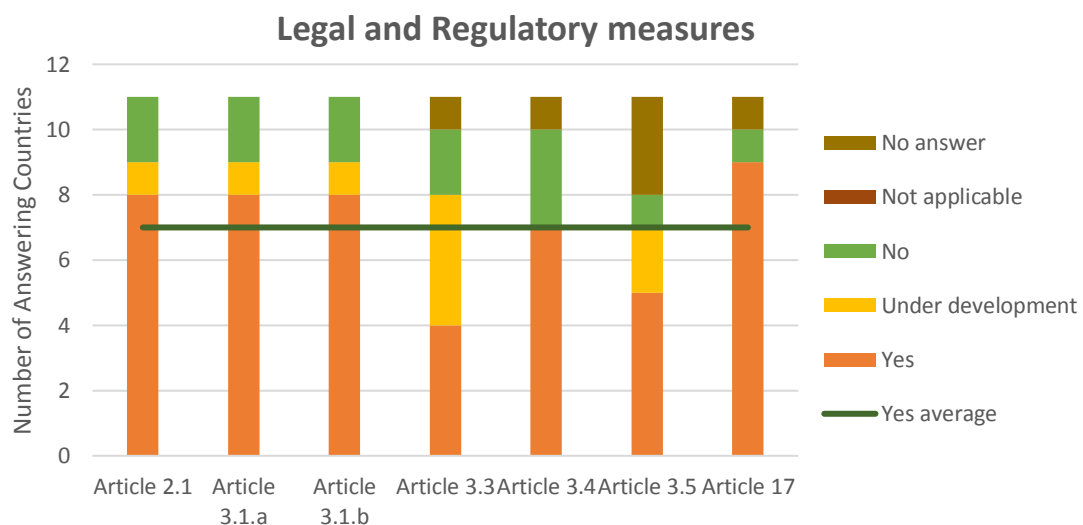
In this analysis, some of the same difficulties that were met for previous biennia were encountered, like incomplete reports, answers to some questions that are missing or different than what is explained in the comments.

The analysis made is based on eleven countries, Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The European Union, which is not a country, was not considered for the calculations. Thus, the present summary is made based on eleven national reports.

Part I: Legal and Regulatory measures

This part tries to identify how the Parties have implemented the provisions of the SPA/BD Protocol by adopting legislation, in accordance with Article 14 of the Barcelona Convention.

Even-though, a positive general trend stands out from the Parties' answers indicating great efforts made by Parties with legal measures taken to protect the biodiversity in the Mediterranean, seven Parties raised difficulties and challenges encountered in the legal and regulatory application of the Protocol, mainly linked to financial resources, administrative management and technical capacities.

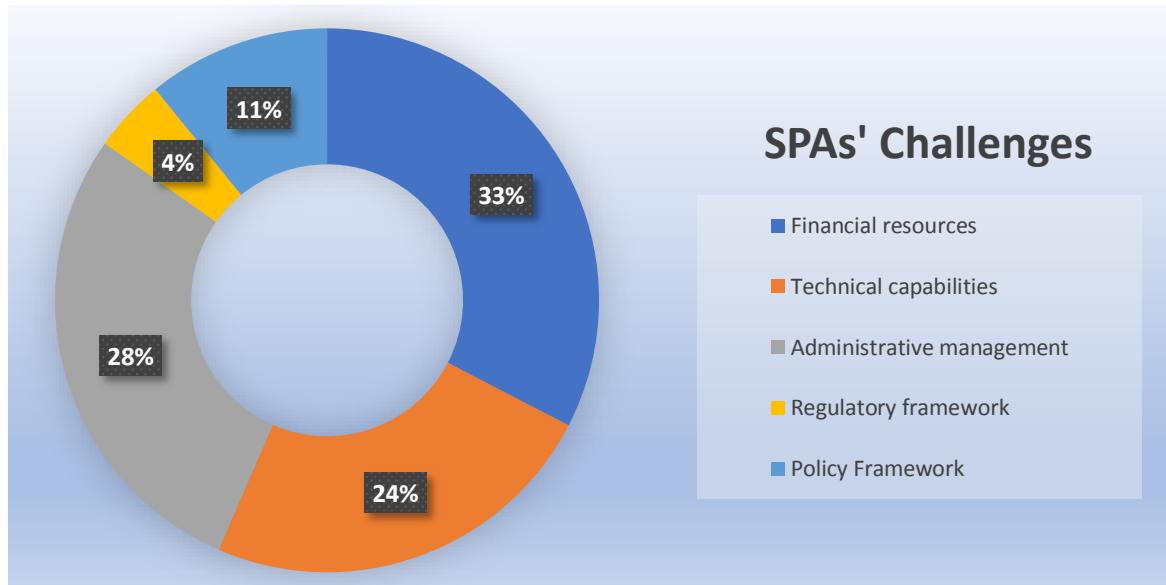


Part II: Specially Protected Areas

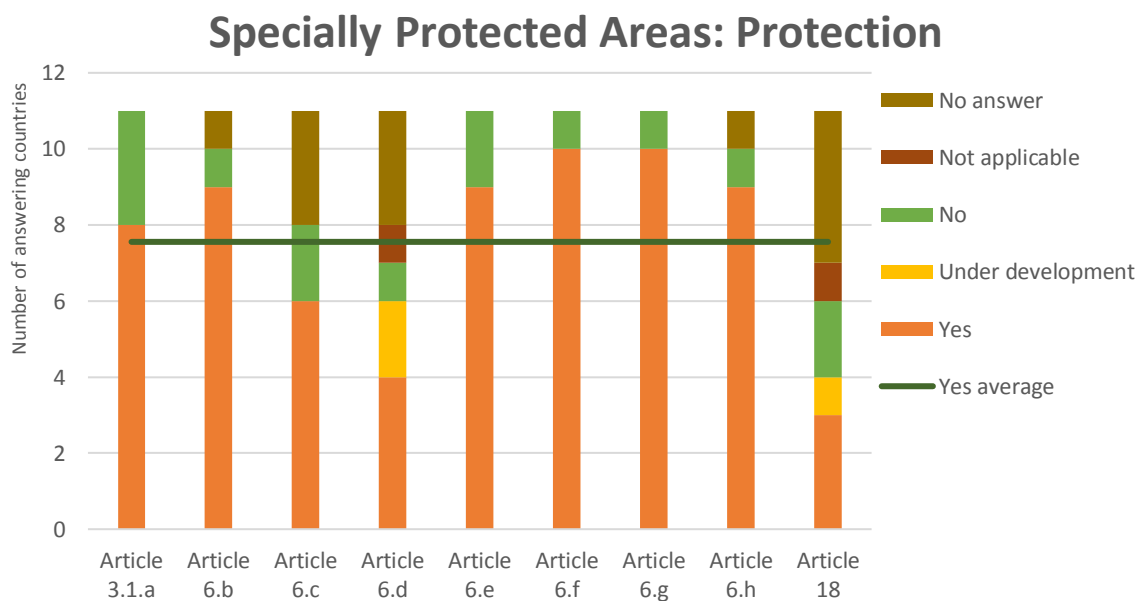
The aim of this part was to take stock of the actions being carried out to set up, protect and manage better the Specially protected areas.

Based on the given answers, SPAs seem enjoying positive efforts made by Parties to create, well manage and sustain the existing Protected Areas.

10 Parties indicated having encountered difficulties and challenges when setting up or managing SPAs. The major difficulties were financial resources and administrative management.

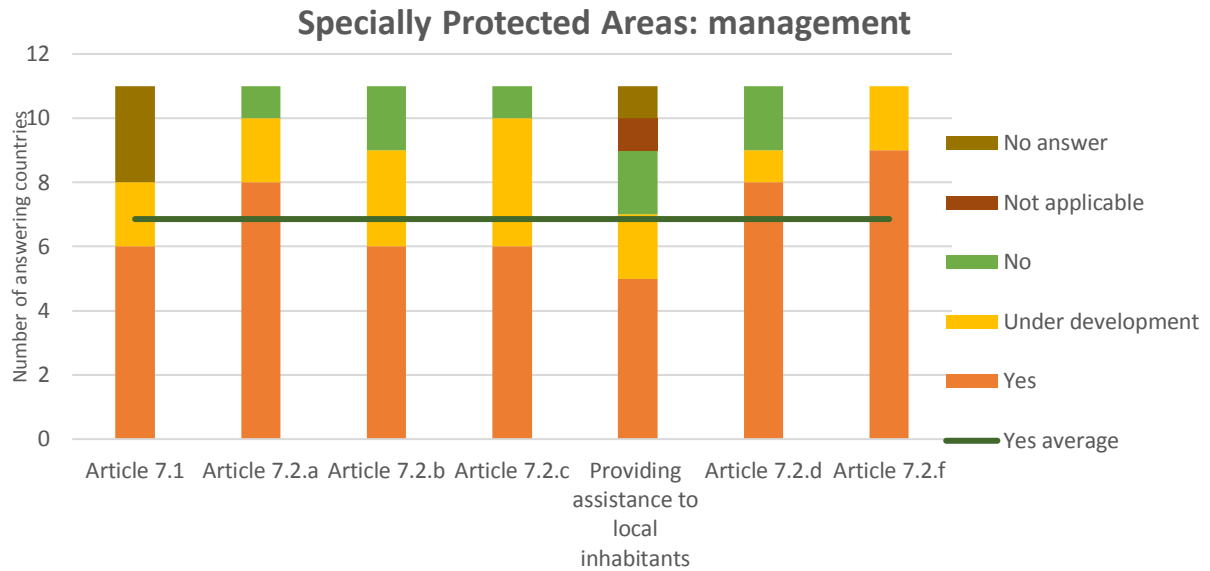


1- Measures to protect the SPAs



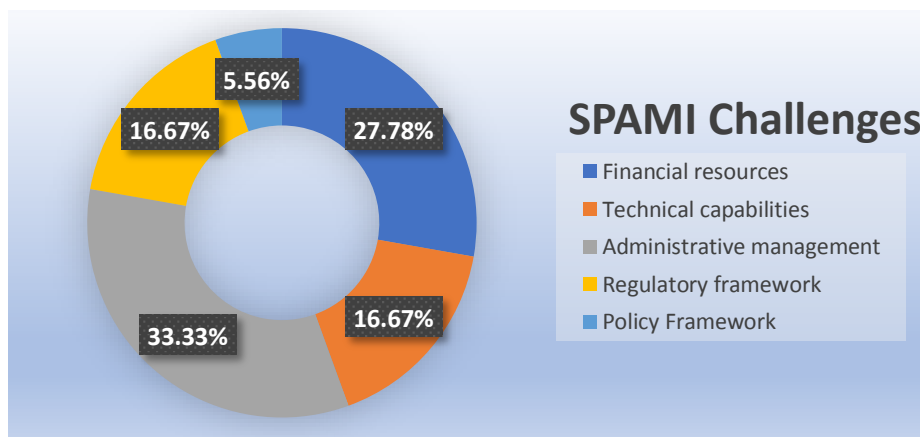
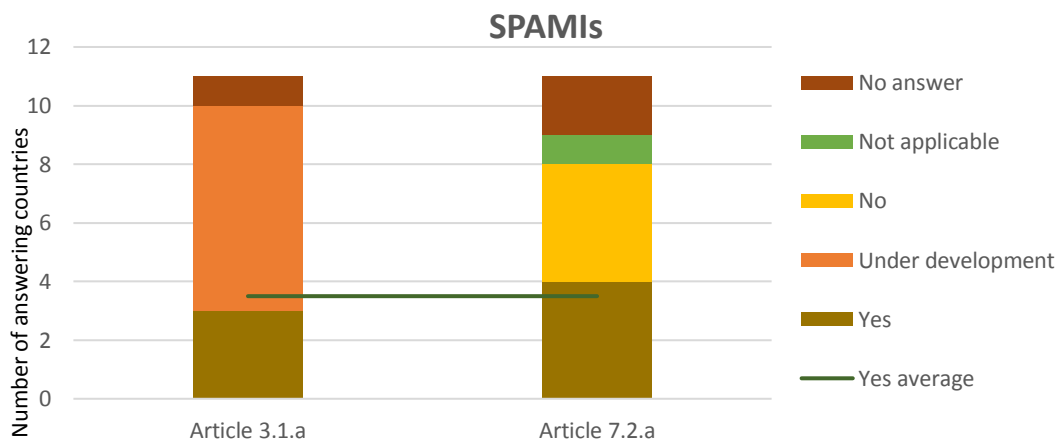
At this specific level, one answering Contracting Party mentioned that the text of the point 6.e should be corrected from "*Regulation or prohibition of all **exploration** activities.*" to "*Regulation or prohibition of all **exploitation** activities...*"

2- Management of the SPAs



Part III: Specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance (SPAMIs)

The aim of this part is to take stock of the actions being carried on creating, and better manage, the SPAMIs.

