

10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group

Istanbul, Türkiye, 11 September 2023

**Agenda Item 4: 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report**

**Report of the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) Pollution – Athens, Greece 1-2 March 2023**

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Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring

Athens, Greece, 1-2 March 2023

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UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2023

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## Report of the Meeting

### Introduction

1. In accordance with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2022-2023 adopted by the 22nd Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, (Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021), the Secretariat is organizing the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring (CorMon Pollution) on 1 and 2 March 2023, in Athens, Greece.
2. The main objective of the meeting is to review the 2023 MED QSR IMAP Pollution draft Chapters for the following IMAP Ecological Objectives and related Common Indicators:
  - a) EO 5 Eutrophication: Common Indicators 13 and 14.
  - b) EO 9 Pollution: IMAP Common Indicators 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21.
  - c) EO 11 Noise: Candidate Common Indicator 26 and 27.

### Participation

3. The meeting was attended by representatives from the following Contracting Parties: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria and Tunisia.
4. The following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, convention secretariats and intergovernmental organizations were represented as observers: The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS); and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were also present.
5. The following non-governmental organizations and other institutions were represented as observers: Atlantic International Research Centre (AIR Centre) and Cedre, Turkish Marine Research Foundation.
6. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention represented by the MAP Coordinating Unit and the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL).
7. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

### Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

8. The Meeting was opened at 9:30 AM on 1 March 2023 by Ms. Tatjana Hema, UNEP/MAP Coordinator. Ms. Hema brought to the attention of participants the major mandate to deliver a QSR up to the expectation of the Contracting Parties in line with their decisions taken in 2017, 2019 and 2021. She congratulated the Members of the CORMON pollution for their work and contribution to the entire process. She explained the work undertaken so far and its outcome pointing out that every effort was made to collect and use to the extent possible available reliable data that would allow to the extent possible quantifiable assessments. The level of assessment quantification varied per common indicators and region/subregion based on data availability. Using this opportunity the Coordinator informed the CORMON Pollution that the secretariat has undertaken a number of reflections regarding QSR delivery in the future and also explained the way forward including the need to ask for a mandate by COP 23 to revise the EcAp roadmap including IMAP in order to consider the finding of MED QSR 2023. Wishing a successful meeting, the Coordinator called for constructive discussions and inputs to

allow the successful finalization of the drafts for its inclusion in the final version of the MED 2023 QSR for submission to the Meeting of Integrated CorMons which will be held in June.

**Agenda item 2: Organizational matters**

*a) Rules of Procedure for the Meeting*

10. The Rules of Procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols was applied mutatis mutandis to the present Meeting (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI).

*b) Election of Officers*

11. Subject to Rule 20 of the rules of procedure mentioned at para. 2(a) 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:	Ms. Erika Magaletti, Italy
First vice chair:	Mr. Lassaad Chouba, Tunisia
Second vice chair:	Mr. Sameh Ayoub, Egypt
Third vice chair:	Ms. Slavica Matijevic, Croatia
Rapporteur:	Ms. Roberta Debono, Malta

*c) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda*

12. Subject to Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure mentioned at para. 2(a), the proposed agenda appearing in document UNEP/MED WG.556/1 and annotated in the UNEP/MED WG.556/2 document was reviewed and accepted, as proposed by the Chair. The Annotated Agenda was adopted by the Meeting as appended in Annex II to the present document.

*d) Organization of Work*

13. The discussions were proposed to be held in two plenary sessions over two days, from 9:30 to 12:30 and 14:30 to 17:30.

14. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French was available for all sessions. All documentation was available in English and French. Participants were encouraged to download the documentation onto their computers in advance of the session. The meeting was recorded for future reference.

15. The Meeting addressed all Agenda items during the two-day meeting. The Meeting closed on 2 March 2023 after adopting its Conclusions and Recommendations appended to this present document.

**Agenda item 3.2.1: The Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR: IMAP Common Indicator 17**

16. Under this agenda item, Jelena Knezevic, the UNEP/MAP Monitoring and Assessment Officer, presented activities undertaken by MED POL within the implementation of the Decision IG.23/6 of COP 20 related to the 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR), and Decision IG.24/4 of COP21 providing the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap implementation (Naples, Italy, December 2019). She elaborated on the following key achievements within the implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap:

- a. Setting/updating the assessment criteria;
- b. Setting the integration and aggregation rules for monitoring and assessment;

- c. Development, testing, and implementation of the GES and alternative environmental assessment methodologies by applying the integration and aggregation rules along with the sales of assessment, the assessment criteria, and the DPSIR approach within the IMAP nested scheme;
- d. The use of data, considering the lack of data reported by the Contracting Parties, further to obligations set in Decisions IG.23/6 and IG.24/4.

17. The above was provided with the scientific support of Dr. Nurit Kress, Dr. Christina Zeri, Dr. Robert Precali, and Dr. Dimitris Poursanidis, MED POL expert team members, which was provided on a periodical basis in the context of the preparation of the present Proposal of the 2023 MED QSR Pollution Chapters further to the conclusions and recommendations of the Meetings of CorMon on Pollution Monitoring (2-3 April 2019, 1-3 December 2020, 26-28 April 2021, 27 and 30 May 2022); Meetings of the Online Working Groups on Eutrophication and Contaminants (June 2021); Meeting of the MEDPOL Focal Points (May 2019, May, July and September 2021; and Meetings of the EcAp Coordination Group (September 2019, September 2021, and July 2022) related to the technical documents on the assessment criteria, rules for integration and aggregation, the assessment methodologies and their testing in different areas of the Mediterranean Sea.

