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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

19 April 2017
Original: English

Science Policy Interface and Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Joint Meeting on IMAP Scale of Assessment and QSR

Nice, France, 27-28 April 2017

Agenda item 4: The development of the Quality Status Report. Contaminants and Eutrophication.

Report of the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring for Contaminants and Eutrophication.

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ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

19 December 2016
Original: English

Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring

Marseille, France, 19-21 October 2016

Report of the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring for Contaminants and Eutrophication

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2016

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Introduction

1. The meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring (CORMON) was held from 19-21 October 2016, in Villa Valmer, 271 Corniche Kennedy, 13007 Marseille, France, in accordance with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2016-2017 adopted by COP 19. It was co-organized by two components of UNEP/MAP, the MED POL programme and Plan Bleu. The focus of this CORMON meeting was on Contaminants (EO 9) and Eutrophication (EO 5) and a second CORMON meeting will be held in February 2017 on Marine Litter (EO10). Plan Bleu coordinated a special session/workshop (Agenda item 6) during the meeting related to Science-Policy Interface (SPI) Strengthening related to Marine Pollution.

2. The main objectives of the meeting were to: i) share and exchange information on the revision of their national monitoring programmes to be updated in light of the Integrated Monitoring and assessment programme adopted by COP 19 held in Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016; ii) review and discuss the preparation of the 2017 Quality Status Report; iii) review the status of the marine pollution monitoring regional data base and reporting, and related quality assurance issues, and agree on solutions to address them; iv) review and agree as appropriate the proposal for Background Concentrations (BC)/Background Assessment Concentrations (BACs)/Environmental Assessment Concentrations (EACs) for contaminants and biomarkers; and finally v) review and discuss the SPI strengthening related to marine pollution: Issues and priorities to bridge the scientific gaps hampering the monitoring programmes at national and regional scales

Participation

3. The meeting was attended by participants from the following Contracting Parties: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. The UNEP/MAP Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit including the MED POL Programme, The Regional Activity Centers Plan Bleu, REMPEC and SPA/RAC. The meeting was also attended by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS). In addition a number of key experts and several representatives from key national institutions and regional projects were invited to attend the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) session on the 20-21st October. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

Agenda item 1. Opening of the Meeting

4. The meeting was opened by Ms. Tatjana Hema, MAP Deputy Coordinator and Mr. Didier Sauzade, Plan Bleu Officer for marine ecosystems.

5. In her opening remarks Ms Hema highlighted the most important aspects of the monitoring and assessment component of MED POL Programme with a special focus on the latest developments, achievements and mandates given by COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention related to IMAP and its implementation. Mr. Didier Sauzade noted that Plan Bleu co-organizes this event because one of the session of this meeting is dedicated to the strengthening of the science policy interface, which one mission entrusted to Plan Bleu within the UNEP/MAP Mid Term strategy. The venue of the meeting, Villa Valmer, has been chosen because this place, owing to the City of Marseille, hosts the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), a multi-partner platform staffed by the World Bank whose Plan Bleu is one of the partners.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the Agenda and Election of Officers

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The proposed Provisional Agenda appearing in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/1/Corr.1 was adopted and appears as Annex II to the present report.

Election of officers

7. In accordance with the Rules of procedures for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties the meeting elected one (1) President, three (3) Vice-Presidents and one (1) Rapporteur from among the participants, as follows:

Chair: Mr Mohamed Elbouch, Morocco
Vice-Chair 1: Mr Bruno Andral, France
Vice-Chair 2: Ms Jelena Knezevic, Montenegro
Vice-Chair 2: Mr Nassir Naser Bsher, Libya
Rapporteur: Ms Tamara Micallef, Malta

Agenda item 3. Implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme

(a) National Monitoring Programmes

8. Under this Agenda item, ten of the Contracting Parties (Egypt, Croatia, Israel, Spain, France, Italy, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Slovenia) presented their national monitoring programmes in relation to Eutrophication (EO5) and Contaminants (EO9) and the challenges and experiences in aligning their monitoring programmes with the IMAP decision, building upon their current monitoring for the MED POL database. From the presentations it was pointed out that all the countries present have in place monitoring activities with some variations in approach to environmental matrices and spatial and temporal scales.