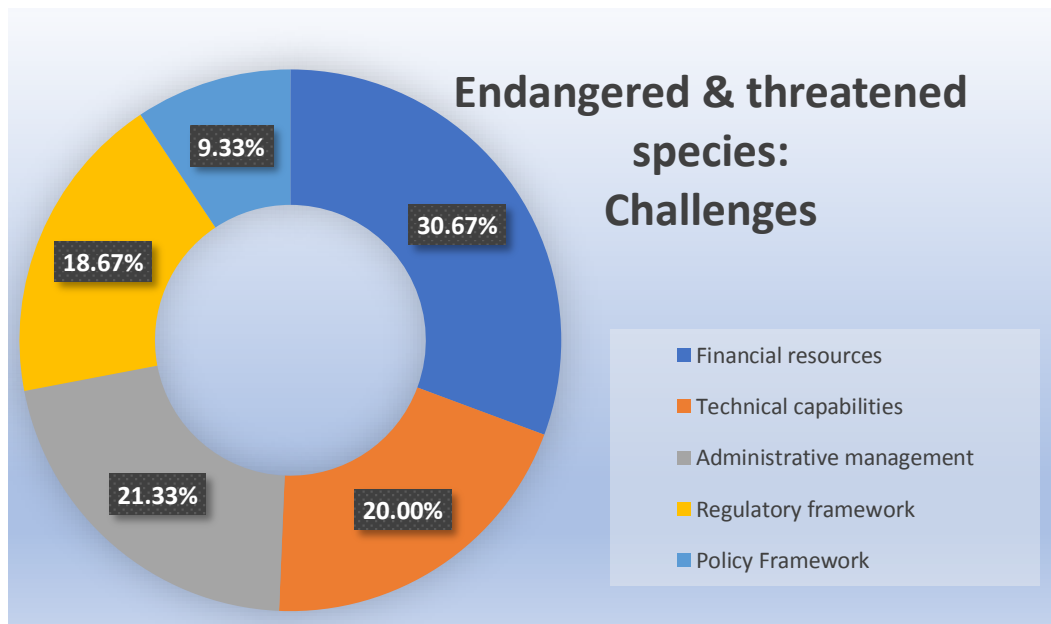
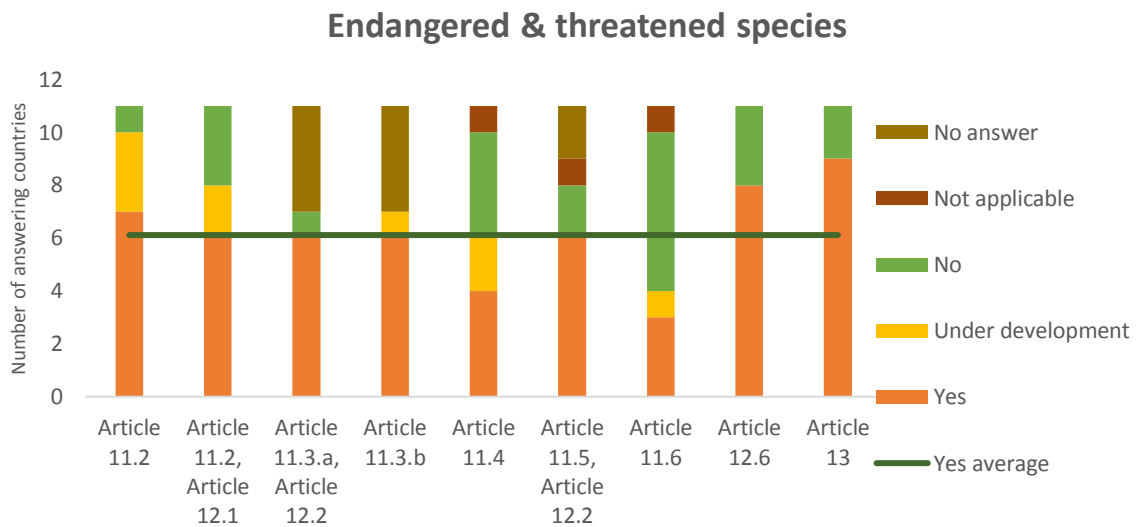


The efforts engaged for establishing and managing SPAMIs seem to be not sufficient despite the great role that these Specially protected areas may play for the marine biodiversity.

Four of the Parties raised difficulties and challenges encountered in setting up or managing their SPAMIs. The main difficulties are administrative management and financial resources.

Part IV: Endangered and threatened species

The aim of this part is to take stock of conservation and protection measures related to endangered or threatened species.



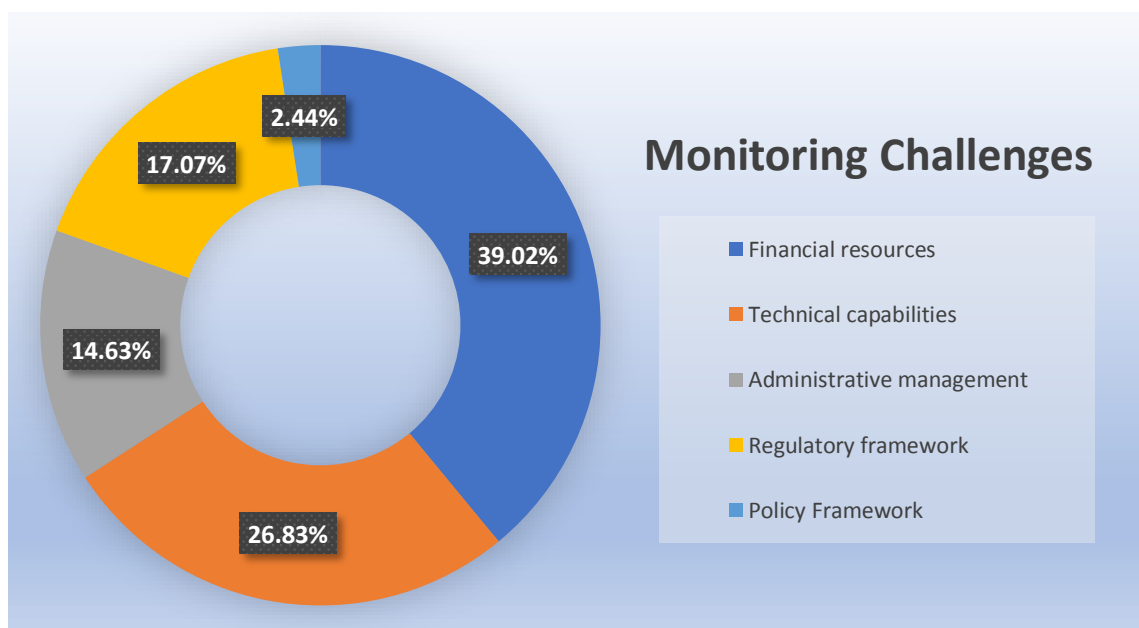
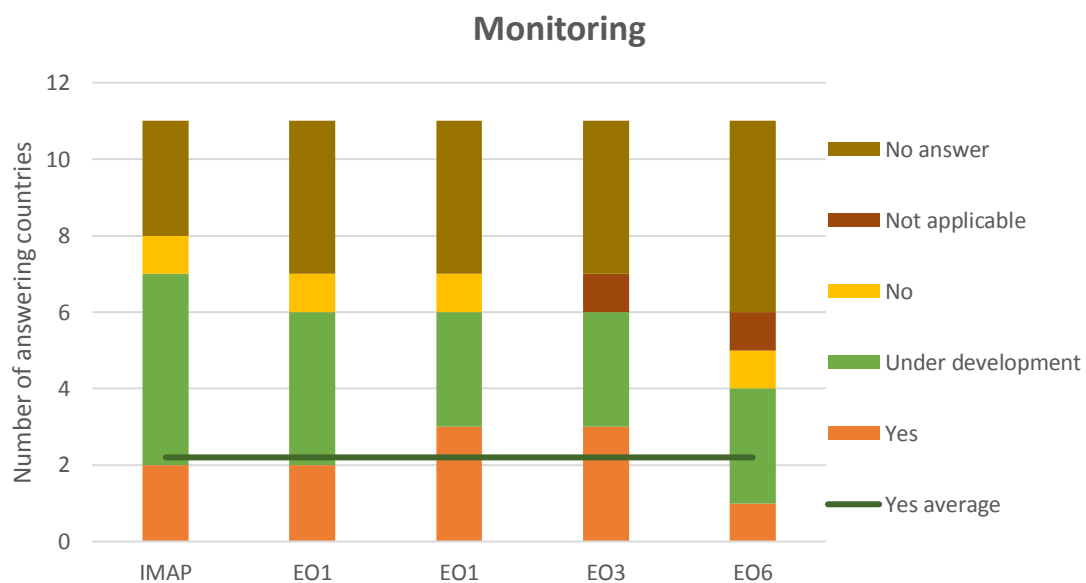
As regards this part, six Parties mentioned the difficulties and challenges encountered when setting up measures to manage and protect species. The main difficulties are linked to financial resources, administrative management and technical capabilities.

Part V: Monitoring

This part aims at identifying the actions being carried-out to implement the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme and its different Ecological Objectives 'EO'.

The analysis made on the comparison of positive answers showed a slow start of their national monitoring Programme. Four Parties have indicated that they have national IMAP programmes under development. Several countries did not answer questions related to this component.

However, four Parties indicated having encountered difficulties and challenges when setting up Integrated Monitoring on the different Ecological Objectives related to biodiversity. The main difficulties seem to be of financial and technical nature.



Part VI: Enforcement measures

In this part, the report examines the application of measures regarding the arrangements concerning banning and regulating the activities involving the capture of species from SPAs.

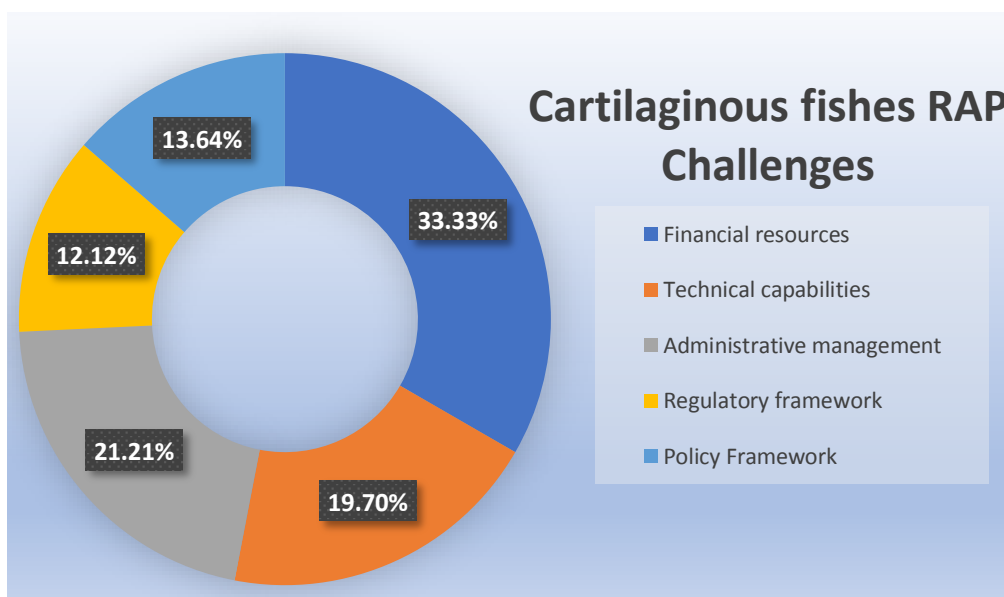
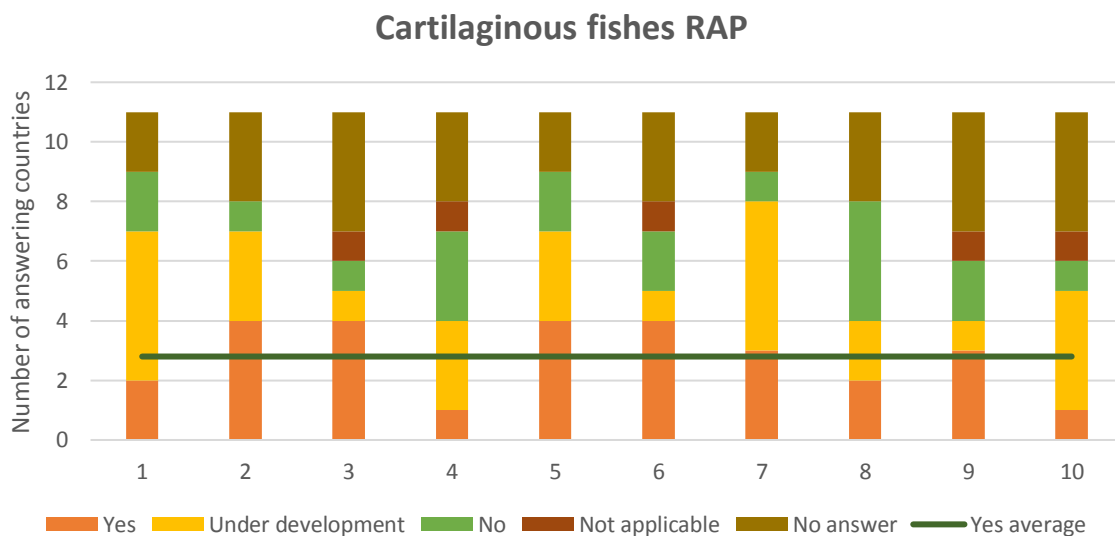
Only two countries have answered to this section. Thus, no analysis could be made based on the answers received.