18. Thereafter she presented the Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR related to IMAP Common Indicator 17 as provided in the working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3, also referring to detailed elaboration provided in the information documents UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.6; UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.7; UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.8; UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.9; UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.10; UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.14; UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.15 and UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.16.

19. The NEAT GES assessment and CHASE+ assessment methodologies were scientifically elaborated by Ms. Nurit Kress and Ms. Christina Zeri, the MED POL expert team's members. Following the presentation delivered by the MDE POL, the Chair opened the floor for discussion.

20. The After the Secretariat presentation several CORMON members took the floor and expressed their satisfaction for the Secretariat work undertaken and its outcome in a relatively short period of time. The work undertaken for the preparation of the Proposal of the 2023 MED QSR Pollution Chapters was found as an impressive achievement. Gratitude was also expressed to the UNEP/MAP – MED POL for the flexibility demonstrated regarding data reporting by the CPs.

21. One meeting participant explained that monitoring data for 2021-2022 are available but due to time constraints were not uploaded into IMAP-IS. They can be submitted to be considered in the assessment. He emphasized that IMAP implementation was launched in most countries during the COVID-19 crisis, and therefore it was impossible to timely report monitoring data in. He also referred to the problems in using IMAP IS, while expressing the need for the organization of the national workshop to support capacity building for the application of the assessment methodologies used for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR Pollution Chapters. A clarification was asked regarding the methodologies used.

22. Another meeting participant stated that an inhomogeneity and the lack of data reported by the Contracting Parties is evident both in terms of quality and quantity of data, in relation to the requirements precisely determined by IMAP and QSR decisions. She noted that resulted in an uneven presentation of the situation in certain sub-regions, therefore the countries that submitted the optimal or larger quantity of quality-assured data were evaluated in a more restrictive manner. She requested that a policy measure in order to undertake future assessments only if all countries submit the minimum required data, and the Secretariat confirms their quality, which would enable the equal treatment of all national data. She also requested in view of this major systemic policy gap which is evident in the 2023 MED QSR Pollution Assessment to include the moderate class in the NEAT GES category considering the high degree of the unreliability of the existing assessments due to the lack of data reporting. She asked the Secretariat – MED POL to provide well-structured technical support for

the countries i.e. training for the application of the assessment methodologies applied for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR Pollution assessment, including related statistical calculations. The detailed written position was also shared with the Secretariat – MED POL.

23. Another meeting participant suggested adding additional biota species as monitoring species, and another one asked for clarification if the assessment methodologies applied for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR IMAP Pollution assessments can be applied at the national level, also asking for the technical support for their future application.

24. Another meeting participant reminded of the significant lack of the equipment in the IMAP competent laboratories of his country. In that regard he asked for an increased funding to support building national capacities, along with setting the twining modality of collaboration between the countries to ensure optimal transfer of knowledge. Regarding division of the Mediterranean sub-regions into the sub-divisions he asked about relevance of the FAO units set for fishery. He can share additional bibliographical scientific references containing data on Hg in biota.

25. One meeting participant asked for more streamlining between MSFD and the IMAP assessment methodologies. She also asked for a correction of paragraph 287 so that it refers to 22 monitoring stations for her country.

26. Another meeting participant asked about the reason for the lack of data (i.e. technical, institutional), and what can be done to address this key systematic problem.

27. One meeting participant stated that more data are available for submission, in case it is not too late to consider them within the present assessments. Noting that it was impossible to timely upload this data into IMAP IS, she informed the Meeting that detailed written comments will be shared with the Secretariat, passing the floor to another delegate to provide a few scientifically based comments. He expressed a view that for the Central part of the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-division (CWMS) instead of the simplified application of the NEAT, the full, non-simplified NEAT assessment can be made by applying a different division of the areas being assessed. The proposal for a different subdivision (e.g., North and South) he noted would be based on the availability of data, to achieve the integrated spatial assessment. Noting that this also raises the question of a coherent assessment at the scale of the sub-regions, as well as at the scale of the Mediterranean basin, by using for example the CHASE+ as an assessment tool. Regarding the BAC values used for the assessment of CI 17 in the Western Mediterranean, he indicated that these values are different from those applied in other sub-regions, and they are significantly higher for  $\Sigma 16$  PAH. Furthermore, he noted that the differences between the higher values in sediment and lower values in biota possibly involve the metabolization of PAHs, which complicate the interpretation of the assessment results. He indicated that one would expect contamination levels in biota to be higher than in sediments as shown by the higher BAC level for PCBs in biota. He indicated that the comparison between the results of the assessment and the known pressures by expert opinion would provide a better understanding of the real impacts of pressures on the state of the environment (DPSIR approach). He noted that it can happen that some of the results obtained in the assessment framework for the CWMS perimeter may show some disagreement between the state result and the degree of known pressures. In that regard, he confirmed that his team will provide more information on this observation. In addition, he proposed reversing Chapters 3 and 4. He also supported the proposal of adding additional biota species as monitoring species to ensure more comprehensive assessments and highlighted the importance of an update of the emerging contaminants given IMAP still relies on the historical ones.

28. Another meeting participant explained that her national team uploaded more data in the IMAP Info System regarding CI17. With respect to the non-homogeneity of data, she added that by applying the NEAT GES Assessment methodology, it is possible to express the level of confidence in assessments, whereby this confidence level should be reported. She noted that these results should be presented to the MAP FPs, including the key figures which visualize the assessment findings. She noticed that figures which visualize the CHASE+ assessment results look very different from NEAT

(i.e. for CHASE single stations are shown, while NEAT depicts the spatial assessments). She suggested a possible harmonization of the way the figures depict the assessment findings of these two assessment methods.

