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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

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**PAP/RAC Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) on
Coast and Hydrography**

Web-conference, 25 November 2021

Report of the meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2021

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Introduction

1. The PAP/RAC Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) on Coast and Hydrography was held on 25 November 2021 via web-conference (*Zoom* platform) due to the travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The main objectives were to: (i) discuss and provide guidance on assessment criteria and the Guiding document for its application for IMAP Common Indicator (CI) 16 on coastline; (ii) inform on the latest developments with regard to the Candidate Common Indicator (CCI) 25 on Land Cover Change; (iii) inform and discuss on the preparation of the baseline situation for the CII5 on hydrography; (iv) present and discuss the structure and the concept of the 2023 QSR in particular the contents for EO7 and EO8 indicators; and (v) exchange information on the status of implementation of IMAP at national level with regards to EO7 and EO8, including nominations of IMAP users.

Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by 24 participants from 16 Contracting Parties, namely: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.
4. The Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), including the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) as organiser, the marine pollution assessment and control component of MAP (MED POL), Information and Communication Regional Activity Centre (INFO/RAC) were represented at the meeting.
5. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting and Organizational Matters

6. The meeting was opened at 10:15 a.m. on 25 November 2021 by Ms. Željka Škaričić, PAP/RAC Director, who welcomed the participants and introduced the background and objectives of the meeting.

A. Rules of Procedure

7. 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.

B. Election of Officers

8. In accordance with the Rule 20 of the rules of procedure, the meeting unanimously elected the following Officers:

Chair: Ms. Alexia Attard (Malta)

Vice-chairs: Mr. Adel Yacoub (Lebanon)
Mr. Rok Szocka Mandac (Slovenia)
Ms. Naoual Zoubair (Morocco)

Rapporteur: Mr. Olivier Brivois (France)

C. Adoption of the Agenda

9. The meeting reviewed and adopted the provisional agenda and its timetable set out in UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.517/2, noting that simultaneous translation in English and French was to be provided during the Meeting. The final adopted agenda is presented in Annex II to this report.

Agenda item 2 EO8 Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes

2.1. Assessment criteria and its application for the Common Indicator 16

10. Mr Aleš Mlakar, PAP/RAC consultant, presented the assessment criteria and the Guiding document for application of assessment criteria for the IMAP Common Indicator 16 "*Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human-made structures*". To assist the Contracting Parties (CPs) to define their good environmental status (GES) and related targets and measures, as well as to make assessment once the trends are known (i.e. after the second and the following monitoring), PAP/RAC has developed this draft assessment criteria and the guiding document for their application. The document was developed with the support of the EcAp MED III project. Mr Mlakar presented the document following its structure: list of the assessment criteria; suggestions on how to prepare the baseline status of the coastline and specify GES once the first set of monitoring data is provided; and instructions on how to prepare the periodical assessment reports based on the application of assessment criteria once future series of data sets for this indicator are reported (i.e., trends).
11. The meeting was invited to provide their comments and suggestions so as to allow PAP/RAC to complete the document and to start testing it as envisaged by the EcAp MED III project in the eligible countries. Other countries will be invited to [start testing] within the framework of IMAP implementation.
12. Participants wanted to highlight that the GES criteria for each country should be set only after the baseline report is prepared for that particular country. Defining GES for this indicator is a policy decision and could require extensive deliberations between the relevant stakeholders. Also, the meeting advised to clarify terminology related to the Baseline Status and Baseline reports already submitted by some of the CPs, to better define the timeframe for the preparation of GES, and to clarify the use of relevant assessment criteria so to give flexibility to CPs which may find some of the assessment criteria less relevant or irrelevant. Mr Prem agreed with the points and also informed the meeting that the GES criteria will be tested within the EcAp MED III project.

2.2. Information on progress for the Candidate Common Indicator 25 "*Land Cover Change*"

13. Mr Marko Prem, PAP/RAC, presented the progress on the Candidate Common Indicator 25 “Land Cover Change”. He noted that the European Environment Agency (EEA) was preparing the Land Cover / Land Use maps for all Mediterranean EU members states as well as for four non-EU countries (EIONET), CPs to the Barcelona Convention (i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Turkey), for the years 2012 and 2018. Methodologically, the approach was very similar to the Guidance Factsheet where the resolution of data and land cover classes were aggregated to five major ones. Therefore, in close cooperation with EEA, PAP/RAC understood that for all EU member states and the aforementioned four CPs, the data for the Land cover change indicator is available at EEA and CPs will not have additional work to do, except to verify this data and to report according to the reporting units set in the Guidance Factsheet. With the preparation of the GEF MedProgramme projects for the South and East Mediterranean countries, the same approach is envisaged. This would significantly save the workload for the CPs and the same data source would be used as well as the method to prepare the Land cover maps. The project is ready to start in Morocco and it is in preparation in some other countries.