Part VII: Implementation of regional action plans (RAPs)

RAP for the conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans)

The analysis made on the positive answers showed a low level of implemented actions. However, several actions are under development by some countries to comply with the Action Plan’s provisions.

Five Parties indicated having encountered difficulties and challenges when implementing the Action Plan on cartilaginous fishes. The main difficulty seems to be of financial nature.

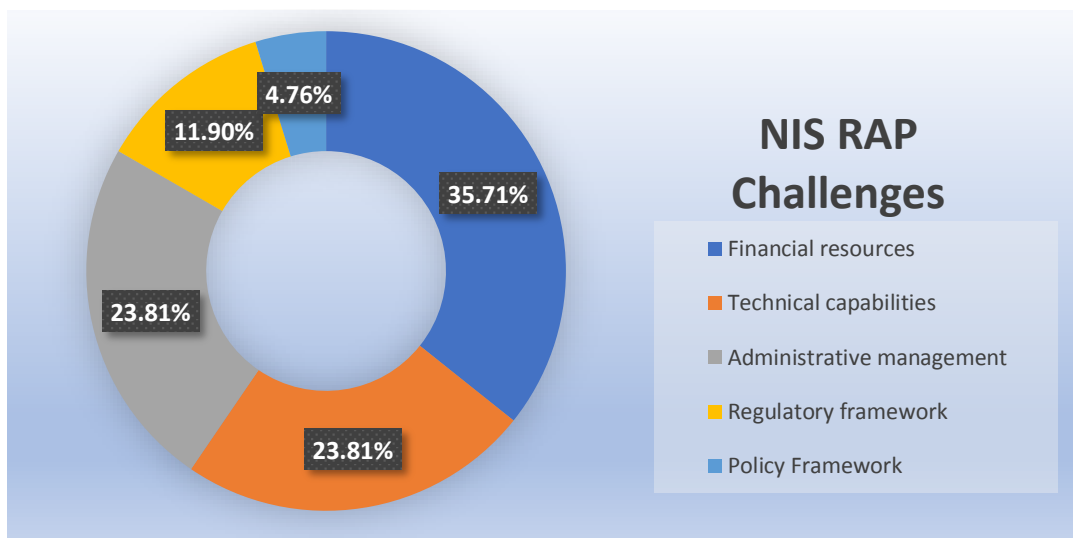
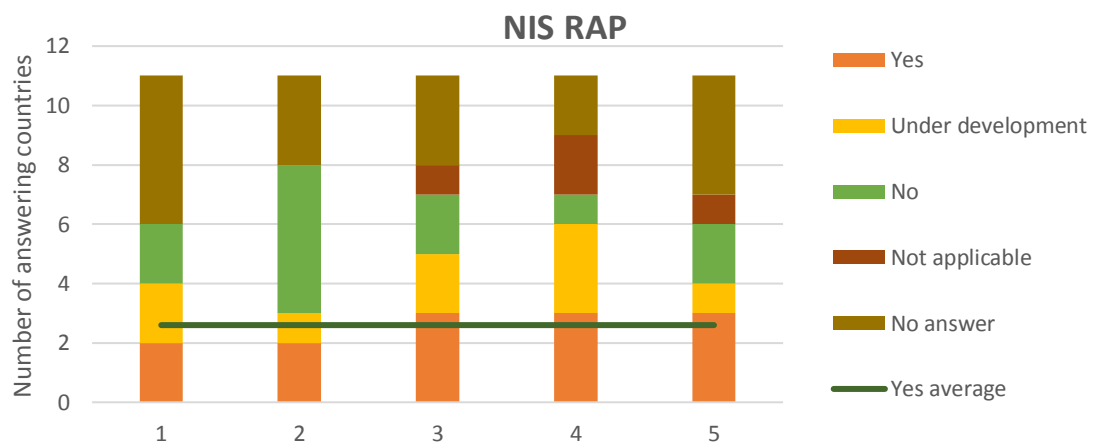


RAP concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species (NIS)

The number of countries having answered the questions under this part is reduced. Within this Action Plan, efforts made on Mediterranean level seem to be insufficient against the threats faced by marine biodiversity.

Six Parties mentioned the difficulties and challenges encountered in implementing the requirements of the Regional action plan concerning species introductions and invasive species.

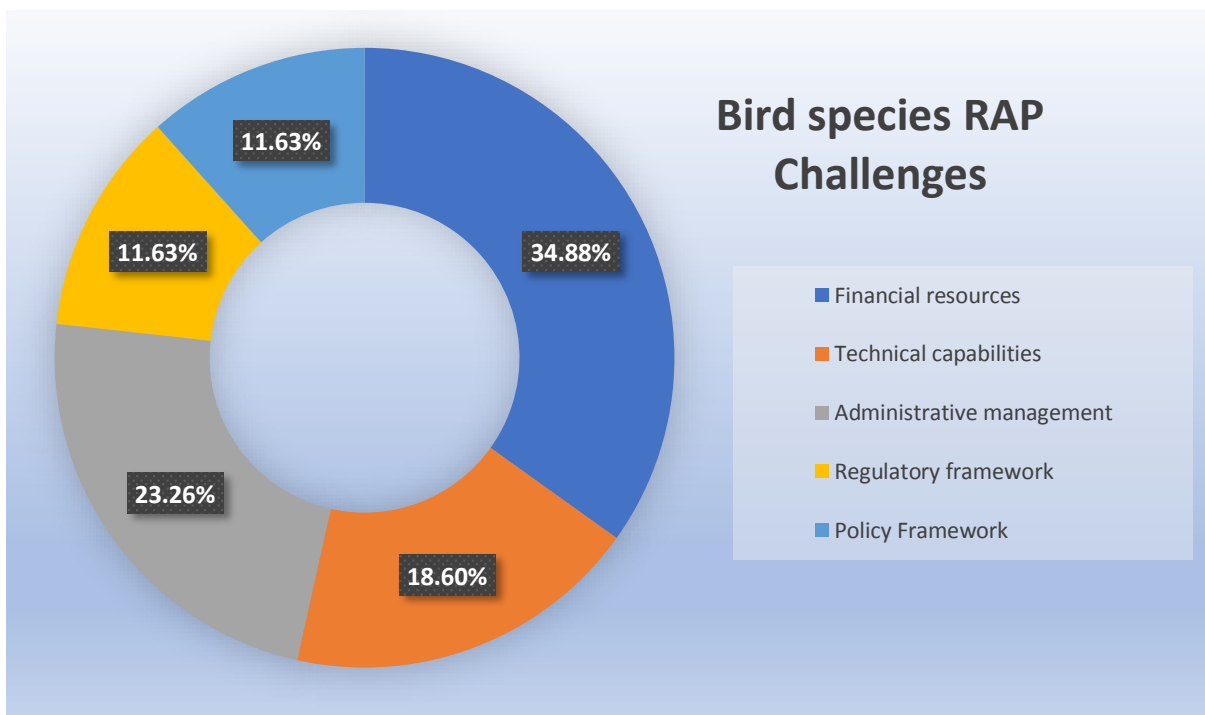
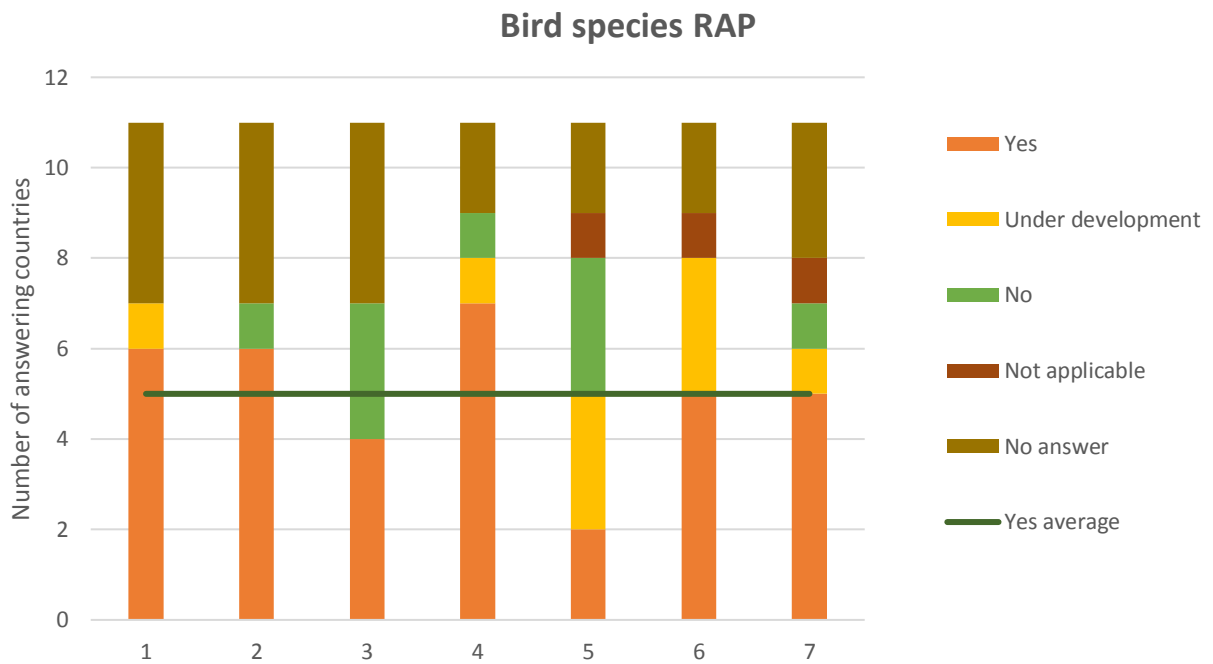
The difficulties mentioned concern mainly financial resources and, at lower levels, technical capacities and administrative management.



RAP for the conservation of Bird Species

Efforts made by Parties within this Action Plan are advancing positively compared to the other Regional Action Plans.