9. The biomonitoring and biomarkers determination was observed as a main challenge for the majority of Contracting Parties and is still only in the testing phase in several countries. Regarding biomonitoring it was discussed that there are numerous biomarkers and biological parameters that could be measured and a selection should be based on complete validated methods according to international standard and scientific research, supported by an independent quality assurance framework. Regarding the determination of contaminants in seawater, it was noted that the results of such data was not always useful, due to low concentrations in the marine environment and limitations of analytical methods and instrumentation. For biota species (bivalves and fish), which are monitored for contaminants in the Mediterranean there are differences in collected specimens between the northern and southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This responds to the geographical distribution of the Mediterranean species themselves. Other challenges discussed and noted include the integration and coordination between the monitoring programs currently implemented by different lead institutions, and the difficulties in securing the financial resources for consistent and long term monitoring (rather than through projects for a limited duration only). Finally pollution from atmospheric deposition was mentioned as a valuable parameter which should continue to be monitored as appropriate and reported to the MED POL monitoring programme.

10. For the future revision of national monitoring Programmes and reporting to MED POL, there is a need to ensure a common approach to the sampling frequency (which ranges for different countries and parameters between 1-6 years). In terms of spatial distribution it was noted in the past, monitoring programmes were more focused on measuring hotspots, which did not include stations where there is no/low impact from pollution sources to assess background concentrations for Good Environmental Status (GES). A common approach to spatial sampling and assessment is needed,

which also includes an adequate number of reference stations. The subject of spatial scales for assessment was further discussed in Agenda 3 d) and issue related to common methodologies were discussed further in Agenda item 3 c).

11. Ms. Hema stressed the importance that all Contracting Parties should revise their monitoring programmes to be in line with IMAP implementation and MED POL through its core and project funding would assist some of the Contracting Parties towards this revision. Following a request from the floor Final considerations were also given related to the issue of new and emerging pollutants not currently included in the MED POL Phase IV monitoring programme and IMAP, and the Secretariat also informed participants that an initial review of new and emerging pollutants had been presented at the last MED POL Focal Points meeting (June 2015) and further work was planned in preparation for the May 2017 MED POL Focal Points meeting for discussion.

(b) Progress on the Preparation of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report

12. Ms. Virginie Hart, MED POL Monitoring and Assessment Officer presented the proposed approach, timeline and structure of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report for 2017 (QSR2017) presented in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/3.

13. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that the EcAp Coordination Group and MAP Focal Points should be involved in the review before the planned meetings in September 2017, and it was agreed that the QSR2017 timeline would be revised accordingly. Participants agreed on the Structure and Table of Contents regarding the part related to Pollution (EO5, EO9, EO10 and EO11) and made some general observations including the suggestion to have Climate Change as a separate sub-chapter, and then climate aspects could be also described within the assessment for each indicator, if appropriate information was available. Also it was suggested to establish a link in the Chapter 3 Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Mediterranean, with the indicator work of the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD) as well as the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs). The question of how the report would deal with those Ecological Objectives where indicators had not been agreed (EO4 and EO6) along with the candidate indicators was raised by several participants, and the Secretariat clarified that for these Ecological Objectives and the candidate indicators (i.e. EO11), the report would not provide a full assessment, but include current information available and identify major gaps. It was also recommended that effort be made by the Secretariat that reporting obligations for the future QSR's be streamlined with other reporting obligations within UNEP/MAP. Contracting Parties agreed to provide by the 11th November 2016 initial proposals related to case studies for EO5, EO9 and EO11, as well as by the 30th November any information on existing recent relevant reports and data to complement the MED POL database. Finally the Secretariat informed participants that the Concept for QSR2017 would be discussed at the Bureau of the Contracting Parties (25-26 October, 2016) and the revised Concept and Timeline would be shared with participants through the INFO/MAP groupware.