29. Another meeting participant reminded of the finding that in the Aegean Sea Sub-division, there are two areas classified as non-GES. In that regard, she asked for the minimum number of stations that need to be set in every assessment unit in order to get a proper assessment. She also asked if the rule on 75% of stations/areas in GES used for CHASE + assessment was also applied to the NEAT GES assessment.

30. One meeting participant apologized for the lack of data reported for his country, explaining it was caused by the lack of monitoring data generated in the period from 2016 to 2022. He mentioned that monitoring data for 2022 are available and can be shared with the Secretariat – MED POL if it is not too late for their use in the present assessments. He asked for an opinion regarding assessment based on the use of toxicological criteria only. He indicated that written detailed comments will be shared.

31. Another two participants submitted their written comments asking for some explanations and provision of slight corrections of a few formulations.

32. In responding to the above questions and comments of the meeting participants, the Coordinator addressed issues related to data reporting, reminding that in past few years formal letters were sent to the CPs at least 5 times, calling for data reporting, including one referring to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, as the cutoff date for data reporting. Given the complexity of data preparation for the assessments, the coordinator indicated that the Secretariat cannot include any additional data reported after this cutoff date. For this reason, the present Meeting of CorMon Pollution is organized early in March to allow an update of the Proposal of the 2023 MED QSR Pollution Chapters further to the feedback of the meeting participants, and thereafter to submit it for the consideration of the Meeting of Integrated CorMons which will be held on 27-28 June. She noted that this is aimed at updating the assessment findings as needed, however, it is impossible to accommodate the use of new data at this stage.

33. The Coordinator also reminded of the technical and financial support provided to the CPs regarding data generation and reporting, referring also to the delays caused by COVID-19 crisis. The Secretariat secured significant support to the seven countries through the IMAP-MPA, EcAp 3 and ML MED 2 projects, financed by the EU. Some countries achieved good results, others could not timely conclude activities, and others could not even start activities, which in turn resulted in reporting of a few data sets of good quality, however, the Secretariat could not capitalize on the results of these projects. Regarding the countries of the Adriatic Sea Sub-region, it should also be mentioned that Montenegro was supported by the financial assistance provided by Italy, while activities are expected to start in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania has not shown an interest yet.

34. It must also be noted that CPs did not ensure the use of the significant quantum of data which were available, whereby the Secretariat provided a big effort to improve the quality of data reported to IMAP IS, or even shared offline, given they were reported without (optimal) quality control.

35. The Coordinator explained that significant changes, as the one suggested for setting different sub-divisions, have to be addressed in the next assessment cycle. In that regard it should be noted that the Secretariat intends to ask the forthcoming COP, for the mandate to revise the IMAP.

36. Regarding the use of different assessment methods, their harmonization ensured reliable assessments and therefore avoiding biased assessment findings within the 2023 MED QSR. In relation to the opinion that the assessment of the smaller assessment areas with more accurate data is more stringent than the assessment of larger areas with fewer data, an explanation can be added. An expected IMAP revision should further discuss the minimum data which needs to be reported to ensure



reliable assessment. Within the next assessment cycle, it can also be expected to improve the visualization of the assessment findings.

37. The Coordinator also informed that within the PoW for the 2024-2025 biennium, the Secretariat plans to assist the CPs regarding the application of the assessment methods applied at the regional/sub-regional level for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. She emphasized that the present work was delivered despite the limited capacity of the Secretariat, which however. This puts the Mediterranean region in a good stand against other regional seas. She concluded by informing that the Secretariat plans to secure additional resources through collaboration with the EU and Italy in order to continue supporting implementation of the national monitoring programmes. The two new projects on EcAp and IMAP implementation are expected to be launched in collaboration with the EU, while additional sources are expected from Italy and GEF. The focus will remain on the southern countries. To address specific technical proposals, the Coordinator passed the floor to the Monitoring and Assessment Officer (MAO).

38. Elaborating on the technical and scientific aspects of the questions raised by the meeting participants, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer, explained that Decision IG. 23/6 on the 2017 MED QSR (QSR Decision) required application of the assessment methods which ensure aggregation and integration of the assessment findings related to Common Indicators of the IMAP Clusters, as well as their spatial integration.

39. She explained that by building on the overall basis which was set by the Regional Meeting on IMAP Implementation “Best Practices, Gaps and Common Challenges” (Rome, Italy, 10-12 July 2018), rules for integration and aggregation were developed and agreed by the Meetings of CorMon Pollution and MED POL Focal Points held in 2020 and 2021, respectively, in the context of applying different tools related to GES assessment. Thereafter, the assessment methodologies were considered depending on their capacity to implement such defined rules of integration and aggregation.

40. Given the lack of data reporting as required by QSR Decision, it was not possible to ensure optimal application of the integration and aggregation rules in all four Mediterranean sub-regions, and therefore to ensure optimal integration of IMAP Common Indicators within specific Ecological Objectives (EO), and thereafter of Ecological Objectives at the level of IMAP Clusters, rather than by individual CI which was the approach of the 2017 MED QSR. Therefore, the IMAP NEAT GES assessment methodology was tested, and thereafter applied, given assessment findings confirmed its capacity to ensure optimal integration and aggregation of the assessment findings first of contaminants (CI 17), and then of *Chla* (CI 13) and nutrients (CI 14) in the Adriatic Sea Sub-region, and thereafter in the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region.