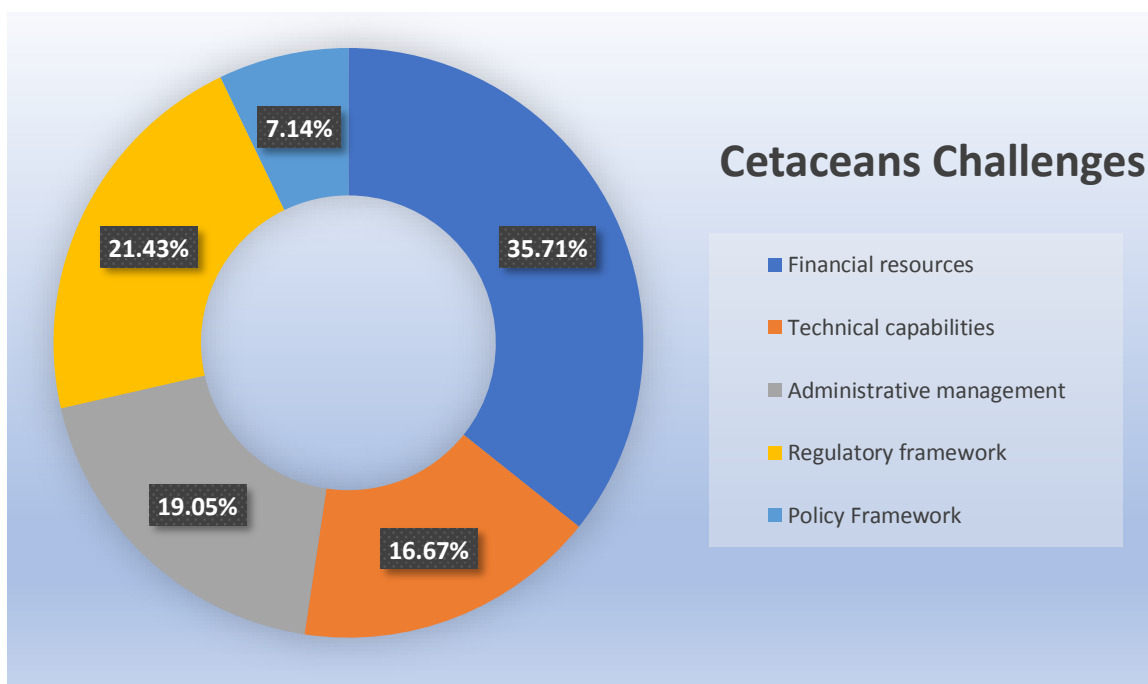
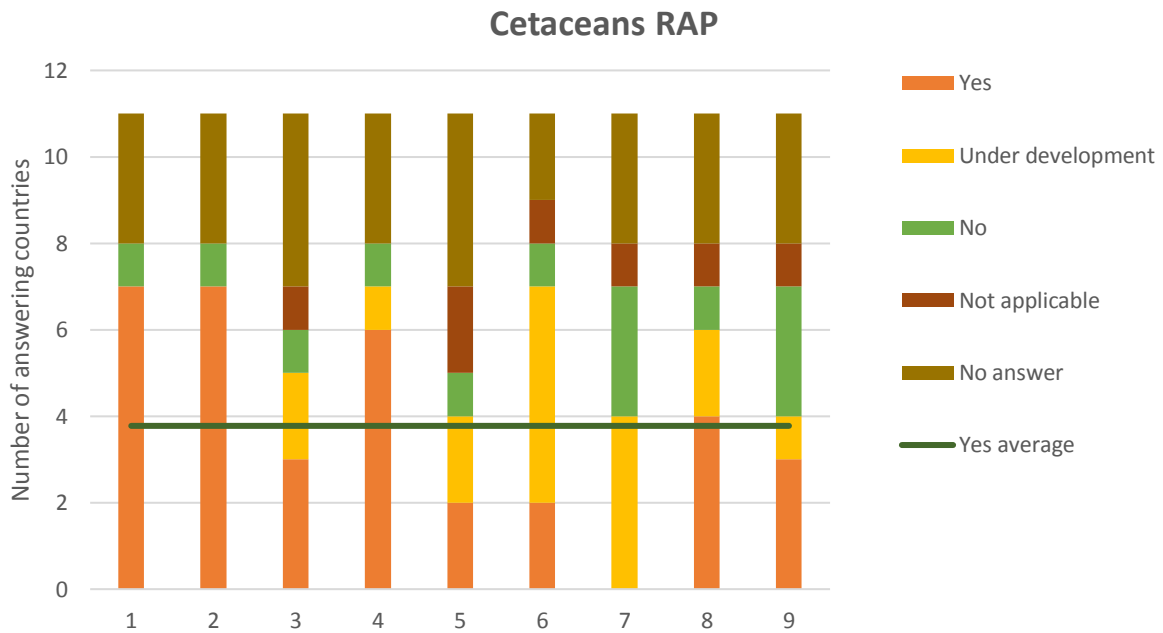
Five Parties raised the difficulties and challenges encountered to implement the requirements of the regional Action Plan for the conservation of bird species. The major difficulty mentioned seems to be of financial nature.



RAP for the conservation of Cetaceans

In accordance to the positive answers received, stating that works are done or are being developed, we can conclude that important efforts are done by Parties for the implementation of this Action Plan.

Five Parties mentioned the difficulties and challenges encountered in implementing the regional Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans. The main difficulty mentioned is once again of a financial nature.

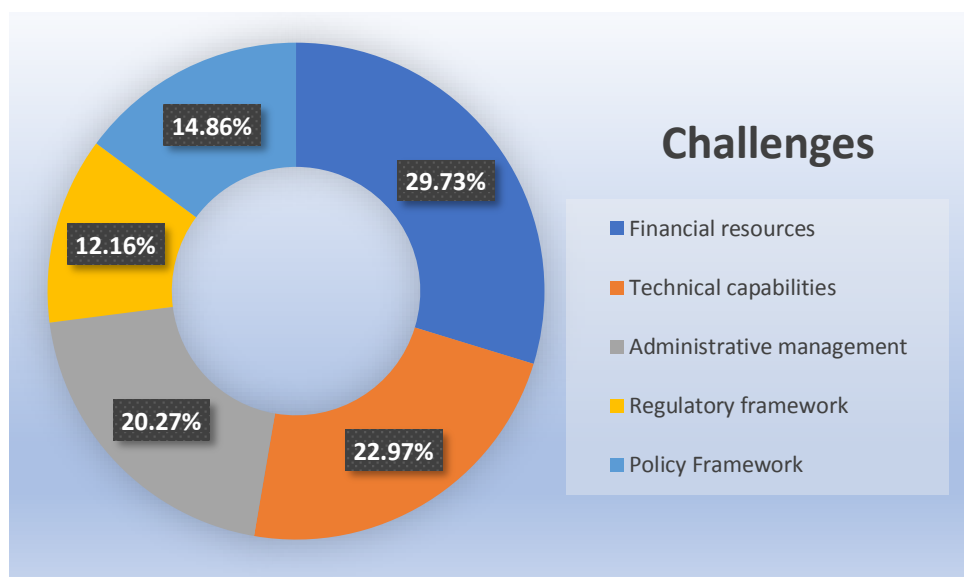
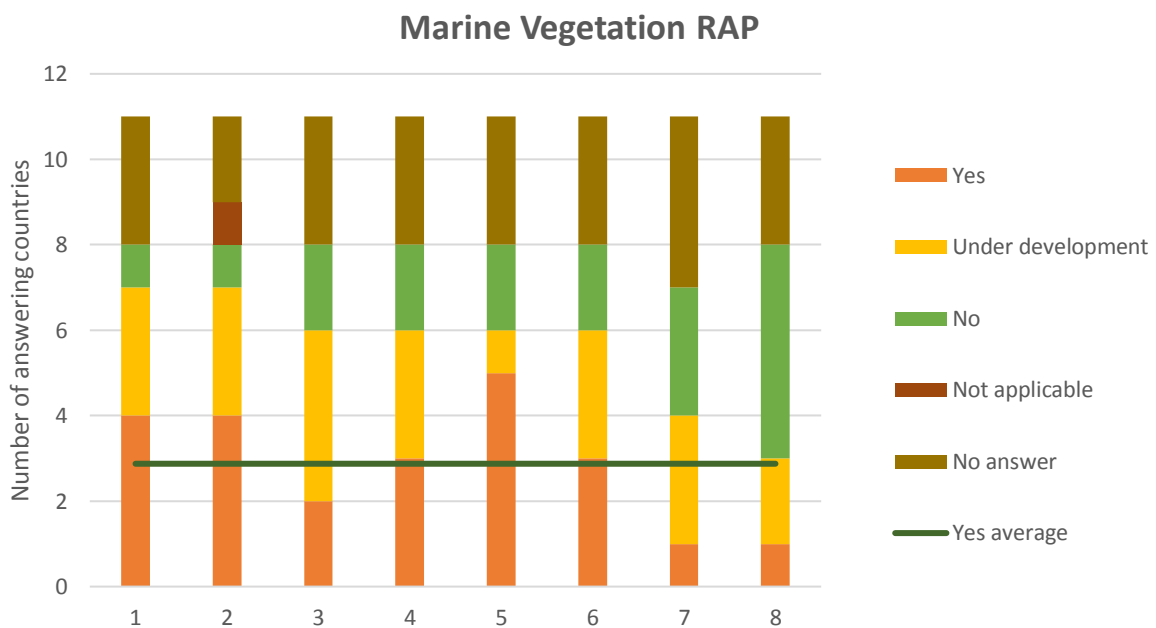


RAP for the conservation of Marine Vegetation

According to the Parties’ answers, marine vegetation in the Mediterranean Sea doesn’t seem to benefit from lot of important actions, even though, several new programmes are under development.

Five Parties indicated the difficulties and challenges encountered in implementing the Action Plan for the conservation of marine vegetation. The main difficulties mentioned are, once again, financial resources, and lack of technical capacities.

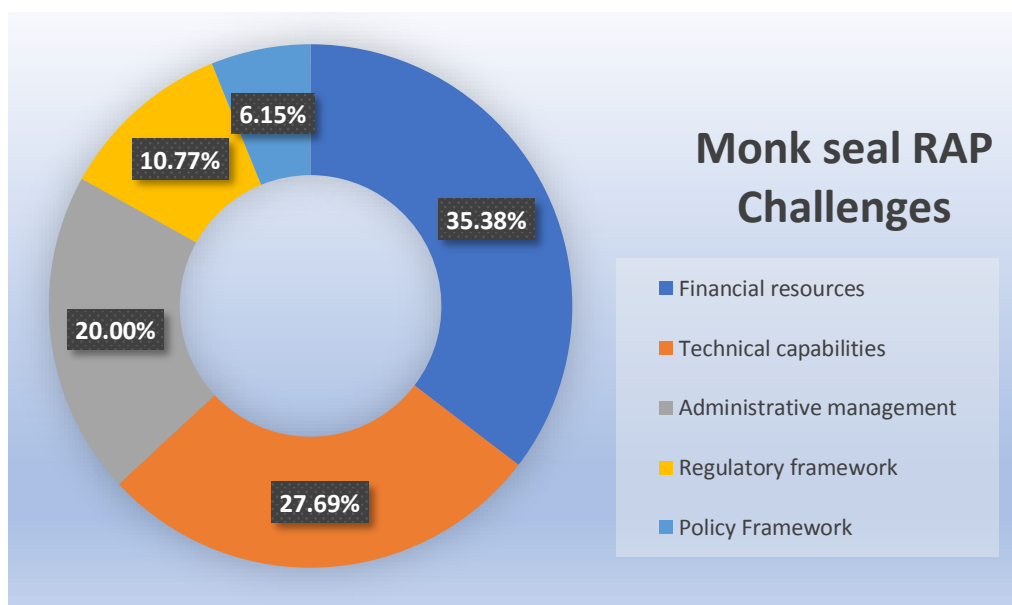
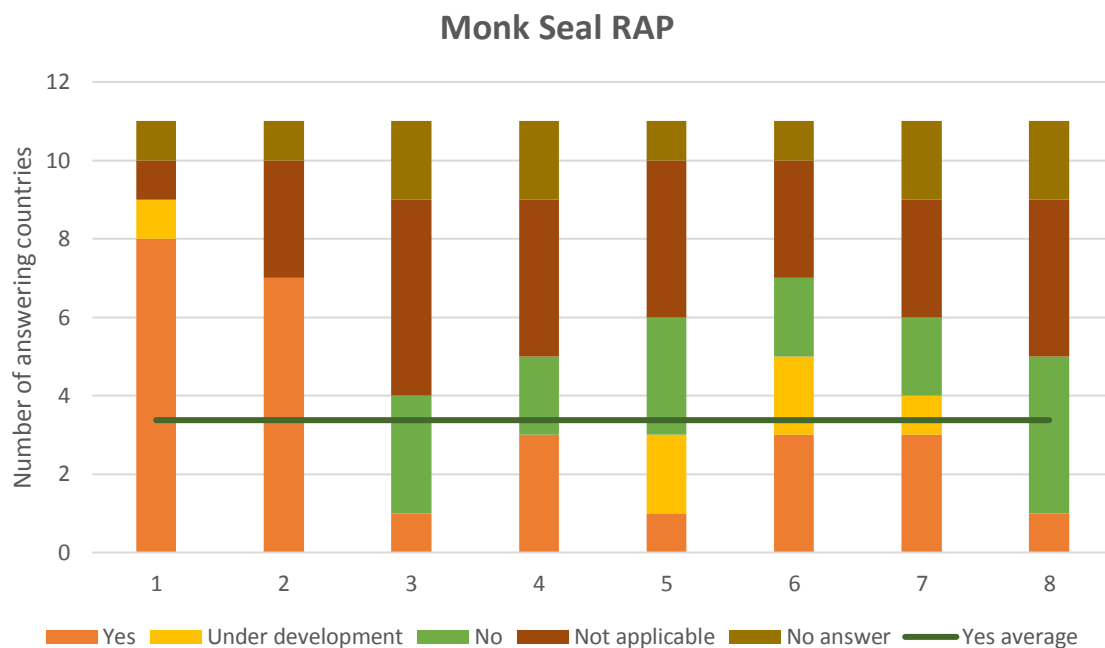
Because of the number of non-answered questions, we were not able to understand if the trend for marine vegetation is rather positive or negative.



RAP for the conservation of the Monk Seal

Efforts made in this Action Plan varies form one Party to another, depending on the presence or not of this species in their national waters. But it is worth noticing that several projects and programmes are being developed by some countries to help protecting the Mediterranean Monk Seal.

Six Parties mentioned the difficulties and challenges encountered, during the reporting period, for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the conservation of the monk seal. It is clear from the received answers that financial resources were the major issue faced.