(c) Common Indicator Guidance Fact Sheets

14. The Secretariat presented the Draft Indicator Guidance Factsheets for Contaminants (EO9) and Eutrophication (EO5), document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/4. Indicator Guidance factsheets are under development for all the IMAP 27 indicators, led by the respective Components: MED POL (EO5, EO9, EO10, EO11), SPA/RAC (EO1, EO2) and PAP/RAC (EO7 and EO8). These are based on the information available in the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/Inf.7) and will be further elaborated for discussion at the Component Focal Point meeting in May 2017.

15. The meeting appreciated and welcomed the first draft guidance factsheets as a valuable guidance and reference to assist Contracting Parties in any revisions of national monitoring programmes. Several Contracting Parties made suggestions for the improvement of the guidance factsheets and it was agreed that CORMON experts will provide comments to the word version of the

draft factsheets, which would be shared with via the INFO/RAC group ware system by end of November 2016 since it is essential for comments and recommendations to be provided as a follow up to this meeting. The representative from ACCOBAMS informed participants of the work underway with the Secretariat for the development of Indicator Guidance Factsheets for the two candidate indicators on Underwater Noise (EO11). It was agreed that these EO11 Indicator Guidance factsheets be addressed by the CORMON on Pollution and that these Guidance factsheets would be added to the working document and shared with participants for final review and comments through InfoMap GroupWare.

(d) Good Practices for Developing Monitoring Assessment Scales in the Mediterranean

16. The EEA presented the Information document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/Inf.10 Good Practices for developing Monitoring Assessment Scales in Europe, also including approaches used by OSPAR and HELCOM. It was explained that heterogeneous approaches are being used by different EU Member States for the marine regions and sub regions. With regards to the MSFD 2018 reporting, a working paper will be presented in the MSFD Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge (WG DIKE) in December 2016 to discuss the state of the art regarding the assessment/reporting units, as well as a suggested approach.

17. In the discussion that followed, it was agreed that the issue of assessment and reporting scales in the Mediterranean is complex and would need further consideration before a proposal could be re-discussed with Contracting Parties. Participants requested the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for future consideration.

Agenda item 4. Marine Pollution Monitoring Regional Data Base and Reporting, MED POL Database Gaps and Related Quality Assurance Issues

18. The Secretariat presented working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/5: Status of the IMAP Implementation, with regards to Pollution and Eutrophication.

19. This was followed by a presentation by IAEA on the data quality assurance in marine pollution monitoring, based on a collaboration since 1986, whereby a total of 56 recommended methods have been developed, 34 Proficiency tests and 54 training courses have been undertaken and 320 Mediterranean scientists have been trained from 17 countries on the analysis of contaminants in marine samples. Based on this long experience IAEA presented the main issues for consideration by CORMON participants and Contracting Parties. Participation of nominated laboratories by the MED POL Focal Points in proficiency tests remains low, and it is important that MEDPOL Focal Points follow up with laboratories for the cause of non-participation in order to improve this problem in the future. The overall performance of laboratories participating in proficiency tests does not show an increasing trend over the years. Therefore follow-up measures for ill performing laboratories are recommended following receipt of the proficiency test results. Laboratories facing data quality problems but are not in the position to resolve them internally should be encouraged to request external assistance for the identification and solution of potential causes of ill-performance. To improve performance close collaboration is needed between the MED POL Secretariat, the MED POL Focal Points, the national laboratories and IAEA/MESL. Finally it was noted that attention is needed to ensure that the candidates nominated for training, work in the laboratory for MED POL marine pollution monitoring, and will continue to work after their training, be able to follow a training course in English and have some experience on the analytical techniques presented during the training courses (such as AAS, GC). Trainees should give a feedback after their return to their laboratories on the effectiveness of the training in improving their analytical performance

20. This presentation was complemented by the representative of QUASIMEME regarding the results of quality assurance exercises for nutrients and chlorophyll-a. The results of the 2015 quality assurance exercise determined that approximately 50% of MEDPOL laboratories uploaded data. The overall performance for silicate, nitrate and phosphate was 75% satisfactory. It was stated that

improvement of performance is necessary by training people in the laboratories and participate in performance studies.

