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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 10-12 September 2013

**Report
2nd Meeting of Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Coordination Group**



United Nations Environment Programme



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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

2nd Meeting of EcAp Coordination Group

Athens (Greece), 24 April 2013

Report 2nd Meeting of Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Coordination Group

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Introduction

1. The second Meeting of Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Coordination Group was held on 24 April 2013, in Greece, Athens. The meeting was held in order to: (1) discuss progress of the work carried out since the last EcAp Coordination Group meeting held in Athens in May 2012; (2) review and comment on the first draft list of GES descriptions and targets developed in three meetings of Correspondence Group – GES and Targets Clusters; and (3) review and comment on the proposed activities to be undertaken to achieve expected outcomes in Decision IG.20/4 and the revised timeline with priorities for the future.

Participation

2. The meeting was attended by the members of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG) from the following Contracting Parties: Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, European Union (EU), France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and Tunisia.

3. The Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), the Pollution Programme (MEDPOL), the Blue Plan Regional Activity Centre (BP/RAC), the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC), the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) and the Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC), the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) were also represented at the meeting.

4. The following institutions and organizations were represented by observers: the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MEDPAN), the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET), CLEAN-UP Greece, MEDWET, the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), UNEP-MAP/MED Partnership and the PERSEUS Project.

5. The list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to this report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

6. The meeting was opened on 24 April 2013 by Ms. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, Executive Secretary and Coordinator of UNEP/MAP. Ms. Silva opened the meeting by welcoming the participants.

7.

Agenda item 2: Election of officers and adoption of the agenda

8. Following informal consultations, the meeting elected its officers as follows:

Chairman: Mr Mitja Bricelj, Slovenia

Vice-Chairperson: Mme Samira Natèche, Algeria

Rapporteur: Mr Erol Cavus, Turkey

Agenda item 3: Progress in implementing the Ecosystem Approach roadmap

9. The Secretariat provided a brief update on the progress since the last EcAp Coordination Group meeting held in Athens in May 2012; and in particular presented the first draft list of GES descriptions and targets developed in three meetings of Correspondence Group – GES and Targets Clusters: Biodiversity and Fisheries; Pollution and Litter and Coast and Hydrography.

10. Participants first gave general comments on the progress made and on the GES and targets draft list. They highlighted the need to ensure that work on EcAp is in line with work inside the EU on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and that other relevant work of international bodies should be also duly taken into account, such as OSPAR. Furthermore, many said that there should be a clearer link made between GES and Targets. Some further highlighted that there is a need to further ensure involvement of national focal points next to the experts in the various cluster groups.

11. One of the parties highlighted the need to be more ambitious and identify gaps, as well as to have more advanced documents for COP18. Many highlighted on the otherhand the ambitious timeline and the need to review it with a reality-check.

12. On GES/targets of the Biodiversity and Fisheries Cluster the first set of draft targets and GES were presented and the functional meaning of bullet points were raised, with asking for more clarity to be given on the tables and make sure that targets and GES follow their respective nature and are not mixed.

13. Some parties raised that integration, prioritization is needed also inside the work of the clusters and it was raised again by some that there is further need to identify gaps for monitoring. Others said that prioritization could be done based on regional specifics, while again others highlighted that not all indicators, targets are relevant for all parties.

14. Some mentioned the need to make sure that work on indicators and targets will be closer to GES and that there is a need to put more emphasis on quantification of targets.

15. Other participants highlighted the importance of feasibility and the need to ensure means of implementation and the link to the protected areas. The importance of the future pilot implementation study was also raised. In addition, various parties highlighted the importance to work closely with the GFCM. One party raised concern on how to agree on fisheries related work under EcAp. The Secretariat re-assured parties that the GFCM has been fully consulted and its comments were fully taken into account during the work of the cluster, in relation to fisheries.

16. On marine food webs one party stated that it should rather be a priority of focus of work for the next cycle, while another highlighted that it should be already now a priority, with some parties mentioning the knowledge gap in this area.

17. Others highlighted the need for further work, additional meetings, fully in line with other international bodies, of which decisions related to EcAp should be informed to the parties.

18. Further specific comments followed on the objectives relating to biodiversity and fisheries, after which the Secretariat asked participants to send their comments on the GES/targets tables (regarding all clusters) by 30 May 2013 and informed parties that follow-up consultations regarding all clusters are planned, but due to budgetary constraints will be

only possible in person in relation to the biodiversity and fisheries and the pollution and litter clusters, which will be held back to back with the respective RAC meetings in the upcoming months.

19. On eutrophication one party mentioned explicitly that the pilot project should focus on this issue, others mentioned that there is still need for more data in this field in the Mediterranean, while again others that there is already enough existing data to be more ambitious and get to quantified targets here.

20. On Pollution, parties gave some technical comments, such as defining thresholds taking into account legal constraints as the EU Water Framework Directive, rephrasing targets 9.1.1 and 9.2.1 that mention "below reference thresholds or concentrations". In addition, one party highlighted that reference to specific contaminants is vague and the need of attention with the 2 indicators related to human health.