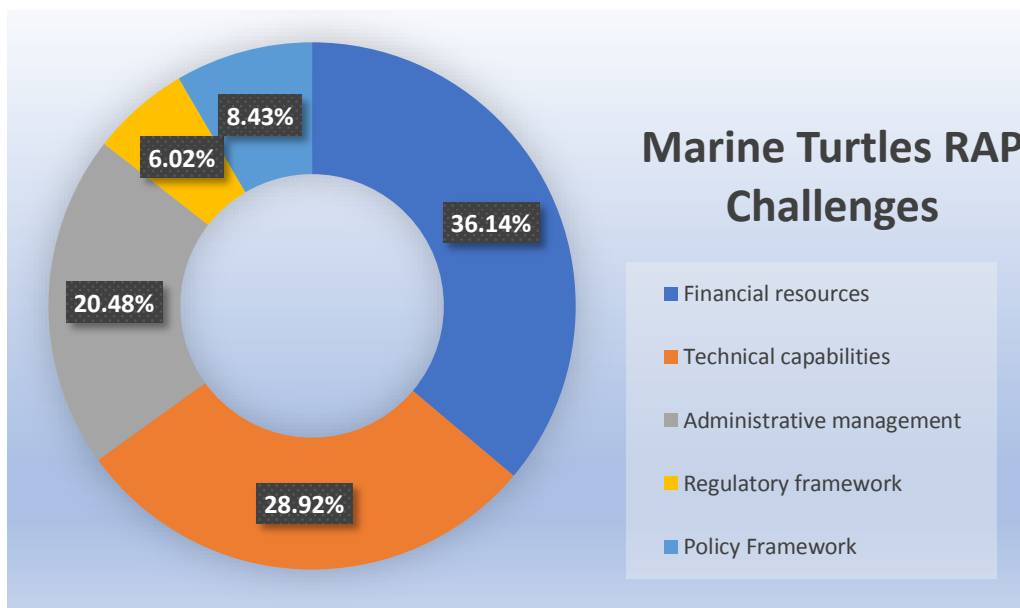
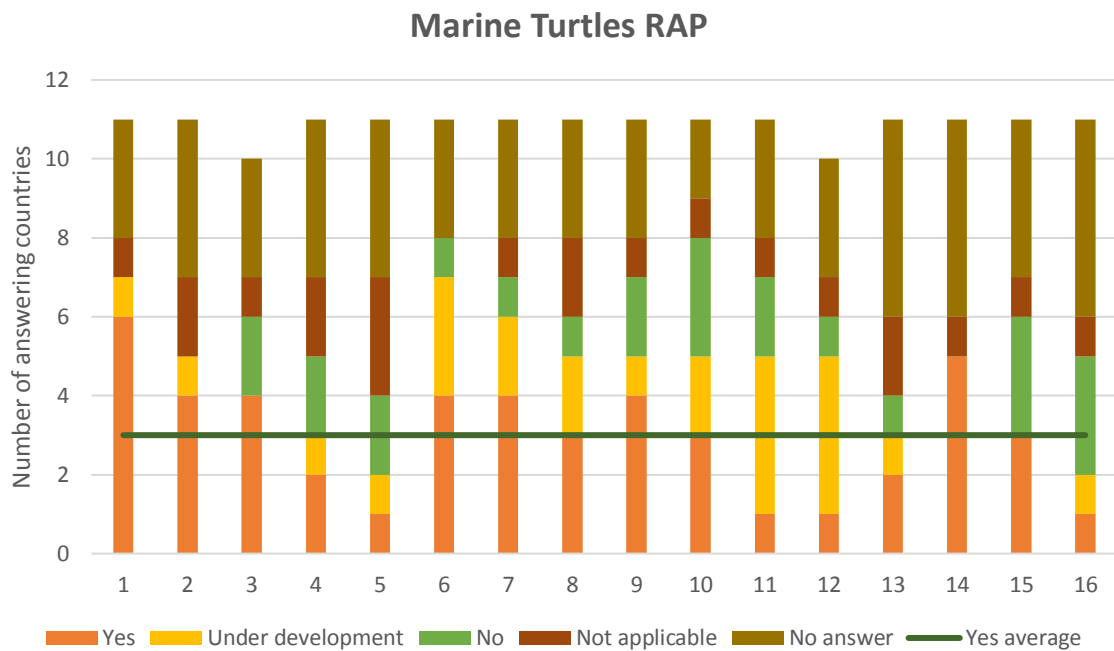


RAP for the conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles

During the reporting period, this Action Plan showed unfortunately less efforts at the Mediterranean scale than during the previous reporting periods.

The answers given to the questions in this part are rather incomplete and do not allow to have a good idea about marine turtle situation.

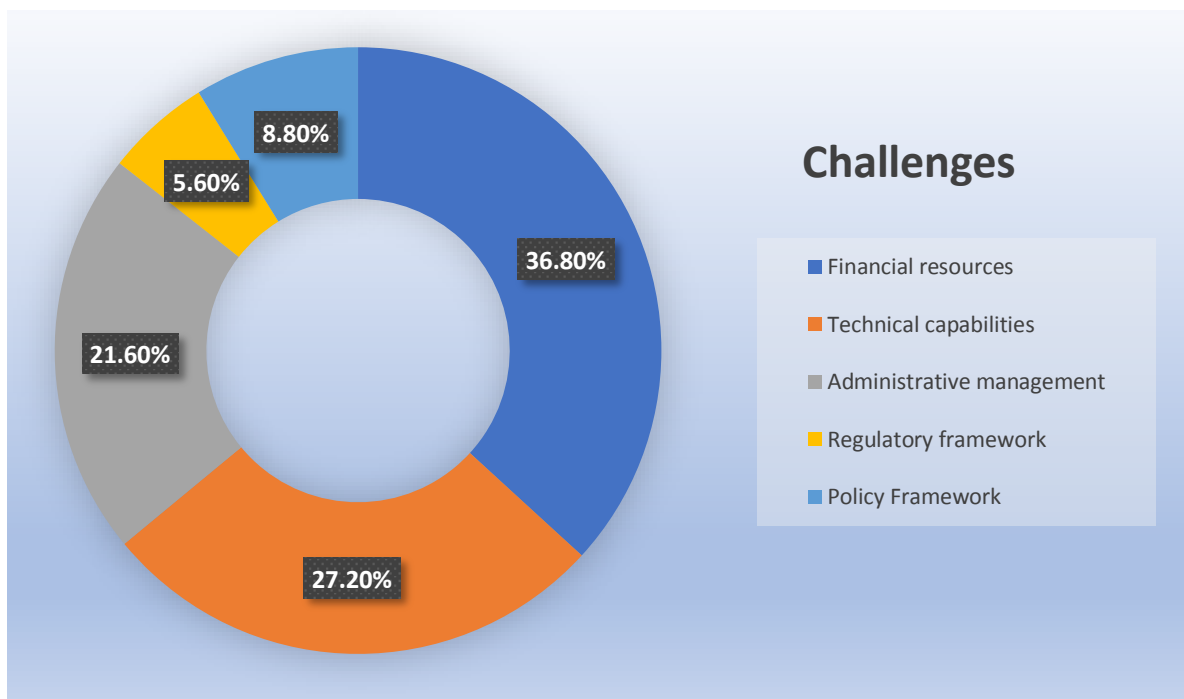
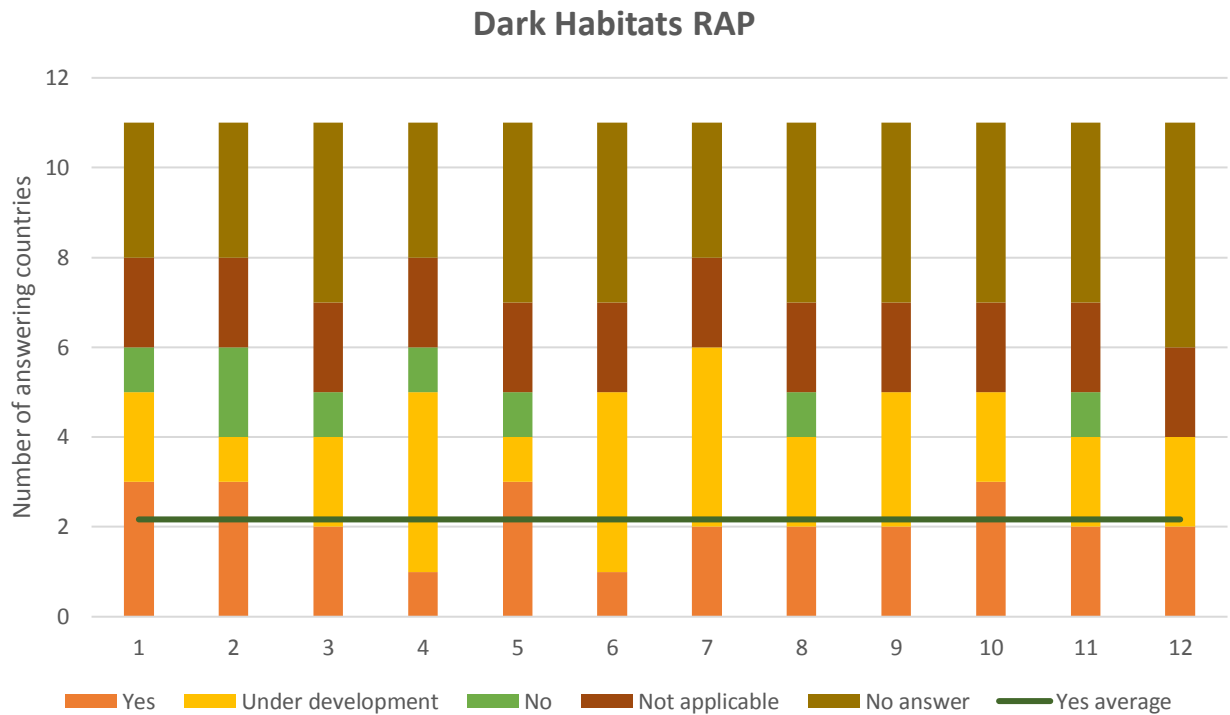
Four Parties mentioned difficulties and challenges encountered in implementing the Regional Action Plan for the conservation of marine turtles. The main reported difficulties are financial resources and technical capacities.



RAP for Dark Habitats

Based on the given answers, this action plan seems to have received only a little attention from Parties during this reporting period. From another side, some parties mentioned few initiatives to develop programmes to implement correctly the Action Plan's requirements.

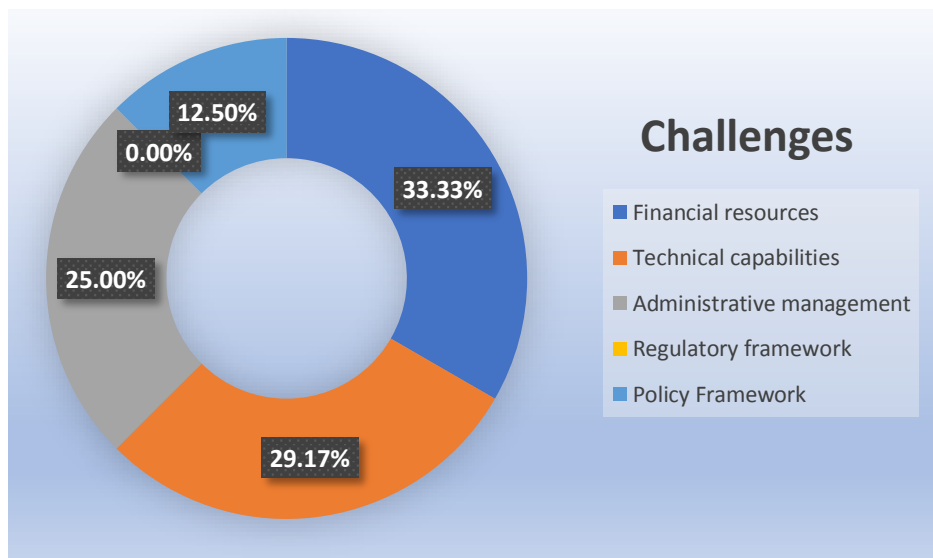
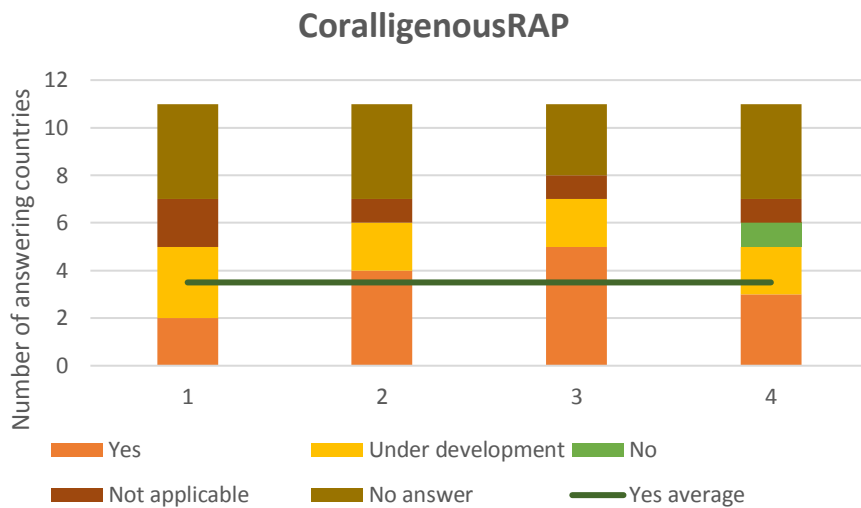
Three Parties indicated having encountered difficulties and challenges when achieving or trying to achieve the requirements of the Regional Action Plan on Dark habitats. The major difficulties were financial and technical.