21. In the discussion that followed regarding quality assurance, proficiency tests and training, it was noted that quality assured data is the cornerstone of a reliable monitoring programme, upon which assessments and priorities for action are determined, and given this was a subject discussed on several occasions should be a priority for all Contracting Parties to address and improve. The Secretariat stressed that whilst accreditation as appropriate is important, countries should prioritize participation in proficiency tests to improve the quality of results.

22. The Italian representative presented the InfoMAP vision and next steps, on behalf of INFO/RAC, who were unable to attend. InfoMAP is the UN Mediterranean knowledge platform conceived to provide and share data, information services and knowledge for the benefit of the Mediterranean Action Plan components and Contracting Parties in their work for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, MAP strategies and policies, including the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD). The architecture and planned steps for development in 2016 were presented. The data center would include: data collection from remote sources (web services, remote databases, cloud, FTP, etc.); data transformation (from different formats and types to agreed XML format); data validation (Automatic: XSD applied on XML or Manual); data storage into Datawarehouse and Business Intelligence. The main features of the pilot Data Centre would include INFO/RAC LDAP users/groups integration; granular management of user permissions; Automatic upload of remote data sources; Automatic/manual data validation; Management of publication workflow from UI; automatic data upload from web forms (in testing) and Automatic/Manual feedbacks management and versioning.

23. In the discussion that followed the question were raised on how the INFO/RAC would put the SEIS principles into practice, what would be the level of privacy of data and how to integrate national data platforms. In response it was clarified that a step-by step approach would be taken to information sharing, where levels of privacy would be adjusted in accordance with the Contracting Parties agreement, and that where national data-platforms existed, these would be linked with InfoMAP and in other cases countries would use the national node of the InfoMAP portal for reporting. It was also clarified that InfoMAP would include the IMA database but also cover all work within UNEP/MAP, such as the NAP data. Finally participants stressed the importance to establish the InfoMAP system and especially the MED POL online reporting portal to as to allow Contracting Parties submit their new data into the system.

24. Finally REMPEC presented the working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/6 for the Development of a Quality Assurance Programme for Oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS), Pollution from Ships and Offshore Data Reporting and Collection in line with the IMA. The objective of this work which begun in September 2016 is to complement the IMA with relevant information and indicators as well as measures to implement, for oil and HNS pollution from ships, the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, namely Article 5; and the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), especially Specific Objective 19; and to support the development of a monitoring programme for the Offshore Protocol.

Agenda item 5. Review of Proposed Background Concentrations (BC)/Background Assessment Concentrations (BACs)/Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) for Contaminants and Biomarkers at Mediterranean and Sub Regional Scales

25. Under this agenda item, on behalf of Secretariat, Mr. Calros Guitart , MED POL consultant presented the working document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/7 for the Proposal of Assessment Criteria for Hazardous Substances and Biological Markers in the Mediterranean Sea Basin and its Regional Scales. The Secretariat has undertaken work to establish assessment criteria in the Mediterranean Sea for a number of MEDPOL contaminants based on reference stations monitoring

information in order to allow the evaluation and fulfillment of the targets within EO9 IMAP indicators. This is a step towards the further definition of the indicators assessment methodology to assess the achievement of the good environmental status (GES). 28 new background assessment criteria (BACs) were presented in line with previous UNEP/MAP assessment work, as well as over 100 new background concentrations (BCs) at 4 eco-regional scales (Western Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Central Mediterranean and Aegean and Levantine Seas) were presented for the first time. Further, informative BCs were also provided despite the number of datasets at a regional seas scale need to be increased for better BCs determinations with further monitoring activities in the context of IMAP. New and revised BCs and BACs at a Mediterranean Sea scale were proposed for trace metals in biota and sediments, individual polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in biota and biomarkers and biological parameters in biota. These new values should further update and refine the criteria within IMAP adopted by Contracting Parties in COP19.