21. On sea-floor integrity parties mentioned the need for further work and some also raised the need to look at the impacts of climate change. One party asked for re-visiting the indicators, as they are not clear, while others highlighted the need to follow the process agreed and only re-open the indicators in the next cycle.

22. Further, on hydrography a party highlighted the need for definition of targets to be more realistic as there is no detailed data. Another party rose to the attention of the participants that EO7/EO8 are closely related, seafloor integrity is also similar. Another participant recommended to focus on impact itself, not on non-impact level and based on this carefully think through definitions.

23. On coastal ecosystems and landscapes, one participant highlighted the need for a better definition and those cumulative impacts only mean something if related to specific areas and gave specific recommendations to improve EO8.

24. On marine litter, one party asked for clarification of a footnote, another, supported by some parties, proposed to include indicator considering microplastics and two indicators referring efforts of coast cleaned and collection of marine litter (latter not supported by the attendants). One participant raised the attention to the need of coherence on targets and regional action plan on marine litter, while another asked to include final paragraph of underwater noise ecological objective as a marine litter footnote

25. On Energy, including Underwater Noise Ecological Objective, one party raised the attention of participants to take into account the work that currently is developed by OSPAR, while another referred to the work developing under MSFD. Another participant highlighted the need to frame adequate mechanisms for monitoring impulsive sounds due to different sources of this type of sound (fixed and mobiles sources).

26. The Secretariat welcomed the suggestions, comments and asked the participants to send in their written comments on the GES/Targets of the different EOs by 30 May 2013.

Agenda item 4: EcAp Roadmap for 2013 and the new Biennium

27. The Secretariat presented the proposed activities to be undertaken to achieve expected outcomes in Decision IG.20/4 and the revised timeline with priorities for the future.

28. One participant proposed to add in timeline milestones, while others asked to see for all items where deliveries are expected by COP18 and asked to get more clarity on the process up to 2015 and link to the EU EcAp project and the timing of the upcoming pilot project. Others stated that there is too much focus in the Roadmap on the COP and more

information was requested on the following process and some mentioned that work on EcAp should not be seen only up to 2015.

29. Secretariat ensured parties that work on implementation of ECAP timeframe will continue after 2015, pointing out the need to further specify measures and revise some ongoing activities. In addition, gave a specific update on the Offshore Protocol, where countries were asked to give information on the state of their related legislation, which will be followed up with a workshop, aiming to promote best practices. In relation to the MPAs, the revised SAP BIO is on its way, in line with the ecosystem approach, with the review needing to take into account ongoing EcAp work. It was also highlighted the work for preparing the integrated monitoring programme, on-going work regarding the regional action on marine litter with the view to make it coherent with ecosystem approach, with an upcoming expert meeting (May 2013) on the topic, for which draft is prepared in cooperation with all RACs. It was also pointed out that NAPs adopted by the contracting parties in the framework of LBS Protocol may require an update to also take into account EcAp GES and targets. Currently three documents were being prepared, one on country implementation of the NAPs, one on analysing SAP/MED targets achievements and one policy paper to ensure that MAP/MED POL pollution reduction policies become coherent with EcAp.

30. Some participants highlighted that the timeline foreseen and deliverables are very ambitious and there is a need for a reality check, as well as the incorporation of different work-streams to the final COP deliverables, with highlighting the importance to take into account outcomes of the Socio-Economic ongoing work to GES and targets development.

31. The idea of an Adriatic EcAp project was raised by some participants, with highlighting important link to ICZM and raising attention to progress on the pilot project. Two countries from the Adriatic offered their location to host the EcAp pilot project.

32. Others mentioned that there is an urgent need to start working on measures too and highlighting that the results of SWITCH MED could be also interesting in this regard and asked for initial discussions on measures at the next meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group in September 2013. While, another party raised attention to the fact that targets to be discussed and approved already in September is highly unrealistic and recommended to agree on specific GES and some targets, which could be discussed by Focal Points in September and agreed on at COP. Others supported this proposal, asking parties to focus work on GES/targets where data is available and progress up to the COP can be foreseen, while leaving other GES/targets for next cycle of work. Others highlighted that this should not mean that one GES/target is more important than the other, rather just a realistic approach that could be improved in the future.

33. Some asked specific further clarifications on the timeline from the Secretariat, on integrated monitoring, where they have seen need for adjusting the roadmap.

34. Secretariat asked parties to send comments, suggestions also on the Roadmap by 30 May 2013, also giving recommendations on specific GES/targets of EOs where COP agreement could be the most realistic.

Agenda item 5: Adoption of recommendations and conclusions

35. The meeting considered the draft conclusions prepared by the Secretariat on which comments were made and modifications requested.