RAP for the conservation of Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions

In accordance to the positive answers received, as well as the answers stating that new projects are being developed, we can conclude that good efforts are done by Parties within this Action Plan.

Three Parties mentioned the difficulties and challenges encountered in implementing the regional Action Plan for the conservation of Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions. The main difficulties mentioned are, once again, of a financial nature followed by the lack of technical capabilities.



CONCLUSION

Twelve Parties out of a total twenty-two Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have submitted their reports, on the new Barcelona Convention Online Reporting System concerning the SPA/BD protocol for the reporting period going from 2016 to 2017.

The present summary has been made based on eleven reports (the EU not included).

From the BCRS reporting system and the reports received by email, it appears that the period 2016-2017 witnessed progress made in implementing the SPA/BD Protocol at regulation level. Indeed, several Parties adopted regulatory arrangements (e.g. laws, decrees) that enabled the Protocol to be better implemented. Most of the Parties that answered the questions mentioned regulatory measures taken or underway concerning:

- Designation of Protected Areas
- The protection and management of endangered or threatened species
- A ban on the discharge of substances likely to harm the SPAs
- The regulating of ships' passage or mooring and scientific activities within the SPAs
- The regulating or banning of activities involving the capture of species in the SPAs or that are harmful to the SPAs
- Projects and activities that can have negative impact on protected areas and species.

Concerning the SPAs, nine of the Parties that answered the questions have SPAs in their territories. Eight Parties set up new SPAs during the period covered by the report and this can be considered as a big effort made by the Contracting Parties.

As for SPAs effective management, progress remains to be made, since only half of the Parties stated that they have elaborated and/or implemented management plans.

Two new SPAs were put on the SPAMI List during the period covered by the report to reach 35 SPAMIs. As regards SPAMI management, all the Parties that have SPAMIs mentioned they have prepared or implemented management plans for them.

As for the measures to protect and conserve species, a list of endangered or threatened species has been or is being made by nearly 65% of the Contracting Parties, and almost 85% of the Parties also have appropriate measures to regulate the introduction of non-native or genetically modified species.

From the reports made by Parties, over the third of the Parties that filled in the form have undertaken inventorying actions, another third envisages doing so and 70% have a national strategy on the subject.

Concerning enforcement measures, it is hard to draw a conclusion as this part was dealt-with only by two Parties.

Finally, the analysis of data on the various Action Plans shows that in terms of regulatory measures and general protection status, species such as birds, Coralligenous and monk seal are those that enjoyed the best protection status. On the other hand, cartilaginous fishes, monk seal and marine vegetation are species that benefit less from National Action Plans and specific programmes. The research programmes undertaken during this period has mostly targeted birds, marine turtles, marine vegetation, and cetaceans. Awareness actions gave priority consideration to marine turtles and marine vegetation.

Lastly, it appears that the contracting Parties who have submitted their report are making continuous efforts to protect the Mediterranean biodiversity at national level. It is important to underline that a focus must be made on more integration and harmonization of these conservation efforts with development activities and local population livelihood.

ANNEX- I

Detailed analysis on the Status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) in the Mediterranean

Legal and Regulatory measures

'Legal and regulatory measures' tries to identify how the Parties have implemented the provisions of the SPA/BD Protocol by adopting legislation, in accordance with Article 14 of the Barcelona Convention

Article 2.1: Designation of the terrestrial areas (including wetlands) under their jurisdiction that are included in the area to which the SPA and Biological Diversity Protocol applies

Eight Contracting Parties out of eleven (Parties that answered the online computerized form) have designated these areas. Three Parties has not yet done so and one of them indicates that the designation is on process. Four Parties raised difficulties linked mainly to the financial resources, and administrative management.

Article 3.1.a: Protection, preservation and management in a sustainable and environmentally sound way of areas of particular natural or cultural value, notably by the establishment of specially protected areas

Eight Parties out of eleven indicated the existence of measures for the protection, preservation and sustainable management of areas and one of the Party declares that it is processing two new coastal and marine protected areas. Mentioned difficulties are mainly related to administrative management

Article 3.1.b: Protection, preservation and management of endangered or threatened flora and fauna species

Eight Parties out of eleven mentioned regulatory protection measures for of endangered or threatened species. One party declared that a draft law was submitted and has got its approval and is currently waiting its endorsement. At the same time, answering Parties indicated essentially financial, technical and administrative challenges.

Article 3.3: Compilation of an inventory of the components of marine and coastal biodiversity

Four Parties out of ten (Parties that answered this question) have carried out, or are carrying out, inventorying actions with particular emphasis on marine areas, due to the application of the European Habitats, Fauna, Flora Directive and the extension of the Natura 2000 network out to sea. Four other Parties raised that these activities are being prepared or under development and the main difficulties faced are financial and technical.

Article 3.4: Formulation of a national strategy and action plan to protect the components of marine and coastal biodiversity

Seven Parties out of ten (Parties that answered this question) stated that they have national strategies and action plans for the conservation of the biological diversity components. Several countries considered the work done in the MSFD and ICZM context as major lines to be followed for the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity at national level.

Article 3.5: Monitoring the components of marine and coastal biodiversity and those processes and categories of activities which have or are likely to have a significant adverse impact on them

five Parties out of nine (answering Parties for this question) mentioned programmes of observation and monitoring essentially under the MSFD and IMAP frameworks and two Parties reported that steps are being taken. Different Parties highlighted the financial, administrative and technical difficulties facing monitoring programmes

Article 17: Taking into consideration, in the planning process leading to decisions on projects and activities that could significantly affect protected areas, species and their habitats, of possible direct or indirect, immediate or long- term, impact, including the cumulative impact of projects and activities on habitats

Nine Parties out of ten (Parties that answered this question) mentioned national legislations managing the consideration of species and their habitats in the planning process. Administrative points where the main challenges indicated by reporting Parties.

Specially protected areas (SPAs)

The aim of this part was to take stock of the actions being carried out to set up, protect and manage better the Specially protected areas.

1. Measures to protect the SPAs

Article 3.1.a: Setting up of protected areas that come within the Protocol's geographical coverage

Eight Contracting Parties out of eleven answered positively and showed that new SPAs have been established on their territory, during the current biennium. Financial resources and administrative management where the main challenges highlighted by reporting countries.

Article 6.b: Prohibition of the dumping and any discharge likely to directly or indirectly harm the integrity of specially protected areas

Nine Parties out of ten (Parties that answered this question) indicated that measures exist by dedicated legislations to ban the dumping and throwing-away of substances likely to harm the integrity of the SPAs.

Article 6.c: Regulation of the passage of ships and all stopping or anchoring in the specially protected areas' extension zone

six Parties out of eight (Parties that answered this question) have regulations that deal with the passage or mooring of ships in SPAs thanks to legislation and administrative measures. At this point, Parties seems to be facing especially financial and administrative challenges.

Article 6.d: Regulation of the introduction of any species not indigenous to the specially protected area or of genetically modified species

Four Parties out of eight (Parties that answered this question) mentioned having measures regulating the introduction of non-native or genetically modified species. Two Parties indicates that actions are under way and two Parties confirm that introduction of genetically modified species is prohibited.

Article 6.e: Regulation or prohibition of all exploration activities or activities that involve modifying the soil or subsoil of the land part, of the seabed or of its subsoil in the specially protected areas

Nine Parties out of eleven have regulatory measures dealing with the prospecting or exploitation of the seabed or subsoil in the SPAs.

At this specific point, one answering Contracting Party mentioned that the text of this point should be corrected from "Regulation or prohibition of all **exploration** activities." to "Regulation or prohibition of all **exploitation** activities..."

Article 6.f: Regulation of scientific research in the specific protected area

Ten of the eleven answering Parties mentioned rules that regulate scientific research activities within the SPAs, and the procedures for obtaining the corresponding permission. Some of them mentioned that scientific research activities are encouraged within SPAs but administrative and technical difficulties were the most indicated among challenges.

Article 6.g: Prohibition and regulation of all activities involving taking of species. (i.e. fishing, hunting, taking of animals and harvesting of plants and their destruction, as well as trade in animals, parts of animals, plants and parts of plants) which originate in specially protected areas.

Ten of the eleven answering Parties mentioned rules about activities involving the capture of species from SPAs.

Article 6.h: Regulation and if necessary, prohibition of any other activity likely to have an adverse impact on the specially protected areas. These include activities that may harm or disturb the species or that might endanger the state of conservation of the ecosystems or species or might impair the natural or cultural characteristics of the Specially Protected Area

Nine of ten Parties that answered this question indicated that any activity likely to have an adverse impact on the specially protected areas is prohibited.

Article 18: Traditional subsistence and cultural activities of local populations taken into account when formulating protective measures for Specially Protected Areas

Three countries out of Seven (Parties that answered this question) answered positively. One party indicate that steps were being taken and one rose-up that the question was not applicable

2. Management of the SPAs

Article 7.1: Adoption of planning, management, supervision and monitoring measures for Specially Protected Areas

Six Parties out of eight that answered this question mentioned they have implemented such measures for Specially Protected Areas. Two Contracting Parties mentioned that no measures were established during the reporting period, but new regulations and tools are being prepared.

Article 7.2.a: Elaboration and implementation of a management plan for each Specially Protected Area

Eight Parties out of eleven mentioned the crafting or applying of Management Plans for SPAs. Two Parties raised that even if their SPAs did not yet all have a Management Plan, steps were being taken. Lastly, one Party answered in the negative.

The main challenges facing Parties for the elaboration and implementation of management plans for SPAs seems to be financial and technical difficulties

Article 7.2.b: Programmes for the observation and scientific monitoring of changes in the Protocol Areas' ecosystems and of the impact of human activities

Six Parties out of eleven mentioned programmes of observation and monitoring and three Parties reported that steps are being taken. Different Parties highlighted mainly the financial, administrative and technical difficulties facing observation and monitoring programmes.

Article 7.2.c: Measures for the involvement of local communities in the process of managing the protected areas

Six Parties out of eleven answered positively and four of the Parties mentioned that steps are being taken. One of the Parties answered in the negative since the process of establishment of marine protected areas is ongoing and management plans haven't been developed yet.

Providing assistance to local inhabitants to compensate for the possible adverse impact which the protection measures introduced in the SPA might have on their income

Five Parties out of the ten that have answered this question mentioned they provided assistance to local inhabitants in relation with the protection measures introduced in the SPAs. Two Parties indicated studies are being prepared on that sense and one Party indicated that this question is not applicable for its case.

Financial and administrative difficulties are the principal points mentioned by the Parties.

Article 7.2.d: Funding mechanisms for managing and promoting the protected areas or income-generating activities that are compatible with the protection measures

Eight Parties out of eleven mentioned funding mechanisms for the management and promoting of Protected Areas that are rather diverse (e.g. swimming & recreational activities, entry fees, tourist boat route charges and national and fund raisers co-financing). Two Parties indicated funding mechanisms are being established during the reporting period. For the other Party, this is mainly due to financing causes and project planning problems.

Article 7.2.f: Appropriate training for the technical managers and other qualified staff of SPAs

Nine Parties out of eleven mentioned training courses, and one of them indicated that trainings are provided under the MedKeyHabitats II project. Two of the eleven Parties indicated that projects are being prepared in this field.

Specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance (SPAMIs)

The aim of this part is to take stock of the actions being carried on, to create and better manage the SPAMIs.

Article 3.1.a: Setting up of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)

Three out of ten answering Parties mentioned having created SPAMIs, but apart from one of them the creations did not correspond to the period covered by the report. Among the seven Parties that answered in the negative, one already has a SPAMI.

Article 7.2.a: Elaboration and implementation of a management plan for each SPAMI

Four Parties out of eight (Parties that answered this question) mentioned having crafted or implemented a Management Plan for their SPAMIs.

Endangered and threatened species

The aim of this part is to take stock of the measures to protect and conserve endangered and threatened species implemented by the Parties

Article 11.2: Drawing up of a list of endangered or threatened species of fauna and flora and identification of their distribution in the zones subject to Party's jurisdiction

Seven Parties out of eleven (Parties that answered the online computerized form) mention listing species that are endangered or threatened at national level, or the ongoing updating of existing lists. Two of them indicated that this listing has been done under the MedMPA Network project. Three Parties mentioned that this work is under development. Lastly, the Parties stressed the fact that this kind of study is financially costly, that there is a gap in knowledge on distribution of marine species, also that present data aren't enough detailed and that there is still a lack of capacity and specialists to establish national lists.