26. In the discussion that followed the assessment undertaken by the Secretariat was commended. It was noted that true natural background concentrations were difficult to assess and even reference stations might be contaminated to a certain extent. Also it was recommended to follow closely the recent and evolving work within the MSFD so as to be aligned if appropriate. Other suggestions included the need for more data on biomarkers, to consider how baselines may vary significantly even within one sub-region, and how to attain the most accurate baseline value for sediments. It was agreed that given the need for further consultations at the national level, the Contracting Parties would submit comments to the Secretariat in writing.

Agenda item 6. Science-Policy Interface (SPI) Strengthening Related To Marine Pollution: Issues and Priorities to Bridge the Scientific Gaps Hampering the Monitoring Programmes at National and Regional Scales

(a) The EcAp MED II Project Output 3, Stronger Ecosystem Approach Related Science-Policy Interface in the Mediterranean

Introduction

27. The implementation of ecosystem approach should be based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies. Therefore, one of the key activities of the second phase of EcAp, the EcAp MED II project 2015-2018, focuses on the strengthening of the interface between science and policy to implement IMAP. To launch this activity, an inception workshop was organized by Plan Bleu in December 2015 bringing together key stakeholders (leading scientists and policy makers linked to MAP focal points) to discuss the implementation of science-policy interface (SPI) to support IMAP implementation. During this workshop, good SPI practices were presented and a first set of 15 key cross-cutting and topic-specific knowledge gaps to be addressed for the implementation of IMAP were identified, along with proposed actions to be taken to address these gaps. The workshop opened up perspectives to develop SPI for IMAP, namely by pointing out the need to formalize SPI along with its structure and processes and to identify dedicated resources to support SPI. It was also decided to go on with thematic SPI workshops.

28. In collaboration with MED POL, a workshop on SPI focusing on pollution issues was organized as a session of this CORMON meeting on Pollution. The main objective was to identify the science needs to be addressed in order to support the full implementation of IMAP regarding contaminants and eutrophication issues at regional and national levels and to propose concrete solutions. This session gathered CORMON attendants and some selected scientific experts invited by Plan Bleu.

29. This session was opened by Ms. Hema and Director of Plan Bleu Anne France Didier. In her opening remarks Ms. Hema referring to the UNEP/MAP Mid term Strategy 2016-2021, informed the meeting that science policy interface is recognizing a new dimension in the MAP system with the principle aim to ensure efficient implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its protocols taking

into account the ecosystem approach. She also referred to the work that Plan Bleu RAC is undertaking in the framework of the EU funded project ECAP MED II to promote science policy interface and define science policy needs for the implementation of IMAP.

(b) Presentation of the Analysis of the Scientific Gaps Impeding the Full Implementation of IMAP and Related Scientific Needs, Focusing on Pollution Issues

30. This analysis was presented in the working document (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/8), which takes stock of the inception SPI workshop main outputs to identify and analyses the IMAP science needs regarding pollution issues (EO5 - Eutrophication, EO 9 - Contaminants). The scientific needs have been characterized and the related state of play in-term of recent research projects documented. In addition, “opportunities” (e.g. outputs of recent/ planned research projects, partnerships with UNEP/MAP, resources of specific scientific centers that may facilitate the development of a particular action, etc.) were envisaged for the identification of possible solutions/actions.

