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Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) Coast and Hydrography

Rome, 15-16 July 2025

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP PAP/RAC
Split, 2025

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Introduction

- 1 In accordance with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2024-2025 adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Portoroz, Slovenia, 4 - 8 December 2023), PAP/RAC and the Coordinating Unit of UNEP/MAP organized a Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Coast and Hydrography Monitoring. The main objectives of the Meeting were to:
 - a) Agree on the updates for the Guidance Factsheet of the CI 15 and CI16 as decided at the previous CORMON meeting;
 - b) Agree on updates of Data Dictionary (DD) and Data Standards (DS) for CI15 and CI16;
 - c) Present and discuss proposal for GES assessment for the CI 25 Land cover change;
 - d) Present and discuss the ToR for the CORMONs and its interaction with other UNEP/MAP governing bodies; and
 - e) Present progress and lessons learned from implementation of EcAp Med PLUS project.

Attendance

1. The meeting was attended by participants from 16 Contracting Parties (CPs) of the Barcelona Convention: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, the Republic of Türkiye.
2. Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) was present as the organizer, from the UNEP/MAP also INFO/RAC participated, as well as two PAP/RAC experts
3. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Opening of the Meeting and Organizational Matters (Agenda Items 1 and 2)

4. The meeting was opened at 9:30 a.m. on 15 July 2025 by Mr. Marko Prem, PAP/RAC Deputy Director who welcomed the participants and introduced the objectives of the meeting.

Rules of Procedure

5. The Meeting agreed that the rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/IG 43/6, annex XI), as amended by the Contracting Parties (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.1/5 and UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.3/5), would apply *mutatis mutandis* to their deliberations.

Election of Officers

6. Following rule 20 of the rules of procedure, the Meeting unanimously elected the following Officers:

Chair: Ms Senida Džaić-Rghei (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Vice-chairs: Ms Evangelia Ntatsi (Cyprus)
Ms Heba Sharawy (Egypt)
Ms Kaouthar Ben Houidi (Tunisia)
Rapporteur: Ms. Tamara Brajović (Montenegro)

Adoption of the Agenda

7. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the agenda and its timetable set out in documents UNEP/MED WG.622/1 and UNEP/MED WG.622/2, noting that simultaneous translation in English and French is to be provided during the Meeting. The final adopted agenda is presented in Annex II to this report.

Agenda Item 3: Final tuning of the Guidance Factsheet for CI 15 and CI16

8. Mr. Ivan Sekovski, Programme Officer at PAP/RAC, presented the updates to the Guidance Factsheets for CIs 15 and 16, based on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous CORMON meeting on Coast and Hydrography, held via teleconference on 17 October 2024.
9. For CI15, the changes suggested in document UNEP/MED 622/3 aimed to simplify the monitoring methodology. These changes involve: (i) delineating the area/polygon of seafloor lost due to the structure itself—i.e., the "footprint" of the structure; and (ii) delineating the surrounding area of potential permanent habitat change by establishing a perimeter around the structure. This area should be estimated using data and information from Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) reports required for such structures or MSP.
10. The Meeting proposed using the term "the surrounding area of potentially affected habitats" instead of "buffer/perimeter," as the latter may imply symmetry, which is often not the case.
11. A question was raised on how to determine this area if it is not specified in the EIA/SEA. In such cases, the area should be determined based on expert judgment, on a case-by-case basis. Ideally, it would be estimated using hydrographic modelling, although this is often not feasible due to lack of data and/or technical expertise.
12. One participant asked whether submarine cables should be included under this indicator. The answer was no, due to their minimal width and associated resolution limitations.
13. The indicator unit proposed in UNEP/MED 622/3 as hectares (ha) was changed to square kilometers (km²) by the Meeting, to align with other surface/area-related indicators.
14. In the section on special considerations for Posidonia meadows, the sentence "Avoid constructions in areas covered with Posidonia meadows, as appropriate" replaced the previous, vague statement "Avoid including Posidonia meadow in a port basin." One participant noted that socio-economic analyses should also be considered in some