14. Related to the above, it would be important to consider the following:

- Availability of data from the same source (Sentinel) and, in cooperation with the EEA, ‘draft’ Land Cover maps could be prepared for the whole region;
- The number of land cover classes, i.e., nomenclature (five land cover classes required by the Guidance Factsheet) is fully compatible with the EEA classes (1st nomenclature level) with some minor adjustments.
- The resolution of satellite data has improved substantially during the last years and some are available as open source (such as via Copernicus Space Component Data Access). This would allow to decrease the minimum mapping unit (grid which is less than 1 ha as currently stated in the Guidance Factsheet, also the minimum mapping unit for change could be specified at 0.5 ha with approximate resolution of raster at 70m (currently it is 25 ha) and the minimum mapping width for change 10 m (currently 100 m)).
- Adaptation to climate change is another potential use of this indicator. Land cover is one of the crucial characteristics that should be taken into account for understanding risks and proposing adaptation measures. For instance, changes from forest to agricultural land cover can drastically diminish the retention function of forests when we face extreme precipitation events and thus increase flooding and damages to property and loss of lives. In combination with the sea level rise these effects can be even more destructive.
- The use of land cover changes through the implementation of the GEF MedProgramme should be further explored, taking into account in particular the adaptation to climate change. Currently, the reporting units include 300 m, 1 km, and 10 km coastal strips, horizontally from the coastline. Additional reporting units, not mandatory at present, include the setback zone (according to Article 8 of the ICZM Protocol) and elevation breakdown (< 50 m asl, 50 – 300 m, >300 m). It would be reasonable to test the elevation breakdown to the resolution available from open-source data or Copernicus DEM that provides 12 m resolution for scientific purposes, if possible. This would allow to study

land cover changes in relation to various elevations and define the most crucial changes for which adaptation measures to climate change could be suggested.

15. The elements above will be taken into account while testing this CCI 25. Based on the experience and lessons learned from such testing, concrete changes to the Guidance Factsheet will be proposed and presented at the next CORMON meeting on Coast and Hydrography in the 2022-2023 biennium for discussion.
16. The participants highlighted that it needs to be ensured that proposed changes should be applicable to all Mediterranean countries.

Agenda item 3 EO7 Hydrography

Baseline situation for the Common Indicator 15 *“Location and extent of the habitats impacted directly by hydrographic alterations”*

17. Mr Marko Prem elaborated the idea to support the preparation of the baseline status regarding the CI15 within the frame of the EcAp MED III project. This would enable collecting the information on the baseline status of CI15 at least for the EcAp MED III eligible countries. Such an approach was applied due to the fact that it has been noted several times that the CI15 on hydrography is not an easy one to monitor and that there are difficulties to implement CI15 according to the Guidance Factsheet.
18. PAP/RAC invited all other CPs to do the same in the case they cannot provide monitoring results through applying the Guidance Factsheet. However, it was noted that these reports should not replace the obligation to report according to the Guidance Factsheet and will not be taken into account for the assessment purposes. The intention is to allow for at least a basic presentation on hydrography in the Med 2023 QSR.
19. Mr Philippe Theou, project manager of the IMAP-MPA project thanked the PAP/RAC for the good collaboration and also thanked the countries for discussions regarding the topic of Hydrography, in particular Morocco and Lebanon who were present in discussions the week before, organized by the IMAP-MPA project.

Agenda item 4 Quality Status Report 2023 (QSR)

4.1. Structure and contents of 2023 QSR

20. Ms Joanne Foden from UNEP MAP presented the structure and contents of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR). The overall structure of sections of the upcoming QSR was presented, with more detailed focus on the Coast and Hydrography cluster. For each Ecological Objective the structure should include key findings; background information, baseline status; methodology; specific issues/trends; and analysis and conclusions. The presentation was concluded by presenting the milestones and the timeline for the MED QSR preparation.

4.2. Status of reporting on EO7 and EO8 indicators

21. Mr Ivan Sekovski, PAP/RAC, presented the status of reporting by CPs regarding Coast and Hydrography indicators. It was noted that the data received by PAP/RAC may differ

from the data that have actually been uploaded to the INFO/MAP system, since the validation and uploading of such data can be a lengthy process. Therefore, the presented status served to confirm with the CPs the situation regarding CI15 and CI16 implementation in their respective countries, and to instigate those CPs that have not implemented these indicators yet, to do so.

22. The participants at the meeting agreed to review the reporting status and respond to PAP/RAC with updates, if any.

4.3. Status of IMAP contact nominations for the coast and hydrography cluster

23. Mr Ivan Sekovski also presented, in a tabular form, the state of IMAP users' nominations by each CP for the Coast and Hydrography cluster. IMAP users (i.e. IMAP contacts) are responsible for uploading, validating and officially releasing the monitoring data related to the IMAP Common Indicators.
24. The participants at the meeting agreed to review this table as well, and respond to PAP/RAC with updates, if any.