Article 11.2, Article 12.1: Management of species of fauna and flora, listed in Annexes II and III to the Protocol, to ensure their favorable state of conservation

Six out of eleven Parties mentioned they have policy and legislation tools to protect and manage the protected species and one of them indicates that not all listed species are covered. Two other Parties mentioned that management tools are being prepared.

Article 11.3.a, Article 12.2: Controlling and, where appropriate, prohibiting the taking, possession or killing, the commercial trade, the transport and the exhibition for commercial purposes of protected species of fauna, particularly those listed in Annex II to the Protocol

Six out of seven (Parties that answered this question) mentioned measures and tools in that sense.

Article 11.3.b: Controlling and where appropriate prohibiting the disturbance of protected wild fauna, particularly during the period of breeding, incubation, hibernation or migration

Six out of seven answering Parties indicated they have controlling system and policies for the disturbance of protected wild fauna. The main highlighted challenges were financial and administrative and one of the Parties mentioned difficulties for providing a long-term duration of the initiatives i.e. repeating the efforts one year after another and introducing it into a routine.

Article 11.4: Establishment of bilateral or multilateral cooperation (including agreements) to protect and restore the population of migrant species in the area where the Protocol is applied

four Parties out of eleven mentioned cooperation programmes, particularly within the framework of the ACCOBAMS, AEWAs Agreements, or indicated actions taken in the context of the Convention on Migratory Species. Two Parties indicated that this is under development and the other Parties highlighted financial, administrative and regulatory challenges.

Article 11.5, Article 12.2: Regulating and where appropriate prohibiting all forms of destruction and disturbance of protected species of flora, particularly those listed in Annex II to the Protocol

Six out of nine answering Parties indicated that they have legislations for regulating and prohibiting destruction and disturbance of protected species of flora. Parties indicated facing mainly administrative difficulties for this point.

Article 11.6: Formulation and adoption of measures and plans concerning ex situ reproduction, particularly in captivity, of protected fauna and the growing of protected flora

Only three Parties out of eleven reported having programmes concerning the ex-situ reproduction or reintroduction of wild protected fauna. Six Parties answered the negative and one Party indicated ongoing work on this field. The small number of positive answers may be explained by the financial difficulties met by Parties at this point.

Article 12.6: Granting of exceptions, to the prohibitions prescribed for the protection of the species listed in the Annexes to the Protocol for scientific, educational, or management purposes necessary to ensure the survival of the species

Eight Parties out of eleven mentioned the possibility of dispensations concerning bans set for the protection of the species appearing in the Annexes to the Protocol, without necessarily indicating whether they had had recourse; however, they usually state that these dispensations are given for scientific objectives.

Article 13: Taking steps to deal with the deliberate or accidental introduction into the wild of non- indigenous or genetically modified species and prohibiting those that may have harmful impacts on the ecosystems, habitats or species

Nine Parties out of eleven mentioned having measures regulating the introduction into the wild of non-native or genetically modified species. One of them also stated that a database on non-native or genetically modified species was established. One of them confirm that introduction of genetically modified species is prohibited.

Monitoring

1: Implementation of quality status monitoring and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment (IMAP)

Only two out of eight answering Parties mentioned they started Implementation of monitoring within the IMAP, either completely or partially. Five other Parties indicated that the process is under development.

2: Ecological Objective-EO 1 Biodiversity

Two out of seven Parties that answered this question mentioned they started monitoring the ecological objective EO1 and four Parties indicated this is under development. Parties mentioned mainly financial difficulties at this level.

3: Ecological Objective-EO 2 Non- indigenous species

Three out of seven answering Parties indicated they have programmes to monitor the ecological objective EO2 on NIS and three reported that monitoring programmes are under development.

4: Ecological Objective -EO 3 Harvest of commercially exploited fish and shellfish

Two out of seven Parties that answered this question mentioned they started monitoring the ecological objective EO3. Three other Parties indicated that programmes are under development to monitor the EO3. One of the answering Parties reported this question is not applicable for its case.

5: Ecological Objective -EO 6 Sea-floor integrity

Only one out of six answering Parties mentioned it is monitoring the ecological objective 6. Three other Parties indicated that the process is under development.

Enforcements measures

Article 6.g: Prohibition and regulation of all activities involving taking of species (i.e. fishing, hunting, taking of animals and harvesting of plants and their destruction, as well as trade in animals, parts of animals, plants and parts of plants) which originate in specially protected areas

Article 11.3.a: Controlling and, where appropriate, prohibiting the taking, possession or killing, the commercial trade, the transport and the exhibition for commercial purposes of protected species of fauna, particularly those listed in Annex II to the Protocol

Article 11.3.b Controlling and where appropriate prohibiting the disturbance of protected wild fauna, particularly during the period of breeding, incubation, hibernation or migration

Article 11.5 Regulating and where appropriate prohibiting all forms of destruction and disturbance of protected species of flora, particularly those listed in Annex II to the Protocol

4 points constituted this part, and incomplete answers from only 2 countries were received. For this reason, no analysis can be made basing on the answers found.

Implementation of regional actions plans (RAPs)

RAP for the conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) (COP Decision IG 21/4)

3. **Formalize/reinforce synchronous submission of catch, bycatch and discard data to both scientific and management bodies, and annually to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)**

Only two of the nine answering Parties mentioned they formalize submission of data, during the reporting period, to both scientific and management bodies and one of them mentioned an FAO project on fisheries data collection system. 5 Other Parties indicated this work is under development.

4. **Establish strict legal protection for species listed in Annex II and GFCM Recommendation through national laws and regulations**

Four out of the seven Parties that answered this question cited they established legal protection through national laws and regulations. Three other Parties mentioned work being developed on that sense.

5. Support GFCM finning prohibition by enacting national regulations and monitoring their implementation and enforcement

Four out of the seven Parties that answered the question stated that they are supporting GFCM finning prohibition through national regulations. One Contracting Party indicated this question is not applicable.

6. Complete and disseminate inventories of critical habitats (mating, spawning and nursery grounds)

Only one Party out of eight (Parties that answered this question) gave a positive answer to this point. Three other Parties indicated under development projects to complete and disseminate inventories of critical habitats

7. Increase compliance with obligations to collect and submit species-specific commercial catch and bycatch data to FAO and GFCM, including through increased use of observers

Four out nine Parties (that answered this question) stated that they increased compliance with obligations to collect and submit species-specific commercial catch and bycatch data to FAO and GFCM. Three Parties mentioned projects under development.

8. Comply with obligations under GFCM Recommendations to collect and submit data on pelagic shark catches.

Four out of eight answering Parties signaled they are complying with GFCM recommendation requirements related to date on pelagic shark catches.

9. Improve programmes for the collection and reporting of data from coastal fisheries

Three out of nine Parties that answered this question mentioned that they improved their data collection and reporting programmes and five other Parties declared that improvements are under development.

10. Monitor Critically Endangered, Endangered and endemic species

Two out of eight answering Parties for this question indicated they are monitoring endemic and endangered species. Two others mention projects under development. Difficulties met by Parties were mainly financial.

11. Submit to the GFCM annual Shark Assessment Reports describing all national target and/or bycatch fisheries

Three of the seven Parties that answered this question indicated that they submitted annual shark assessment reports to GFCM.

12. Develop and adopt (where these do not exist) national Shark Plans and specific regulations for fisheries exploiting chondrichthyans, whether target or bycatch

Only one out of the seven Parties that answered this question mentioned it developed and adopted nation shark plans and regulations for fisheries. Four other countries mentioned work is under development.

RAP concerning Species Introductions and Invasive Species (COP Decision IG 22/12)

1. Set up a mechanism to promote and coordinate the actions listed in paragraph 22 of the RAP

Two Contracting Parties out of six that has answered this question mentioned they have set up such mechanisms. Two other Parties mentioned they have work under development.

2. Conduct a baseline study to feed the Marine Mediterranean Invasive Species (MAMIAS)

Two out of eight answering Parties mentioned cooperation with MAMIAS network whereas five other Parties stated that they have conducted no baseline study for feeding the Database, or that they have cooperation with other networks but not with MAMIAS.

3. Development of programmes for data collection and monitoring

Three of eight Parties that answered this question indicated they have programmes for data collection and monitoring mainly under the IMAP and MSFD processes. Two other Parties mentioned they have ongoing work to develop such programmes within the EcApMed Project and indicated that financial resources were the main challenges facing them at this level.

4. Launch the procedures for enacting or strengthening national legislation governing the control of alien species introduction

Three Parties out of nine reported that they have adopted general legislation to check the introduction of alien species, or that they are implementing the measures decreed by the European Community in this field. Three Parties mentioned that actions are being prepared in this field.

5. Develop programmes to raise the awareness of the general public and target groups, including decision- makers, concerning the risks associated with species introduction

Only three Parties out of seven reported that they set up training and awareness programmes on the risks linked to the introduction of non-native species and on ways of handling this problem. Three other Parties answered that reflection is under way in the field.

RAP for the conservation of Bird Species (COP Decision IG 21/4)

1. Protect legally all bird species listed in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol

Six Parties out of seven give legal protection to bird species listed in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol.

2. Optimize synergies with international agreements and organizations dedicated to bird conservation

Six Parties out of seven mentioned that they have optimized synergies with International agreements and organizations working on bird protection field.

3. Organize specific training courses and workshops in coordination/synergy with international and/or national NGOs

Only four out of the seven Parties that answered this question reported organization of training courses and workshops in coordination with international and national NGOs. The other Parties answered negatively to this question.

4. Establishment / support of research and monitoring programs to fill gaps in the knowledge of threatened species in partnership with other organizations

In this context, seven Parties out of nine reported that they have started research and monitoring programmes on protected bird species in the context of the Barcelona Convention. The main difficulties mentioned were of financial type. One Party mentioned ongoing reflection.

5. Establishment and implementation of National Action Plans for the conservation of endangered and threatened bird species in the Mediterranean

Only two Parties out of nine mentioned that they have Action Plans for one or several of the bird species appearing in Annex II to the Protocol. Three other mentioned ongoing preparation of National Action Plans for the conservation of the Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) and Yelkouan Shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*)

6. Identification of areas of important for birds on land and at sea (mapping of breeding, feeding, molting and wintering areas)

Five out of nine answering Parties indicated that studies and researches has been established during the reporting period in order to identify areas of importance for birds. Parties seemed to be facing essentially Financial issues.

7. Legal establishment of Protected Areas with adequate management plans at breeding sites

Only five Parties out of eight mentioned that on their territories they have Protected Areas with adequate management plans to conserve the bird species in the SPA/BD Protocol and their breeding sites.

RAP for the conservation of Cetaceans (COP Decision IG 22/12)

1. Ratify the ACCOBAMS Agreement and implement its Resolutions and Recommendations of relevance for the Mediterranean Sea

Seven Parties out of eight (Parties that answered this question) reported that they have ratified the ACCOBAMS Agreement. One Party Answered no as it is not member of ACCOBAMS.

2. Ensure that cetaceans are covered, at national level, by appropriate regulation measures providing for the elimination of deliberate killing and for the mitigation of the adverse impacts from their interactions with human activities

Seven Parties out of eight mentioned having granted appropriate regulation measures to protect cetaceans mainly through law enforcement.

3. Ensure, through regulation or other appropriate approaches, that whale-watching activity is environmentally sound and sustainably conducted

Only three out of seven answering Parties indicated specific regulation to monitor and follow up whale-watching activity. Different kind of difficulties has been reported by answering Parties at this level.

4. Undertake the comprehensive survey of abundance and distribution of cetaceans being planned by ACCOBAMS (ACCOBAMS Survey initiative)

Six out of Eight Parties (Parties that answered this question) mentioned they have set up surveys of abundance and distribution of cetacean under the ACCOBAMS survey initiative. Two of these countries talked in fact about surveys held in 2018 or to be held in 2019 so not in the reporting period. One Party indicated ongoing survey during the biennium 2016-2017 and no major challenges were highlighted for this point.

5. Assess the cetacean bycatch and depredation in their fisheries and adopt mitigation measures

Only two out of seven Parties that answered this question gave a positive answer. Two other Parties indicated that assessment is under development and two other countries stated that the question is not applicable for them.

At this level, we mention that regulatory framework has appeared as frequently faced difficulty, aside administrative management and financial resources.

6. Pursue the development and the implementation of a basin-wide strategy for underwater noise monitoring in the Mediterranean under the Ecological Objective 11 of the EcAp process

Two Parties out of nine (Parties that answered this question) stated they pursued the development and implementation of strategy for underwater noise monitoring such as an initiative adopted in 2014 and started in 2016 within the MSFD. In another side, five Parties mentioned ongoing work on this matter like those under the IMAP programme.

7. Development of acoustic mapping to build a comprehensive picture of the spatial and temporal distribution of anthropogenic noise sources, in particular for the noise hotspot areas identified in the Mediterranean by ACCOBAMS

None of the eight Parties that answered this question has developed any acoustic mapping of the spatiotemporal distribution of anthropogenic noise sources. Four Parties indicated ongoing work on this field.