36. The recommendations and conclusions included in Annex III were approved by the meeting.

Agenda item 11: Closure of the meeting

37. Following the usual exchange of courtesies, the Chairperson closed the meeting on Wednesday, 30 May 2012 at 5.30 pm.

**Annex I
Agenda**

DATE	<i>PLENARY</i>
Wednesday 24 April 2013	
08.30 – 09.00 a.m.	Registration
09.00.– 09:15 a.m.	Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting Agenda item 2: Election of officers and adoption of the agenda
09:15 a.m.– 13.00 a.m.	Agenda item 3. Progress Report on implementation of EcAp in the Mediterranean 09:15-10:00 – Progress of Work 10:00-11:00 – Pollution and Litter GES and targets 11:00-11:15 – Coffee Break 11:15-12:30 – Biodiversity and Fisheries GES and targets 12:30-13:00 – Coast and Hydrography GES and targets
13:00 – 14.30 p.m.	Lunch Break
14.30– 15:00 p.m.	Agenda item 4: EcAp Roadmap for 2013 and the new Biennium
15:00 – 16.30 p.m.	Coffee Break
16.30 – 18.30 p.m.	Agenda item 5: Adoption of recommendations and conclusions Agenda item 6: Closure of the meeting

Annex II
Conclusions and Recommendations

Annex II – Conclusions & Recommendations

The EcAp CG welcomes achievements in the EcAp process and takes note of the Roadmap for 2013-2015, which needs to be further specified with deliverables, in particular those requested by COP17 decisions and key milestones of the process by the Secretariat in a realistic manner.

The EcAP CG welcomes the first draft of GES descriptions and targets for the 11 Ecological Objectives and encourages the COR-GEST to continue its work according to the views expressed by the EcAp CG as well as to the previous EcAp CG outcome, which together with the following guidelines and recommendations, should serve as a basis for its further work:

- Develop an explanation on the nature of the elements of the GES tables and explain links between GES and targets;
- Ensure that targets are realistic and not repetitive and identify key data gaps to guide monitoring needs, and development and calculation of indicators;
- Make sure that targets will be accompanied with a realistic timeframe and that related feasibility issues and socio-economic aspects will be included;
- Where necessary, comment on the problems identified on the agreed indicators with the view of taking those comments into account in the implementation of the EcAp;
- Take into account the work from other regional bodies, such as of OSPAR and the MSFD process of the EU;
- Ensure that outcomes from other related ongoing processes can be taken into account and that the timeline will be aligned with these (like MSFD, CFP, GFCM, etc);
- Ensure integration of outcomes both inside and between clusters (also regarding targets), all CORs (COR-GEST, COR-MON, COR-ESA) and full involvement of related MAP Components;
- Consider that in the Mediterranean the different capacities of the countries should form part of the socio-economic assessment;
- Consider that significant amount of data in the MAP system which is available in relation to EO5 (eutrophication), which may allow MAP to advance defining quantitative targets;
- In upcoming threshold discussions take fully into account existing targets as provided to EcAp CG in the document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.377/Inf.3. "Existing targets related to 11 Ecological Objectives".

The EcAp CG encourages the Secretariat to further work on finalizing a draft list of GES and selected targets, taking into consideration the recommendations of the first meeting of the EcAp CG and the COR-GEST Cluster Meetings, the discussions at this meeting noting the need to focus work where GES description and target-setting is possible thanks to sufficient information and data, with the aim to agree at COP18 on a set of GES descriptions and targets.

The EcAp CG further encourages the Secretariat:

- to ensure that the ambitious roadmap will be further adjusted and specified with deliverables and key milestones of the process, taking note of links with

all relevant processes and taking stock of activities ensuring deliverables to COP18 and identifying gaps;

- to provide a guide/manual of the whole process, as well as an explanatory note on working mechanism, methodology, process and its timeline;
- to provide information on progress made on the preparation of a regional integrated monitoring programme (in particular GFCM);
- provide further information to the national focal points on all EcAp related, but outside of MAP processes and decisions taken;
- to give clarity regarding EcAp pilot implementation to serve as a useful best practice for the whole Mediterranean region.

The EcAp CG supports need expressed by COR-GEST for further consultations to complete the work of all COR-GEST clusters and supports the idea to carry out written consultations regarding Coast and Hydrography Cluster and in-person consultations back-to back with MED/POL and RAC/SPA FPs meetings regarding clusters of Pollution and Litter and Biodiversity, with the aim to ensure technical completion of the process before MAP FPs meeting in September 2013.

The EcAp CG notes the need to hold a wrap-up meeting of COR-GEST outcomes for integration with a view to:

- prioritize the targets developed separately by the three COR-GEST Clusters;
- integrate as much as possible the ongoing work of COR-ESA;
- start the initial discussion on the framework for the preparation of programmes of measures for the possible consideration of the next EcAp CG Meeting.

National Focal Points will be fully involved in the process, and to this aim, will provide the Secretariat with their written, specific comments on the draft list of GES and selected targets by 30 May, with a focus on giving their opinion on where they see target-setting realistic, and on the timeline by advising other steps that might be needed, taking note of the available data, in order to ensure as much deliverables as possible to COP18 in Istanbul.