Agenda item 5 Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting

Introduction

1. The Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) on Coast and Hydrography was held on 25 November 2021 via videoconference.
2. Following presentations and discussions within all agenda items, the Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

Agenda item 2: EO8 Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes

2.1 Assessment criteria and their application for the Common Indicator 16

3. The Meeting welcomed and reviewed the draft document "*Assessment criteria and the Guiding document for application of assessment criteria for the IMAP Common Indicator 16*" (UNEP/MED WG.517/3). The Guiding document will support CPs to define country-specific Good Environmental Status (GES) and will be used for future assessments once next sets of monitoring data will be available.
4. The meeting provided comments and proposals for its improvement that will be taken into account in order to finalise the document, including: clarification of terminology (Baseline Status and Baseline reports already submitted by some of the CPs), better define the timeframe for the preparation of GES, a need for consultation on GES with stakeholders, clarify the use of relevant assessment criteria).
5. The Meeting appreciated the support provided by the EcAp MED III project to include also testing of the Guiding document (once completed) in the eligible countries and encouraged the other CPs to test it, too. The lessons learned and country-specific GES definitions, operational objectives and targets will be presented at the next CORMON

meeting for consideration and endorsement, prior to submitting them to the EcAp Coordination Group meeting for approval.

2.2 Information on the progress with the Candidate Common Indicator 25 “Land Cover Change”

6. The Meeting expressed the importance of adjustments needed to upgrade the Guidance Factsheet for the CCI 25 that was adopted by the EcAp Coordination Group meeting (Athens, September 2019). These changes could include for example the scale of mapping units and the reporting units related to elevation. This would allow for better integration of recent developments regarding availability and resolution of satellite data with the aim to better capture land cover changes, as well as to better reflect the use of land cover maps for understanding climate risks and proposing adaptation measures for climate change.
7. The Meeting welcomed the support provided by the GEF MedProgramme to upgrade the current Guiding Factsheet and test its application in the eligible countries, including for the CC adaptation purposes. The adjustments to the Guiding Factsheet will be presented and discussed at the CORMON meeting before submission to the next EcAp Coordination Group meeting.

Agenda item 3: EO7 Hydrography - Baseline situation for the Common Indicator 15

8. The Meeting appreciated the work done in the framework of the EcAp MED III project related to the elaboration of the baseline situation for the CI 15. Understanding the difficulties that many CPs have with the monitoring of the CI 15 according to the Guidance Factsheet, the Meeting encouraged the preparation of the country baseline status for this CI according to the proposed format (UNEP/MED WG.517/Inf.2). This, however, should not replace the obligation to report according to the Guidance Factsheet and will not be taken into account for the assessment purposes. It is meant to allow for at least a basic presentation on hydrography in the Med 2023 QSR.

Agenda item 4: 2023 Quality Status Report (2023 QSR)

4.1 Structure and contents of 2023 QSR

8. The Meeting took note of the structure and contents of the Med 2023 QSR, in particular its Chapters on Coast and Hydrography. The Meeting encouraged the CPs to provide monitoring data in due time to allow timely drafting of the 2023 QSR as it will be based on data provided by the CPs.

4.2 Status of reporting on EO7 and EO8 indicators

9. The Meeting welcomed the support and assistance provided by PAP/RAC to monitor CIs 15 and 16. The Meeting acknowledged the need for the timely provision of data to the IMAP info system at INFO/RAC on CIs 15 and 16, and agreed to upload data by end February 2022 at the latest so to enable drafting of the 2023 QSR. The

meeting invited the CPs to provide the updates on the status of implementation on indicators to PAP/RAC after the meeting.

4.3 Status of IMAP contact nominations for the coast and hydrography cluster

10. The Meeting stressed the importance of having IMAP contacts in place as they have a crucial role for the monitoring process in the country and in particular for uploading of the monitoring data to the IMAP Info system. The Meeting invited all the CPs that have not yet nominated the IMAP contacts for the Coast and Hydrography cluster to do so as soon as possible.