8. Promote awareness of the anthropogenic noise impacts on cetaceans, targeting in particular decision makers, key players in the industry organizations and the stockholders in the shipping sectors

Four out of eight answering Parties indicated having promoted awareness of the anthropogenic noise impacts on cetaceans and two indicated that awareness programmes are under development. Mentioned difficulties was mainly of financial level.

9. Establish a list of marine areas under its jurisdiction identified as of special importance for cetaceans

Six Parties out of eight reported they have set up MPAs for the protection of cetaceans, but that does not always refer to the period covered by the report. One Party mentioned a creation project

RAP for the conservation of Marine Vegetation (COP Decision IG 20/6)

1. Take new vegetation species in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol into account

Four Parties out of eight stated that new vegetation species included in the Annex II has been took into account within their protection measures. Three other Parties mentioned that this is ongoing. Financial and technical issues were the main mentioned difficulties facing this action.

2. Create MPAs to conserve marine vegetation

Nine Parties answered this question and four of them indicated creation of MPAs for the conservation of marine vegetation such as Sites of Community Interest. Three Parties reported that sites are being designated.

3. Set up a programme for making national inventories on macrophyta species, with staggered planning according to the regions' priorities.

Two out of eight answering Parties mentioned they have programmes for making national inventories on macrophyta species. Three Parties stated that inventories are under development and one of them specified that even if inventory exist, it needs updating.

4. Make theoretical probable distribution maps for the main plant assemblages.

As in the previous question, eight Parties answered the question and three of them mentioned having set up programmes to map the main meadows and other important plant formations.

5. Implement targeted mapping and inventorying actions (Annex II species, priority sites).

Five out of eight answering Parties have implemented targeted mapping and inventorying actions. One Party has a project under development.

6. Establish a programme for setting up monitoring networks for the main marine plant assemblages at national and regional level.

Three of the eight answering Parties mention setting up monitoring networks for the main marine vegetation assemblages specially under the IMAF and the MedMPA Network project and three other Parties stated that such programmes are being established. But funds seemed to be a big issue for this point.

7. Set up and/or extend their networks for follow-up of plants in the Mediterranean.

Seven Parties answered this question. Only one of them stated it has set up a network to follow evolution of protected marine plants. Three Parties indicated work under development.

8. To develop short, medium- and long-term action plans according to national and regional priorities.

One out of eight Contracting Parties that answered this question stated it has developed Action Plan for the conservation of marine plants. Two Parties mentioned that Action Plan are being prepared and five countries answered the negative.

RAP for the conservation of the Monk Seal (1985 COP Decision)

Some of the Parties raised that since the monk seal is absent from their territory, almost the entire questionnaire do not apply; they are therefore only counted among the total number of Parties that answered the questionnaire.

1. Has the Party given the monk seal protection status?

Eight Parties out of ten answering Parties mentioned having conferred protection status on the monk seal. One of the Parties mentioned ongoing work in this field.

2. For fishing, does the Party explicitly ban the use of dynamite, the carrying of firearms on boats, and all fishing techniques that can endanger monk seals?

Seven Parties out of ten reported having installed bans on fishing with dynamite and the carrying of firearms on board ship. One of the Parties said that punishments appear in its bill on protection of aquatic life.

3. If the Party still has breeding monk seal populations, have measures been taken to isolate monk seals from any human activity?

Only one Party out of nine mentioned having monk seal populations that are of reproductive age and that they have taken steps to keep them away from all human activity. Three Parties answered the negative. Finally, a total five Parties stated that since they have no monk seal population of reproductive age, the question does not apply.

4. In the Party's territory, have SPAs been created to conserve monk seal populations or their potential habitats?

Three Parties out of nine reported the creation of Protected Areas for the conservation of monk seal populations or their potential habitats. Two Parties mentioned ongoing project for the creation of SPAs.

5. Has the Party established a list of breeding caves and other habitats that are of importance for monk seal conservation?

Only one out of ten mentioned having made a list of the reproduction caves and other habitats that are extremely important for the monk seal. Two Parties reported that studies are made in this field.

6. Has the Party carried out programmes for data collection on the monk seal?

Three Parties out of ten mentioned having implemented programmes of data collection on the monk seal. Two other Parties mentioned projects to do this.

7. Has the Party developed programmes for awareness raising, information and training concerning monk sea conservation?

Three Parties out of nine reported setting-up awareness, information and training programmes on the conservation of the monk seal. These awareness actions are sometimes carried out as part of inter-state cooperation or through NGOs and concern the circulation of brochures for the wider public or the production of a handbook of instructions on saving wounded monk seals. Financial issues are the main difficulties reported by answering Parties.

8. Does the Party have an action plan for the conservation of monk seal and its potential habitats?

Only one Party out of nine (Parties that answered this question) mentioned that they have crafted Action Plans for the conservation of the monk seal and of its potential habitats. One of the Parties that stated the negative indicates that the element for the Action Plan is already included in the law protecting this species. Lastly four Parties stated that this question is not applicable for them.

RAP for the conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles (COP Decision IG 21/4)

1. Protection of turtles—general species protection.

Six Parties out of eight reported having laws and regulations for the protection of marine turtles and one of them stated that there is no new actions or measures undertaken during the current biennium. One of the Parties rose that the entire questionnaire on marine turtles does not apply to it; it is therefore only counted among the total number of Parties that answered the questionnaire.

2. Enforce legislation to eliminate deliberate killing.

Four Parties out of seven that answered this question stated that they enforced legislation to eliminate deliberate killing of Marine Turtles. One Party indicated ongoing work to set enforced policies.

3. Habitat protection and management (nesting, mating, feeding, wintering and key migration passages).

Four out of seven answering Parties mentioned that they have programmes for the habitats protection and management. One of them indicated the establishment of a team that regularly identify nesting and explore number of nests and number of eggs.

4. Setting up and implementing management plans.

Similarly to the previous question, seven Parties answered the question. Only two of them indicated that they set up and implemented management plans for the species. One of them highlighted the role of SPA/RAC and MAVA in the preparation of this plan. One Party indicated that ongoing project is prepared.

5. Restoration of damaged nesting habitats.

Only one Party out of seven that answered this question indicated programme of restoration of damaged nesting habitats. One other country mentioned that it has an under-development work. Three other countries stated that this question is not applicable for them.

6. Fishing regulations (depth, season, gear) in key areas.

From eight countries that answered this question, four mentioned established fishing regulations in key areas. One of them mentioned programmes for making fishermen aware of keeping sea turtles alive and even collaboration with army in case of observation of fishing on these species. Three Parties stated that they are preparing sets of legislations and laws to regulate fishing for Marine Turtles.

7. Setting up and/or improving operation of Rescue Centers.

Four out of eight countries that answered this question mentioned setting up and improvement of rescue centers for marine turtles. Two other countries stated that there is programmes to set up or to improve them and one of them has started a project in 2017 and estimate that the main goal will be reached by 2019.

8. Identification of new mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages.

Three out of eight Parties indicated they have programmes for the identification of new mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages. One of them mentioned that whole Adriatic is considered important area for *Caretta caretta*, specifically Northern and Middle part of the Adriatic Sea as important wintering and feeding areas and new data show quite a large abundance of species in the whole Adriatic. Two countries mentioned ongoing studies.

9. Elaboration and execution of cooperative research projects of regional importance aimed at assessing the interaction between turtles and fisheries.

Four Parties out of eight that answered this question mentioned cooperative research projects to assess the interaction between turtles and fisheries in collaboration with universities and fisherman. One Party indicated that a research project is under development.

10. Tagging and genetic analysis (as appropriate).

Three Parties out of nine mentioned that they participate in marine turtle tagging programmes and genetic analysis, and three of the Parties also indicated that this topic is under study by some research groups and universities.

11. Modification of gear, methods and strategies.

Only one out of eight answering countries answered the positive to this question. Four other Parties stated that legislative framework is under development

12. Setting up and/or improving long-term monitoring programmes.

As for the previous question, one Party out of seven mentioned having set up long-term monitoring programme within the IMAP process or Habitat directive. Four Parties mentioned that such programmes are being prepared during the reporting period.

13. Setting up stranding networks.

Two out of six answering Parties mentioned that they set up stranding networks for marine turtles and one of them stated that during the reporting period communication path of the National Stranding Network was revised and improved.

14. Public awareness and Information campaigns in particular for fishermen and local populations.

Five Parties out of six reported that they have set up programmes of awareness, information and training on the conservation of marine turtles. These awareness actions concern both school children and the general public and specialists. They are usually organized at nesting sites or in care centers. These programmes have proved to be important, particularly for fishermen.

15. Training courses.

Three out of seven answering Parties mentioned training courses mainly under the IMAP process.

16. Elaboration of National Action Plans and assessment of progress in implementation.

Only one out of six answering Parties mentioned having Action Plans for the conservation of marine turtles.

RAP for Dark Habitats (COP Decision IG 21/4)

1. Making a summary of knowledge of dark populations and their distribution around the Mediterranean in the form of a geo-referenced information system

Three Parties out of eight answering countries mentioned studies made to enlarge knowledge of dark populations. One of them reported on a programme between Oceana, SPA/RAC, IUCN and the CNRS, for a one-month expedition in deep-sea previously unstudied areas. Two countries indicated that studies are ongoing. Two other countries stated that the whole thematic is not applicable for them.

2. Identify and assess proven pressures on each of the various types of habitat

Like for the previous question, three countries out of eight reported that several studies have addressed the pressures and activities that have a potential negative impact on the marine environment.

3. Revise the reference list of types of marine habitat for the selection of sites for inclusion in the national inventories of natural sites of conservation interest, in order to take account of dark assemblages

Two out of seven answering Parties indicated they have revised the reference list of types of marine habitats and two others mentioned that the revision is under development. Countries highlighter financial resources as main issue facing this task.

4. Revise the list of endangered or threatened species in order to take account of dark assemblages species

Only one Party out of eight stated that it has revised the list of endangered or threatened species in order to take account of dark assemblages species. Four Parties mentioned the revision is being prepared.

5. Promote the identifying of areas of interest for the conservation of dark assemblages in the Mediterranean and Carry out concerted actions in national and/or cross-border sites

Three out of seven Parties that answered this question indicate that they promoted the identifying of areas of interest for the conservation of dark assemblages.

6. Finalise the implementing of MPAs in already identified sites at national level and outside waters that lie within national jurisdiction

One Party of the Seven answering Parties stated that it has finalized the implantation of MPA. Four other Parties indicated ongoing project on that sense. Administrative and financial issues have been the main reported ones by answering Parties.

7. Propose the creation of new MPAs

Two out of seven Parties that answered this question indicated that studies for national marine protected areas have been carried out. Also, four Parties mentioned ongoing studies and one of them indicated that declaration of exclusive marine zones is being studied.

8. Extent existing MPAs to integrate nearby sites that host dark assemblages

Two Parties out of seven answering countries mentioned that they extent existing MPAs to integrate nearby sites hosting dark assemblages.

9. Introduce national legislation to reduce negative impacts

Two out of seven answering Parties indicated that they introduced national legislation to reduce negative impact on identified dark assemblages and three other countries mentioned ongoing studies on this field.

10. Integrate taking dark assemblages into account within impact studies procedures

Three Countries out seven Parties that answered this question mentioned that they integrated taking dark assemblages into account within procedures of impact studies. Three other Parties indicated that studies are prepared for this integration to be established.

11. Step up awareness and information about dark assemblages with the various actors

Two out of seven Parties indicated that they set up awareness and information about dark assemblages. Two other countries indicated that awareness programmes are being prepared.

12. Implement monitoring systems

Two countries out of six answering this question mention that they implemented monitoring systems for darks assemblages.

RAP for the conservation of Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions (COP Decision IG 22/12)

1. Improve habitat modeling methods could provide new predictive models on Coralligenous distribution and guide cost-effective field surveys for data acquisition.

Two Parties out of seven (Parties that answered this question) report having improved habitat modeling methods and predictive models on Coralligenous distribution either through existing scientific paper or through new projects that are still ongoing.

2. Promote research programs on Coralligenous assemblages and maerl beds.

Four out of seven answering Parties mentioned that they promoted research programs on Coralligenous assemblages and maerl beds. Two other parties stated that they have programs under development and one Party indicated that it is not concerned with this Action Plan.

3. Develop and implement legislation initiatives for the conservation of Coralligenous assemblages.

Five countries out of eight that answered the question indicated having developed and implemented legislation initiative to protect Coralligenous assemblages.

4. Coordinate the design of an Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program for the assessment of the state Coralligenous/maerl assemblages in view to be included the assessment of the state of the Mediterranean.

Three out of seven Parties coordinated design of an IMAP program to assess the state of Coralligenous assemblages.