(c) Presentation of SPI Good Practices

31. These presentations on existing science-policy interfaces in the Mediterranean region at different scales (e.g. national, regional levels) allowed for an active exchange on current SPI practices, results, benefits and limitations, as well as possible improvements. In the framework of the EU, it has been shown that a number of research projects common data repositories, platforms and networks are currently under way as a means, among others, to disseminate and make available and accessible the existing information and knowledge on marine pollution. As illustrative examples, French and Lebanese national experiences on SPI were shown, and detailed, respectively, the interactions between the scientific and decision-making spheres, the structure of the SPI platforms existing, their limitations, dissemination and links with civil society as well as some proposals for the further development and improvements for such SPI platforms. Discussions and exchanges between participants highlighted that environmental policy needs to be based, more than ever, on scientific evidences due to environmental evolution and the rising complexity of environmental policy making. As a conclusion, it was pointed out that there exists a diversity of SPI, which depend on the country context and needs, as well as on policy makers' expectations.

(d) Review of the Scientific Needs to Support Full Implementation of IMAP, Focusing on Pollution Issues

32. A working group session was dedicated to thematic discussions in two groups focusing on i) eutrophication and ii) contaminants. Each thematic group was required to further develop from the working document WG 427_8 on SPI, reviewing the pre-identified science needs and possible scientific actions to address them (e.g. research projects/ initiative, pilot actions at specific scales, etc.), proposing priorities at different scales (regional, national, etc). The groups were also required to address a specific request reported during the CORMON meeting, regarding the relevant scales for periodic reporting and assessments in the context of the implementation of IMAP. Finally they were asked to make suggestions in matter of organization to sustain the Science-Policy Interface to support the implementation of IMAP.

33. The meeting allowed reviewing the working document, and especially tables in Annexes 1 and 2, i.e. the identification of science gaps and needs regarding EO 5 (Eutrophication) and EO9 (Contaminants), respectively. Participants proposed and agreed on a series of related concrete priority actions and recommendations, especially aimed at addressing the issue of appropriate scales for monitoring, reporting and assessing in the context of IMAP. Scientific workshops were suggested as concrete actions: i) on known cause-effect relationships for contaminants, gathering Mediterranean scientists from different countries and international experts, with the participation of some policy-makers; ii) on a common assessment methodology, identified as a priority for all Mediterranean countries, allowing answering CORMON requests on the issue of the scales.

34. Acknowledging that strengthening and sustaining SPI is a need for IMAP implementation, the participants formulated some proposals: i) Develop some SPI living examples in small-scale pilot projects to test good practices that can be further extended; ii) Inject young scientists in the environmental administrations for a fixed duration; iii) Experiment SPI at various levels, including at low organizational levels; iv) Develop PhD and research projects in SPI, including social scientists.

35. Moreover, the participants expressed some general recommendations: i) the independency of the public environmental scientific research should be guaranteed, especially to recognize emerging environmental issues, ii) better coordination is to be developed regarding SPI within both the scientific community as well as among policy makers and iii) more effective cooperation between the scientific community and policy makers, especially regarding the exchanges of information and data, in particular to increase interoperability and generalize open access of existing data.

Agenda item 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

36. The Secretariat presented the Conclusions and Recommendations of the meeting which after minor changes were adopted and are included in Annex III to this report.

Agenda item 8. Any Other Business

37. Under the eight Agenda item, participants didn't raise and discuss any other matters.

Agenda item 9. Closure of the Meeting

38. After the expression of usual courtesies, the President declared the meeting closed at 2.00 p.m. on Friday 21 October 2016.

Annex I
List of Participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Annex II
Agenda of the Meeting