Agenda item 6 Closure of the meeting

23. The Chairperson closed the Meeting at 14.30 hours on 21 November 2021.

Annex I

List of Participants

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE ET HERZÉGOVINE	Ms Senida Džajić-Rghei Hydro-Engineering Institute Sarajevo
EGYPT / EGYPTE	Mr Mohamed Abass ICZM Department, Ministry of Environment, Egypt Ms Maha Mouad ICZM Department, Ministry of Environment, Egypt
EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPÉENNE	Mr David Connor Policy officer Directorate-General for the Environment
FRANCE	Mr Olivier Brivois BRGM (French Geological Survey)
GREECE / GRÈCE	Ms Evgenia Lagiou Head of Department of National Spatial Planning Strategy Directorate of Spatial Planning Ministry of Environment and Energy
ISRAEL / ISRAEL	Ms Maayan Haim Coastal Environment Engineer Marine Environment Protection Division Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection Mr Dror Zurel Environmental Marine Monitoring Coordinator Ministry of Environmental Protection
ITALY / ITALIE	Mr Giordano Giorgi ISPRA – The Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research
LEBANON / LIBAN	Mr Adel Yacoub Department of Natural Resources Protection Ministry of Environment
LIBYA / LIBYE	Mr Almunji Alsamh Environment General Authority Director, EIA and Studies Office
MALTA	Ms Alexia Attard Planning Officer, Planning Authority

MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNEGRO	Mr Luka Čalić Institute of hydrometeorology and seismology of Montenegro
MOROCCO / MAROC	Ms Naoual Zoubair Chef du Service Littoral Ministère Délégué chargé de l'Environnement Mme Btissam El Menouar Ministère Délégué chargé de l'Environnement Mme Mounia Hamdaoui Ministère Délégué chargé de l'Environnement
SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE	Ms Helena Caserman Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia Mr Rok Szocka Mandac Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	Ms Rosa Balbín-Chamorro Instituto Español de Oceanografía, Centro Oceanográfico de Baleares Ms Carla Murciano CEDEX - Centro de Estudios y Experimentación de Obras Públicas
TUNISIA / TUNISIE	Ms Kaouther Ben Houidi Chef de service Analyse et Traitement des données Observatoire du Littoral - APAL
TURKEY / TURQUIE	Ms Tutku Karadogan Ministry of Environment and Urbanization Mr Emrah Soylemez Ministry of Environment and Urbanization

**SECRETARIAT TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION
AND COMPONENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
SECRETARIAT DE LA CONVENTION DE BARCELONE ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN
D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE**

<p>UN ENVIRONMENT/MAP ONU ENVIRONNEMENT/PAM</p>	<p>Ms Joanne Fodden Programme Management Officer, 2023 MED QSR</p> <p>Mr Lucas Spieser Project Manager, EcAp MED III Project</p> <p>Mr Philippe Théou IMAP-MPA Project Manager</p>
<p>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER FOR THE PRIORITY ACTIONS PROGRAMME (PAP/RAC) / CENTRE D'ACTIVITES REGIONALES DU PROGRAMME D'ACTION PRIORITAIRES (CAR/PAP)</p>	<p>Ms Željka Škaričić Director</p> <p>Mr Marko Prem Deputy Director</p> <p>Mr Ivan Sekovski Programme officer</p> <p>Mr Ante Ivčević Programme officer</p> <p>Mr Aleš Mlakar PAP/RAC consultant</p>
<p>INFO/RAC</p>	<p>Mr Arthur Pasquale Deputy Director</p> <p>Mr Francesca Catini NBB & IMAP Officer</p> <p>Mr Alessandro Lotti InfoMAPNode & IMAP Officer</p>
<p>MEDPOL</p>	<p>Ms Jelena Knežević Programme Officer</p>

Annex II

Agenda of the meeting

Thursday, 25 November 2021 Videoconference		Relevant documents
10.00 – 10.15 (CET, Rome time)	Registration of participants	
10.15 – 10.30	Agenda item 1 Opening of the Meeting and Organizational Matters	UNEP/MED WG.517/1 UNEP/MED WG. 517/2
10.30 – 11.30	Agenda item 2 EO8 Coastal ecosystems and landscapes: 2.1 Assessment criteria and its application for Common Indicator 16 <i>“Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human-made structures”</i>	UNEP/MED WG.517/3
11.30 – 11.50	Break	
11.50 – 12.20	2.2 Information on progress for the Candidate Common Indicator 25: <i>“Land Cover Change”</i>	UNEP/MED WG.517/Inf.1
12.20 – 12.50	Agenda item 3 EO7 Hydrography: Baseline situation for the Common Indicator 15 <i>“Location and extent of the habitats impacted directly by hydrographic alterations”</i>	UNEP/MED WG.517/Inf.2
12.50 - 14.00	Agenda item 4 2023 Quality Status Report (2023 QSR) 4.1 Structure and contents of 2023 QSR 4.2 Status of reporting on EO7 and EO8 indicators 4.3 Status of IMAP contact nominations for coast and hydrography cluster	UNEP/MED WG. 517/Inf.3 UNEP/MED WG.517/Inf.4 UNEP/MED WG.517/Inf.5
14.00 – 14.30	Break	
14.30 – 15.30	Agenda item 5 Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting	UNEP/MED WG. 517/4
15.30	Agenda item 6 Closure of the meeting	