41. The Monitoring and Assessment Officer explained that for the sub-regions/sub-divisions with insufficient data reported for application of the NEAT IMAP GES assessment methodology along the nested areas of assessment, the four other methodologies were elaborated: i) the CHASE+ (Chemical Status Assessment Tool) methodology for assessment of CI 17 and ii) the Ecological Quality Ratio (EQR); iii) the simplified EQR methodology and iv) the simplified G/M comparison methodology, the later three methodologies for assessment of IMAP CIs 13 and 14. She emphasized that the CHASE + Environment Assessment methodology ensures assessment of the cumulative impacts of contaminants measured at the monitoring stations, therefore at the points in the space, whereby the NEAT GES Assessment Methodology ensures spatial integration of the aggregated assessment findings for the contaminants assessed along the IMAP nested scheme, therefore assessment of the areas.

42. Given QSR Decisions requested delivery of GES assessment by applying the optimal methodology, she explained that it was not justifiable to completely reject the application of the NEAT GES Assessment Methodology due to the lack of data in the two sub-regions. Therefore, the combination of the NEAT GES and CHASE+ Environmental Assessment methodologies were applied along with the harmonization of the classification of the GES/non-GES categories to avoid biased assessment of different areas of the Mediterranean.

43. First, scales of assessment were harmonized in the Adriatic Sea Sub-region, and then finally agreed upon further to NEAT GES assessment application in the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region. For this sub-region, both the results of the NEAT and CHASE+ assessment methodologies were provided (UNEP/MED WG.556/Inf 7), however, both results cannot be integrated into the 2023 MED QSR and therefore, the NEAT GES Assessment results were used as more accurate. Namely, given that for the scope of CI17 monitoring in the Western Mediterranean Sea, the CPs have set 91,5% of the monitoring stations in the coastal zone and no data on contaminants were reported for the period 2017-2022 for any of the offshore stations, only the coastal SAUs were considered and nested under a 2 levels` hierarchical scheme and the integration of the assessment results was conducted for the coastal zone of the Alboran (ALBS) and Tyrrhenian Seas (TYRS) sub-divisions. It should be noted that the integrated assessment up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> level using the NEAT tool was unreliable for the Central part of the WMS, and therefore, the assessment of this subdivision was undertaken just for the 1<sup>st</sup> level and only for those IMAP subSAUs for which data exist. She also explained that the use of different IMAP nested scheme i.e. adding new sub-divisions or re-defining the existing sub-divisions is not possible at this stage, however, she invited countries to submit their proposals to the Secretariat which will be then elaborated for an upgrade of the IMAP nested scheme during the next assessment cycle. The present sub-divisions were set for the purpose of data grouping within the calculation of the assessment criteria in 2016, and thereafter further used for setting the areas of assessment along IMAP nested scales of assessment, whereby the present data grouping was matched with the environmental and hydrographic characterization of the areas as available in the scientific literature.

44. Regarding visual depiction of the assessment findings of the NEAT GES and CHASE+ Environmental Assessment Methodologies, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer explained that the maps are optimally harmonized among the regions where any of the methodologies was applied. However, they show different content given CHASE+ assessment can provide only assessment at the station level i.e. a fixed point in the space, and the NEAT GES assessment shows the status of the areas of assessment. It is unfortunate that the NEAT could not be applied across the entire Mediterranean. Therefore, the maps are harmonized, but they show the different types of the assessment results.

45. The Monitoring and Assessment Officer reminded of the fact that the BCs and BACs were calculated based on the data available for the sub-regions in IMAP-IS and a few literature sources, as agreed by the Meeting of CorMon Pollution in the revised meeting document UNEP/MED WG.533/3 as approved in May 2022. The sub-regional BACs are different, showing the differences among the areas of the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, for more accurate assessments it was necessary to use the sub-regional BACs instead of the Mediterranean BACs. The sub-regional values cannot be identical to the national values. Concerning bioaccumulation by biota, she explained it is usually relevant for organic contaminants. However, this aspect could not be better reflected in the present values of the criteria due to the limited quality and quantity of data reported to IMAP IS for the calculation of the criteria. This is an important aspect that needs to be addressed in future updates of the criteria.

46. She also explained that the present assessment cannot be based on toxicological criteria due to the lack of any data reported for IMAP CI 18, as well as the lack of EACs based on data reported for the Mediterranean. Therefore, GES/non-GES classes were set by applying relevant multiplication factors as relevant for specific classes considering the distance from BACs values, by relying on the assessment approach as applied by EEA, whereby GES definition for IMAP CI 17 was taken into account i.e. it relates setting of GES objectives both with threshold and/or reference conditions.

47. Furthermore, she explained that both assessment methodologies were tested and adjusted to IMAP implementation further to the positive outcome of their implementation by EEA and/or EU Member States, including also within MSFD implementation. The five classes, and their grouping in GES and non-GES statuses, are requirements within the implementation of these two, but also other GES assessment methodologies.

48. Regarding additional information on the DPSIR for the Central part of the WMS, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer asked for their submission to the Secretariat within two weeks in order to be taken for the finalization of Chapter 3 on DPSIR and the preparation of Chapter 6 on Measures.