- cases, particularly regarding how such decisions might affect fishing communities reliant on port infrastructure.
15. The Meeting agreed that until the EO1 habitat map is available, Contracting Parties will use their national habitat maps.
 16. For CI16, the changes proposed in UNEP/MED 622/3 include:
 - a) the coastline will be considered artificial only if landward structures intersect the reference coastline;
 - b) archaeological remains will be listed as a separate category in the CI16 information standard. Other human-made structures that do not fall under existing categories (e.g., parking lots, quarries) will be classified as “Other”;
 - c) offshore breakwaters should be projected onto the reference coastline and considered artificial.
 17. The Meeting agreed with the proposed changes, including that “pilings,” if not part of a port or marina, should be categorized as “Other” in the Guidance Factsheet for CI16.
 18. One participant noted that some countries have already completed baseline monitoring of CI16 without classifying offshore breakwaters as artificial, which will affect the assessment of temporal changes in the percentage of artificial coastline.
 19. PAP/RAC informed participants that these updates (for both, CI15 and CI16) will be incorporated into the working document on IMAP revision, to be discussed at the EcAp Coordination Group meeting in September 2025.

Agenda Item 4: Updates of DD and DS for CI15 and CI16

- Mr. Alessandro Lotti from INFO/RAC presented the work on the development and completion of the “Info/MAP platform and platform for the implementation of IMAP,” aimed at facilitating access to knowledge for managers, decision-makers, stakeholders, and the general public, as outlined in Decision IG.22/7. Document UNEP/MED WG.622/4 provides an overview of the work completed to date and integrates the finalized details from the Guidance Factsheets for CIs 15 and 16 into the DD and DS.
- The Meeting noted the progress, with specific remarks. A key issue raised was that the table under “Expected Assessment Outputs” in the CI15 Guidance Factsheet (UNEP/MED 622/3) does not fully align with attribute Tables 3 and 4 in UNEP/MED WG.622/4 as well as that some spelling mistake and references should be corrected.
- A participant inquired whether other formats, such as GeoPackage, could be used in addition to shapefiles for reporting on CI15 and CI16. INFO/RAC responded that they would assess the technical feasibility of this suggestion and report back at the next CORMON meeting on Coast and Hydrography.

Agenda Item 5: Proposal for GES assessment for CCI 25 Land cover change

20. Mr. Ghaleb Faour from the National Center for Remote Sensing, Lebanon, presented a method for assessing Good Environmental Status (GES) for Candidate Common Indicator 25: Land Cover Change. The goal was to reach consensus on a simple, robust, and cost-effective method relying on open-source data, enabling harmonized assessment without requiring dedicated personnel. The method presented is based on

two indicators namely, the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) and the Land Surface Temperature (LST).

21. The Meeting welcomed the proposed method, noting it must be adapted to align with the provisions of Indicator 25. For example, while the current study focuses on a 10 km-wide belt, CCI25 also includes 300 m and 1 km belts. It was also suggested to include the Low-Elevation Coastal Zone (LECZ) layer due to its high relevance.
22. The weighting factor (0.5) used in the GES calculation was acknowledged as specific to the presented study. Future assessments should include adapted and agreed-upon weighting criteria.
23. There was a question regarding the use of Copernicus data; however, it appears that Copernicus does not provide open-access thermal imagery, which is critical for the method.

Agenda Item 6: Proposal of climate-related CIs within EO7 and EO8

24. Mr. Marko Prem presented proposed climate-related Common Indicators developed since the last CORMON Coast and Hydrography meeting when the main themes for the development of such CIs have been discussed and agreed. Two indicators relate to Ecological Objective 7 (“marine”), and three to Ecological Objective 8 (“terrestrial”). These proposals were also supported at the PAP/RAC National Focal Points meeting in Athens (6–7 May 2025).
25. Following in-depth discussion, most participants requested more time to review the indicators and consult relevant national counterparts, as climate change is a cross-sectoral issue managed by multiple departments. Participants were of the opinion that the EO7 CIs, although already part of IMAP, are not the drivers of the climate change but actually parameters that have to be taken into account when planning interventions in coastal areas and that some of parameters are regional due to the scale (such as currents). Also, areas burnt due to the forest fires were not considered important to some participants, as well as the definition of flooding that would require better definition of types of floods, the scale and alike. As far as the coastal wetlands, some felt that degradation should be first defined and only then restoration could be specified and actions proposed.
26. Finally, participants agreed to submit comments and suggestions on the proposed indicators to PAP/RAC by the end of October 2025, following national consultations. These inputs will inform future discussions at CORMON meetings.