Agenda of the Meeting

- Agenda item 1.** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda item 2.** Adoption of the Agenda and Election of Officers
- Agenda item 3.** Implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme
- a) National Monitoring Programmes
 - b) Progress on the Preparation of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report
 - c) Common Indicator Guidance Fact Sheets
 - d) Good Practices for Developing Monitoring Assessment Scales in the Mediterranean
- Agenda item 4.** Marine Pollution Monitoring Regional Data Base and Reporting, MED POL Database Gaps and Related Quality Assurance Issues
- Agenda item 5.** Review of Proposed Background Concentrations (BC)/Background Assessment Concentrations (BACs)/Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) for Contaminants and Biomarkers at Mediterranean and Sub Regional Scales
- Agenda item 6.** Science-Policy Interface (SPI) Strengthening Related To Marine Pollution: Issues and Priorities to Bridge the Scientific Gaps Hampering the Monitoring Programmes at National and Regional Scales
- a) The EcAp MED II Project Output 3, Stronger Ecosystem Approach Related Science-Policy Interface in the Mediterranean
 - b) Presentation of the Analysis of the Scientific Gaps Impeding the Full Implementation of IMAP and Related Scientific Needs, Focusing on Pollution Issues
 - c) Presentation of SPI Good Practices
 - d) Review of the Scientific Needs to Support Full Implementation of IMAP, Focusing on Pollution Issues
- Agenda item 7.** Conclusions and Recommendations
- Agenda item 8.** Any Other Business
- Agenda item 9.** Closure of the Meeting

Annex III
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring was held on 19-21 October 2016 at the kind invitation of Plan Bleu and city of Marseille, at Villa Valmer, Marseilles, France in combination with a workshop of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) Strengthening related to Marine Pollution organized jointly by Plan Bleu and the MEDPOL programme of UNEP/MAP.

Following review and discussions of all agenda items, the meeting agreed on the following deliberations, Conclusions and recommendations:

Contracting Parties Monitoring Programmes

1. The meeting acknowledged and appreciated the ongoing work of several Contracting Parties which presented the current status of their national monitoring programmes for EO5 (Eutrophication) and EO9 (Contaminants) and the steps taken to align their programmes to IMAP and the related indicators. The meeting encouraged all Contracting Parties to continue the work of streamlining the IMAP Decision IG.22/7 into the updating and upgrading of their monitoring programme as appropriate. The meeting recommended that the Contracting Parties should send to the Secretariat the updated national monitoring programmes once available and preferably before the MEDPOL FP meeting in 2017.

2. The meeting recommended that the countries which have not yet done so should report without further delay the pollution monitoring data as provided for in the provisions of the Convention and the LBS Protocol including past monitoring reports (2012-2013, 2014-2015).

3. The meeting noted the importance of monitoring the influence of atmospheric deposition to pollutant levels measured. It was recommended to consider continuing reporting the data regarding the atmospheric contaminants to the MED POL database where data is available in line with MED POL Phase IV reporting formats.

Quality Status Report (QSR2017)

4. The meeting agreed in principle with the revised annotated table of content of the QSR2017 relevant to pollution as attached in the Annex I to these conclusions and recommendations. However it was agreed to allow 2 more weeks for any further comments by the Contracting Parties.

5. The meeting took note of the proposed timetable for the preparation of the QSR2017 and recommended another step in the consultation process that the final draft QSR2017 is circulated with Contracting Parties, CORMON experts and the ECAP Coordination Group before it is formally submitted to the EcAp Coordination Group and MAP Focal Point meeting in September 2017.

6. Contracting Parties should provide as appropriate to the Secretariat by the 11th November 2016 initial proposals related to case studies for EO5, EO9 and EO11, as well as by the 30th November any information on existing recent relevant reports and data to complement the MED POL database.

7. The meeting expressed strong interest to contribute to the preparation of the QSR, however expressing its concern for the additional work load and budgets required for the QSR which is a continuous process. The meeting asked the Secretariat to make efforts to streamline it with other reporting assignments of the countries and also to bring it to the attention of the upcoming bureau meeting for their consideration

Indicator Guidance factsheets

8. The meeting appreciated and welcomed the first draft guidance factsheets (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/4) for the seven common indicators as an important tool to guide countries in the implementation of IMAP at national and regional levels. It was agreed that CORMON experts will provide comments to the word version of the draft factsheets, which would be shared with via the INFO/RAC group ware system by end of November 2016. Following a general presentation by the ACCOBAMS it was agreed that two additional Guidance Factsheet for the two candidate indicators of Ecological Objective 11 Underwater energy and Noise will be dealt with by the CORMON on Pollution and will be shared with via the INFO/RAC group ware system for comments.