49. She also explained that the present CHASE+ environmental assessments use the flexible decision rule of 75% of stations/ areas of assessment in GES. Paragraph 46 of the document explains that within the present work it was recommended that if at least 75% of the elements are in GES, the station should be considered in GES. The same recommendation was given when assessing certain areas or the whole Sub-region or Sub-division i.e., when 75% of the stations are in GES for a certain parameter, the whole Sub-region is in GES for this particular parameter and not the overall status of the Sub-region or Sub-division. Within the NEAT GES assessment, there is a calculation of the assessment confidence which also considers the minimal level of data per surface of the area. Unfortunately, the application of CHASE+ assessment methodology does not support this function and therefore, it has to follow the 75% decision rule. A minimum number of stations is the one defined in the national monitoring programmes, however, present assessments confirm that in most cases the countries do not report data for all monitoring stations.

50. Concerning weaknesses of the NEAT assessment methodology indicated in relation to the uneven presentation of the situation in certain sub-regions, as well as the proposal to include the moderate class in the NEAT GES category, the use of data in the concrete case will be checked in close collaboration with the national team with a view of considering the suggested policy measure.

51. With regards to the above, the chair noted explanations provided by the Secretariat, summarizing the following:

- The assessment findings related to the NEAT GES Assessment of the Adriatic Sea and the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region are approved, whereby slight corrections can be addressed in the final version of the assessments which will be submitted to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to supplementary information provided during the discussion;
- The lack of availability and the non-homogeneity of data impacted CI 17 assessment whereby the difficulties were recognized regarding the timely submission of the required data from the countries;
- The submission of additional data and information might not be possible to optimally address at this final stage of the 2023 MED QSR preparation process;
- Both the NEAT GES and CHASE+ environmental assessment methodologies produce comparable results and their further streamlining will be ensured for the preparation of the next MED QSR.

52. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

### **Agenda item 3.1.1: The Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR: IMAP Common Indicator 13 and 14**

53. Under this agenda item, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer presented the Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR related to IMAP Common Indicators 13&14 as provided in the working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3, also referring to detailed elaboration provided in the information documents UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf 3; UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.4 and UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf.5.

54. One meeting participant explained that the present assessment of the Alboran Sea cannot be accepted given data from COPERNICUS over-estimates *in-situ* data. She mentioned that her national team developed an algorithm to correct the use of COPERNICUS data, by asking for use of i) the satellite chlorophyll *a* concentration data for 2016-2019 (included) calculated by the regional-specific

algorithms developed by the national team; ii) the threshold values calculated in the same manner as for OSPAR, WFD and MSFD, and iii) the assessment areas which are already used in MSFD and WFD, referring also to the areas of assessment as elaborated for the contaminants (UNEP/MED WG. 556/Inf 15).

54. Another meeting participant explained that the assessment criteria concerning the sub-regions have not yet been carried out for the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region, and the Tyrrhenian Sea Sub-division. For the thresholds which are expected to be defined according to the simplified EQR method, it will be necessary to ensure their consistency with the threshold defined at the national level. Then she followed the intervention of the previous participant, by explaining that her national team developed an algorithm to correct the use of COPERNICUS data. This ensured the use of validated and calibrated satellite products in the oligotrophic waters in the offshore zone of the WMS. She informed that these products will be shared with the Secretariat in order to be used for assessment of Chl a in the WMS.

55. Another meeting participant expressed doubt about showing assessment results based on the use of one single parameter for a conclusion about GES/non-GES status, as well as about the representativeness of the spatial assessment unit with just one monitoring station which therefore cannot be representative of a such wide area. She also expressed an opinion that the quantum of data reported from her national team for the Tyrrhenian Sea should be sufficient to allow applying the NEAT GES assessment for this sub-division.

56. One meeting participant asked for an explanation of the maps showing additional assessment results for CI 14 marked in red by applying the simplified G/M method for satellite derived Chl a points of the observation grid (1 x 1 km).

57. Another meeting participant asked the Secretariat to consider the constraints of different countries, and therefore to take into account data that can be reported only now by his national team.

58. One meeting participant informed that her team will submit comments in writing in order to include a few corrections related to the changed locations of monitoring stations both for CIs 13&14 and CI 17.

59. Another meeting participant expressed an opinion that the number of stations set for both Ecological objectives 5 and 9 is very low, by informing that her country will expand the monitoring network by adding one more monitoring station.

60. Responding to requests related to the use of more data and application of the assessment methods as applied in different national contexts, the Coordinator emphasized that lack of data prevented optimal GES assessment of eutrophication. The assessment of the Adriatic Sea Sub-region included both CI 13 – nutrients and CI 14 – Chl a, and the Secretariat would appreciate approving this assessment. Regarding the other 3 sub-regions/related sub-divisions, she explained that the Secretariat needs more time to conclude work given the lack of data caused by a great workload in searching for alternative sources of Chl a data at least, and their adjustment for a purpose of the present assessment. Regarding queries to apply specific national assessment methods in the Alboran Sea and the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer will respond in terms of the technical feasibility of the proposed work, however, it must be noted there is not too much time for addressing these proposals, whereby the complete assessments must be finalized one month ahead of the Meeting of Integrated CorMons which will be held on 27-28 June.