Agenda Item 7: Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and Flow of Interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP Governing Bodies

27. Mr. Marko Prem presented a draft document outlining the Terms of Reference for CORMONs, CORESA, and the Online Working Groups. The document forms part of the revised EcAp Roadmap and IMAP policy, to be reviewed at the EcAp Coordination Group meeting in September 2025. It clarifies the interaction between EcAp governance structures, particularly CORMON and the EcAp Coordination Group, and defines the roles and responsibilities of MAP bodies, including Component/Thematic Focal Points and COP meetings.

28. The Meeting took note of the draft and proposed enhancing coordination between CORESA and CORMONs prior to the EcAp Coordination Group meeting.

Agenda Item 8: Implementation of the EcAp Med PLUS project: national IMAP revision, best practices

29. Mr. Milad Fakhri, from the National Council for Scientific Research, Lebanon, presented national activities and progress in implementing the EcAp Med PLUS project and revising Lebanon's national IMAP. The objective was to support capacity building and exchange of experiences among Contracting Parties engaged in national IMAP revisions.
30. Two suggestions followed the presentation: (1) include financial gap analysis in the revision process; and (2) include a representative from MEDPOL in the national steering committee overseeing the process.

Agenda Item 10: Conclusions and recommendations

31. Following the presentations and discussions of all agenda items, the Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

Introduction

The Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) on Coast and Hydrography was held on 15 and 16 July 2025, in Rome, Italy.

Following presentations and discussions within agenda items, the Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

Agenda Item 3: Final tuning of the Guidance Factsheet for CI15 and CI16

Building on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous CORMON Coast and Hydrography meeting (17 October 2024), the Meeting reviewed and proposed the updates for the both Guidance Factsheets (CI15 and CI16). For CI 15 the following updates were agreed on:

- Instead of “buffer/perimeter” to use “the surrounding area of potentially affected habitats”;
- To use km² instead of ha as the indicator unit;
- Until the habitat map from EO1 is available the Contracting Parties will use their own habitat maps;
- In chapter on particular considerations for Posidonia meadows to put “Avoid constructions in areas covered with *Posidonia* meadows, as appropriate”.

For CI 16, pilings, if not part of port and marinas, to be considered in the category “Other”.

These updates will be integrated to the working document on IMAP revision to be discussed by the EcAp Coordination Group meeting in September 2025.

Agenda Item 4: Updates of DD and DS for CI15 and CI16

Following the agreed changes to the Guidance Factsheets for the CI15 and CI16, as presented above, the Meeting proposed to include these changes to the Data Dictionary (DD) and Data Standards (DS) for these CIs.

The meeting suggested that the attribute table for the CI15 in the Guidance Factsheet and in DD and DS should be aligned.

For the reporting on CI15 and CI16, apart from shape files, the utilization of similar formats (such as GEOpackage) was suggested. INFO/RAC will assess the technical feasibility of this suggestion, and report on it in the next CORMON meeting on Coast and Hydrography.

Agenda Item 5: Proposal for GES assessment for CCI 25 Land cover change

The Meeting welcomed the proposed method for assessing Good Environmental Status (GES) for Candidate Common Indicator 25: Land Cover Change, as a simple, robust, cost-effective approach that relies on open-source data. Based on the document presented (UNEP/MED WG.622/5) the meeting requests PAP/RAC to extract the methodology, align it with the existing Guidance Factsheet for CI25, and prepare a brief that will serve as a guiding document and present it at the next CORMON meeting.

Agenda Item 6: Proposal of climate-related CIs within EO7 and EO8

The Meeting took note of the proposed climate-related Common Indicators within EO7 and EO8, as outlined in the UNEP/MED WG.622/6. However, after a thorough discussion the Meeting concluded that more time is needed to study and reflect on their exact titles, GES and targets. Also, the participants will provide to PAP/RAC comments and suggestions on the proposed indicators after consultations with relevant national counterparts, by end October 2025. Based on these contributions, climate-related CIs will be discussed in future CORMON meetings.

Agenda Item 7: Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and Flow of Interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP Governing Bodies

The Meeting took note of the draft document outlining the Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Group. A proposal to better interlink COR ESA with CORMONs prior to EcAp Coordination Group was suggested. The draft document will be discussed at the EcAp Coordination Group meeting in early September 2025.

Agenda Item 8: Implementation of the EcAp Med PLUS project: national IMAP revision, best practices

The Meeting welcomed the presentation of the EcAp Med PLUS project, as a project that plays a key role in supporting eligible countries to update their national IMAPs and develop National Action Plans (NAPs) containing measures aimed at achieving Good Environmental Status (GES). Also, the meeting recognized the value of sharing experience from implementation in Lebanon as contribution to capacity building for the Contracting Parties currently revising their national IMAP documents.