9. It was agreed that Contracting Parties should send names and contact details of the key experts for each indicator cluster as appropriate, related to EO5 (Eutrophication), EO9 (Contaminants and EO 11 (Underwater Noise) to contribute to the review process of the indicator factsheets and QSR2017 draft. The review process will be carried out through the INFO/RAC groupware.

Good practices on Assessment scales

10. The meeting took note of existing best practices related to the Assessment Scale and comments provided by the Contracting Parties and requested the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for future consideration.

Monitoring Programme.

11. The meeting expressed its concern the results of the most recent proficiency tests carried out in 2015 with regards to eutrophication and contaminants and noted the imperative need to maintain a proper quality assurance of the data. Contracting Parties were urged to enhance participation to proficiency tests and address cases of poor performance including asking support from the Secretariat as appropriate. The meeting also drew the attention to avoid situations when the appointed laboratories by the MEDPOL Focal Point do not participate or do not submit the results of the proficiency tests.

12. The meeting encouraged INFO/RAC to make every effort to ensure that the MEDPOL info system is online as early as possible and before the MEDPOL Focal Points meeting in May 2017, to enable CP's to report MEDPOL data online.

Review of proposed Background Concentrations (BC)/Background Assessment Concentrations (BACs) and Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs)

13. The meeting commended the work of the Secretariat to undertake an in-depth and complete review of the MED POL data base including the data provided by the Contracting Parties during the last biennium. It also reviewed and took note of the trend analysis and the proposal to revise some of the BCs, BACs and EACs for the Mediterranean that were adopted by COP19 in February 2016 in Decision IG.22/7.

14. It was agreed that given the need for further consultations at the national level, the Contracting Parties can submit where appropriate further comments regarding the proposed revised criteria and the recommendations of the assessment report (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.427/7) by 30 November 2016.

15. Finally the meeting suggested that further consideration should be given to the need for more Mediterranean experts involved in work of the CORMON to ensure consistency, continuity, efficiency and sustainability of its deliveries.

Science-Policy Interface (SPI) Strengthening Related To Marine Pollution

The Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring was held on 19-21 October 2016 at the kind invitation of Plan Bleu and city of Marseille, at Villa Valmer, Marseilles, France in combination with a workshop of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) Strengthening related to Marine Pollution organized jointly by Plan Bleu and the MEDPOL programme of UNEP/MAP.

Following review and discussions of all agenda items, the meeting agreed on the following deliberations, Conclusions and recommendations:

Agenda item 6: Science-policy interface (SPI) strengthening related to Marine Pollution

16. The specific session dedicated to the SPI has gathered CORMON attendants and scientific experts invited by Plan Bleu. It was acknowledged by the participants that the strengthening of SPI is a need for IMAP implementation.

This meets the general trend showing that environmental policy needs to be based, more than ever, on scientific evidences due to environmental evolution and the rising complexity of environmental policy making.

17. From the current SPI experiences presented by some participants, it was highlighted that it exists a diversity of SPI, depending on the country context and needs, and policy maker expectations. Nevertheless the meeting has expressed some recommendations:

- independency of the public environmental scientific research should be guaranteed, especially to recognize emerging environmental issues,
- SPI although existing in number of Mediterranean countries should be better recognized as an operational process both by involved scientists and policy makers;
- better coordination is to be developed within the scientific community as well as among policy makers, at the pertinent scales; and
- more effective cooperation between the scientist community and policy makers, in particular regarding the exchanges of information and data, in particular to increase interoperability and generalize open access of existing data.

18. The meeting allowed reviewing the working document WG 427/8 on SPI, and especially tables 1 & 2 (identification of science gaps and needs) regarding EO 5 (Eutrophication) and EO9 (Contaminants) respectively. On this basis, the meeting has proposed a series of related concrete priority actions and recommendations, especially aimed at addressing the issue of appropriate geographical scales for assessing, monitoring and reporting in the context of IMAP.