61. The Monitoring and Assessment Officer explained that visualization of the Adriatic Sea Sub-region assessment depicts assessment results per parameters i.e. TP, DIN, and Chl a, first aggregated at the spatial assessment units' level, and then spatially integrated to the sub-division/sub-regional level. These results are provided to avoid masking drivers of non-GES status. However, it must be noted that the final GES/non-GES classification, as shown in Section 5, shows the aggregated and

integrated assessment findings of all three parameters. The assessment status for TP was possible for the whole Adriatic Sea given data availability at the level of subSAUs. The results of TP assessment indicate that probably an accumulation of phosphorus is present in the area. It is necessary to explore if the problem is related to nitrogen limitation of the area and subsequent accumulation of phosphorus, or a local source of pollution contribute to the generation of the pressure on marine environment. Non-GES status of a few subSAUs do not affect the overall assessment status and all SAUs fall under the GES status (high, good). She also explained that misleading is avoided given the NEAT GES assessment is relevant both regarding the use of small and sufficient quantum of data. Namely, NEAT calculates the % of assessment confidence, therefore quantum of data and their distribution across the areas of assessment are considered for the calculation of the confidence of assessment (explanation of the confidence calculation is included in the meeting document UNEP/MED WG. 556/Inf. 6). The absence of some SAUs evaluation is related to the decision of the countries to monitor areas that are found relevant for the assessment of eutrophication and therefore excluding the areas where problems were not historically observed.

62. The Monitoring and Assessment Officer explained that the reference and boundary/threshold values were calculated for the Levantine Sea and the Alboran Sea by using the satellite-derived chl a data, as shown in tables 4.2.4.2 and 4.2.4.3. For the Central part of the WMS and the Tyrrhenian Sea, they are still not calculated, since assessments for these sub-divisions of the WMS sub-region have not been provided yet. The consultations will be organized regarding the use of the algorithms validated and calibrated by the national teams for use of satellite products. If compatibility with the current work under the 2023 MED QSR will be confirmed, they can be used for the assessment of the remaining part of the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region, as well as for a review of the Alboran Sea Sub-division. The thresholds for the satellite-derived chlorophyll a will be (re)calculated by applying the methodology as elaborated in meeting documents UNEP/MED WG.556/3 and UNEP/MED WG. 556/Inf. 4, by also undertaking their comparison with the national thresholds which can be shared from the national teams. The assessment areas will be reviewed by considering inputs that are also expected to be provided by the national teams, however ensuring the use of the principle applied in setting all IMAP spatial assessment units.

63. She explained that the homogeneity of data in terms of reporting all mandatory parameters for nutrients and chl a for the period 2018-2022/2023, as required by Decisions IG.23/6, was not provided. A small quantum of *in situ* data reported in the Western Mediterranean Sea, along with the lack of any data reported for TP, prevented eutrophication assessment by applying methods relevant for use of *in situ* data. Therefore, the use of satellite-derived chl a data by applying the simplified G/M comparison was the only option to provide assessment of the Alboran Sea and Levantine Sea Sub-divisions. It is likely the approach to follow in the remaining part of the Western Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean Sea Sub-regions. Only for the Tyrrhenian Sea Sub-division, data were optimally reported by one country, and therefore MED POL is looking for applying a more advanced EQR assessment methodology. The use of the NEAT will be also considered. However, given the limited time for the finalization of the eutrophication assessment, the application of the EQR assessment methodology seems more realistic. *In situ* data recently reported i.e., significantly after 31<sup>st</sup> October, the cut-off date for data reporting, cannot be taken into account, however, they remain an important source for future assessments.

64. Regarding figures LEVS 5.1.2.E and ALBS 5.1.2.E, she explained that maps show satellite-derived Chl a data points which indicate non-GES coloured in red, as well as Chl a data points which indicate the RC conditions coloured in blue, however by plotting data points in more detailed size i.e., in observation grid of 1 x 1 km. These additional assessments were tentatively performed by applying the Simplified G/M comparison assessment methodology on every satellite derived Chl a point of the data grid. Due to the high geographical variability of the biogeochemical processes at such a scale (1 x 1 km), this assessment provided only an indication of the environmental status of the single data points which supports the identification of the main biogeochemical, controlling processes in the Levantine and Alboran Seas Sub-divisions. However, these figures do not show the likely GES/non-GES status of the areas of assessment which are shown only in figures LEVS 5.1.1.E and ALBS 5.1.2.E.

65. Mr. Precali, an expert team member for the scientific support for eutrophication assessment, further explained that the use of COPERNICUS products required calculation of the reference conditions and threshold values for the satellite-derived Chl *a* given values available for *in situ* Chl *a* are not applicable on remote sensing products. The calculation was undertaken by relying on the experiences gained in the Baltic Sea (Andersen et al. 2011; HELCOM 2010). For an indicator showing a positive response (i.e., nutrients and Chl *a*), it indicates that the threshold has an upper limit of +50 % deviation from reference conditions. For an indicator showing a positive response (i.e., nutrients and Chl *a*), it indicates that the threshold has an upper limit of +50 % deviation from reference conditions. Setting the threshold to 50% implies that low levels of disturbance (defined as less than +50 % deviation), resulting from human activity, are considered acceptable, while moderate (i.e., greater than +50 %) deviations are not considered acceptable for the water body in question. The data were aggregated as a 5-year geometric mean and normalized in order to ensure their comparability between the areas of assessment. For normalization, the best Normalize package in R was used. From the normalized values, the following values are back transformed: the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile as the reference condition, the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile as the mean value of the distribution, and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile ~ mean +1 SD that represents the G/M threshold. Finally, each considered observation point or area was classified in GES or non-GES status, comparing the value of the indicator to the boundary limit between G/M i.e., back transformed the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of the normalized distribution. He confirmed that the algorithms used by the two countries for the satellite-derived data can be analyzed with a view of revising the present assessment of the Albran Sea Sub-division and undertaking the assessment of the remaining part of the Western Mediterranean Sea, whereby more advanced EQR method is likely to be applied in the Tyrrhenian Sea Sub-division.