Agenda Item 11: Closure of the meeting

32. The meeting was closed in the afternoon of 16 July 2025.

Annex I List of participants

REPRESENTATIVES OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	Ms. Senida Džaić-Rghei Hydro-Engineering Institute, Sarajevo, B&H
CROATIA	Ms Sunčana Habrun Institute for Spatial Development, Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets Zagreb, Croatia
CYPRUS	Ms. Evangelia Ntatsi Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus
EGYPT	Ms. Heba Shrawy Head OF ICZM Central Department General manager for Environmental Economy MAP Coordinator/ WAVES focal point Ministry of Environment Cairo – Egypt
FRANCE	Mr. Olivier Brivois Department for Risk Prevention BRGM French Geological Survey
GREECE	Mr. Kapsimalis Vasilios Research Director Department of Marine Geology and Geophysics Institute of Oceanography Hellenic Centre for Marine Research
ISRAEL	Ms. Tzeela Karniel

ITALY	<p>Ms. Iolanda Lisi Researcher</p> <p>Ms. Valeria Pesarino Technologist</p> <p>National Centre for Characterization and Coastal Protection, Marine Climatology and Operational Oceanography. Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), Rome, Italy</p>
LEBANON	<p>Mr Adel Yacoub</p> <p>Department of Natural Resources Protection Ministry of Environment, Lebanon</p>
LIBYA	<p>Mr. Almunji Alsamh</p> <p>Environment General Authority Director, EIA and Studies Office</p>
MALTA	<p>Ms. Andrea Carolina Perez Pardo</p> <p>Environment and Resources Authority, Malta</p>
MONTENEGRO	<p>Ms. Tamara Brajović</p> <p>Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development, Podgorica, Montenegro</p>
SLOVENIA	<p>Mr Rok Szocka Mandac</p> <p>Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia</p>
SPAIN	<p>Ms Rosa Balbín-Chamorro</p> <p>Instituto Español de Oceanografía, Centro Oceanográfico de Baleares</p>
TUNISIA	<p>Ms. Kaouthar Ben Houidi</p> <p>Observatoire du Littoral à l'APAL</p>
TÜRKİYE	<p>Ms. Özge ÖZ Ms Sevil Öksüz</p> <p>Ministry of Environment Urbanization and Climate Change</p>

OTHER	
PAP/RAC	<p>Mr. Marko Prem, Deputy Director</p> <p>Mr. Ivan Sekovski, Programme Officer</p> <p>UN Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan, Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity http://www.paprac.orgCentre (PAP/RAC)</p>
INFO/RAC	Mr Alessandro Lotti
PAP/RAC experts	<p>Mr Ghaleb Faour</p> <p>National Center for Remote Sensing, Lebanon</p> <p>Mr Milad Fakhri</p> <p>National Council for Scientific Research, Lebanon</p>

Annex II Meeting agenda

DAY 1, 15 July 2025		Relevant documents
9.30 – 9.45	Agenda item 1 Opening of the meeting	
9.45 – 10.00	Agenda item 2 Organizational matters	UNEP/MED WG.622/1 UNEP/MED WG.622/2 UNEP/MED WG.622/Inf.1
10.00 – 10.45	Agenda item 3 Final tuning of the Guiding Factsheet for CI 15 and CI 16	UNEP/MED WG.622/3 UNEP/MED WG.622/Inf.2
10.45 – 11.10	Coffe break	
11.10 – 11.30	Agenda Item 4 Updates of DD and DS for CI15 and CI16	UNEP/MED WG.622/4
11.30 – 13.00	Agenda Item 5 Proposal for GES assessment for CCI 25 Land cover change	UNEP/MED WG.622/5
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch break	
14.30 – 16.15	Agenda Item 6 Proposal of climate-related CIs within EO7 and EO8	UNEP/MED WG.622/6
DAY 2, 16 July 2025		
9.30 – 10.15	Agenda Item 7 Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and Flow of Interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP Governing Bodies	UNEP/MED WG.622/7
10.15 – 11.15	Agenda item 8 Implementation of the EcAp Med PLUS project: national IMAP revision, capacity building	
11.15 – 11.45	Coffe break	
11.45 – 12.30	Agenda item 9 Any Other Business	
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break	
14.00 – 14.45	Agenda Item 10 Conclusions and Recommendations	
14.45 – 15.00	Agenda Item 11 Closure of the Meeting	