66. With regards to the above, the Chair noted explanations provided by the Secretariat, summarizing the following

- The assessment findings related to the NEAT GES Assessment of the Adriatic Sea Sub-region can be considered approved, whereby slight corrections can be addressed in the final version of the assessments which will be submitted to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to supplementary information provided during the discussion;
- The assessment findings should be amended for the Alboran Sea Sub-division in the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region by considering additional information on the finest spatial assessment units and the use of the algorithm to improve the accuracy of the satellite-derived Chl *a* data from COPERNICUS further to their submission to the Secretariat from the two countries no later than on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023;
- The assessment findings should be amended for the Levantine Sea Subdivision of the Aegean-Levantine Sea Sub-region by addressing the request to better clarify the use of an additional assessment, tentatively performed for every satellite-derived Chl *a* point of the data grid.
- It is agreed to use the satellite-derived Chl *a* data for the application of the Simplified G/M comparison for the assessment of the remaining sub-divisions of the Aegean-Levantine Sea, the Central Mediterranean Sea, and the Western- Mediterranean Sea Sub-regions, with exception of the Tyrrhenian Sea Sub-division where the Ecological Quality Ratio (EQR) methodology will be likely applied further to the significant quantum of data reported for this subdivision.
- Additional data which still might be reported to IMAP Info System after the cutoff date for data reporting cannot be used for the present assessment, however, they will be considered for checking the assessment findings based on satellite derived Chl *a* data.

67. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 3.2.2: The Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR: IMAP Common Indicator 18**

68. Under this agenda item, Ms. Kress, an expert team's member responsible for the scientific support for assessment of contaminants, presented the Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR related to IMAP Common Indicator 18 as provided in the working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3, also referring to detailed elaboration provided in the information document UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf. 11.

69. One meeting participant referred to the information about the absence of data reporting for IMAP CI 18. He reminded of the Data Dictionaries and Data Standards adoption for this indicator by the Meeting of CorMon Pollution held in May 2022, and confirmation received from the Secretariat – INFO/RAC that the module related to CI 18 will be operational by July 2022, so that Countries may report data by 31<sup>st</sup> October. This module has not been operational yet and therefore his country could not report data available for CI 18 as of 2008.

70. Another meeting participant asked an explanation as to why thresholds related to CI 18 were not used for assessment. She explained that the work undertaken by OSPAR could be used as a complementary reference to present work based on the use of scientific literature. There is also data that could be used to improve the present assessment solely based on a literature review.

71. Another meeting participant suggested moving the biomarkers' monitoring back to the Biomonitoring programme which was launched within the MED POL IV phase, explaining it was well-defined with very good initial results. One more participant supported this proposal by also adding that IMAP implementation is expensive and implementing the entire IMAP Pollution Cluster requires financing which is unaffordable for his country.

72. Addressing the questions and comments of the meeting participants, the Monitoring and Assessment officer reminded that an update of the threshold values as adopted by Decisions 22/7 and 23/6 was impossible due to the lack of any data which could be used for this purpose, as discussed and confirmed by the Meeting of CorMon Pollution Monitoring held in May 2022. The lack of data is also the reason for applying the present assessment methodology which is entirely based on the use of scientific literature, therefore excluding the application of available thresholds for biomarkers. She confirmed that the Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for CI 18 was adopted by the Meeting of CorMon Pollution in May 2022, expressing regret that countries were not able to use the operational module in IMAP IS. However, she pointed out that at the CorMon Pollution meeting, the Secretariat - MED POL expressed its readiness to consider the offline data submitted to the Secretariat, even with deficiencies, however in the form of Data Dictionaries for CI 18, as it was the case for other IMAP Pollution indicators. No country contacted the Secretariat for consultations on this basis, nor submitted data. The use of data for CI 18 must be based on the quantity and quality necessary for the preparation of regional assessments. At this stage data can only be used for checking and validating the present assessment findings, whereby undertaking new assessments for CI 18 is impossible. For example, if the entire data sets would be submitted quickly, data quality control and data preparation for the assessment would take one month at least, and that's time the Secretariat does not have at disposal.

73. After consultation with INFO/RAC, the Coordinator shared the response provided to her, which confirmed that the CI 18 module was not operational in IMAP IS. She confirmed the Secretariat's commitment to resolve the issue of the operability and accessibility to the IMAP IS by the Contracting Parties. She also called on countries to submit data in the format of Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for CI 18 to be analyzed for possible complementary use for validation of the existing assessment results. The Secretariat could not commit to more than this as it would not be feasible at this stage. Responding to one participant's additional position that his team could only submit data in the previous MED POL data format, the Coordinator replied that the rapid use of data to verify existing assessment findings would only be possible if data would be reported in the format of Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for CI 18 in two weeks. However, if this is not possible, countries are encouraged to submit the data in another format so that it can be used for different purposes in the upcoming period.

74. Further to explanations provided by the Secretariat, the Chair invited the meeting participants to submit data if they were available in the format of Data Dictionaries and Standards for CI 18 for their possible complementary use for checking the present assessment findings of CI 18 which can be considered accepted.

75. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 3.2.4: The Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR: IMAP Common Indicator 20**

76. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat presented the Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR related to IMAP Common Indicator 20 as provided in the working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3, also referring to detailed elaboration provided in the information document UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf. 12.

77. One meeting participant took the floor to comment on assessment findings related to CI 20. Due to the delayed submission of the French working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3, her team did not have enough time to consult national food safety experts responsible for assessments of CI 20, therefore, detailed written comments will be additionally submitted. She asked for adding in this document the tabular form showing the regulatory levels applied for the present assessment. For example, the table containing EU seafood regulatory levels, included in the meeting document UNEP/MED WG. 556/ Inf. 12, can be associated as an annex to the meeting document UNEP/MED WG. 556/3. She expressed concerns about the assessment limitation associated with the type of species that can be used. She called for caution in this part of the report given a decision on the use of species is a delicate point of the assessment.

78. Another participant explained that her country did not report data for CI 20 as stated in paragraph 656, however, asking if submission of additional data for CI 20 would still be acceptable at this stage.

79. One participant explained that data for CI 20 were prepared, but her national team faced problems regarding data reporting to IMAP IS.

80. Addressing the comments of meeting participants, regarding the difficulties the Contracting Parties had faced in online data reporting, the Coordinator confirmed that available data can be submitted in the format of Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for CI 20 in two weeks. However, they can only be analyzed for possible complementary use for validation of the existing assessment results.

81. The Monitoring and Assessment Officer confirmed that EU seafood regulatory levels were adopted by the Meeting of CorMon Pollution held in May 2022, for their use for assessment of CI 20. However, due to the lack of data reported for CI 20, they could be applied only on concentrations of contaminants reported in the biota matrix for CI 17 within assessment of CI 20. She confirmed that regulatory levels will also be included as Annex to the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3. Regarding concerns related to the limited type of species used, she explained that the present assessment had to resort to the available scientific literature. Confirming there are relevant aspects that cannot be addressed within the present work, she mentioned that the submission of data on additional species could improve future assessments.

82. Further to explanations provided by the Secretariat, the Chair invited the meeting participants to submit data if they were available in the format of Data Dictionaries and Standards for CI 20 for their possible complementary use for checking the present assessment findings of CI 20 which can be considered accepted.



83. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 3.2.5: The Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR: IMAP Common Indicator 21**

84. Under this agenda item, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer presented the Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR related to IMAP Common Indicator 21 provided in the working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3, also referring to detailed elaboration provided in the information document UNEP/MAP WG.556/Inf 13.

85. One meeting participant expressed concern about the lack of conformity between the results of the national assessments and the assessment findings as presented in the meeting documents. The national assessment indicates better status, with fewer non-compliant stations. He asked if data for the period 2018-2021 were used, explaining more data can be shared to support a comparison of the two assessment findings, therefore, to complement data at stations which could not be classified due to lack of data reported. One more meeting participant also asked for an explanation of non-classified stations.

86. Another meeting participant asked for checking the status “draft” assigned to data reported in IMAP IS by her country.

87. In responding to concern expressed by one country regarding the methodology applied for assessment of IMAP CI 21, the Secretariat explained that by adopting Decision IG.20/9 Criteria and Standards for bathing waters quality in the framework of the implementation of Article 7 of the LBS Protocol, COP 17 (Paris, 2012) agreed on the threshold values in the Mediterranean region. In the present assessment these values are used to set the boundary limit between GES and non-GES status regarding the pathogens in bathing waters. The IMAP Guidance fact sheet for CI 21 includes the methodology that has been proposed by Directive 2006/7/EC which also sets the minimum sampling frequency i.e. at least one per month and not less than four in a bathing period, including an initial one prior to the start of the bathing period, along with exceptions under defined conditions. This assessment methodology was also applied for CI 21 within the preparation of the 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2017 MED QSR). In case insufficient updated datasets are available in IMAP IS, the IMAP Guidance Factsheet for CI 21 foresees use of datasets submitted by the corresponding agencies e.g., the European Environment Agency (EEA). Given lack of data reported by the CPs prevented optimal implementation of the recommendations of COP 19, the present assessment was undertaken by combining Assessment Report on the State of Bathing Water Quality in 2020 of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the assessment of monitoring data reported for CI 21 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Lebanon, Montenegro and Morocco.

88. The methodology used in the EEA 2020 assessment of the state of bathing water quality was as defined in the EU 2006/7 Directive and in IMAP decision IG.20/9, i.e. the classification of the bathing waters was provided according to the 90<sup>th</sup> or 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of the log<sub>10</sub> normal probability density function of microbiological data. The number of data points for each location was at least 16, over 4 bathing seasons, at least 4 for each bathing season. It must be emphasized that the EU 2006/7 Directive defines the two indicators: Intestinal enterococci (IE) (cfu/100 ml) and Escherichia coli (E. coli) (cfu/100 ml), whereby assessment of Intestinal enterococci (IE) is required for CI 21, as the only mandatory parameter.

89. Therefore, the classification of the bathing waters by EEA is based on the combination of both microbiological parameters, classifying the stations based on the worse status between the two criteria. The same methodology used in the EEA 2020 of the state of bathing water quality was applied to the data set reported by Montenegro, Morocco and Lebanon, however using just Intestinal enterococci (IE). This methodology could not be applied to data from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Israel because 16 data points for 4 consecutive bathing seasons were not available. For these two countries, the

classification was based on the geometric mean calculated for each location. The geometric mean was chosen because it reduces the effect of outliers on the mean and is not influenced by skewed distribution as the arithmetic mean. The assessment findings for CI 21 also includes a tabular overview of the comparison between the two methodologies.

90. Further to the above explanation, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer also expressed readiness of the Secretariat – MED POL to analyze additional information which can be provided by one country concerned with the discrepancy between the national and the 2023 MED QSR assessment findings for CI 21, including also impact of non-classified stations on the assessment results. She also explained that non-classified stations are those which had less than 12 sample results spread over 3-4 bathing seasons; therefore, they could be either in GES or non-GES. The draft status of data reported by one country will also be checked in IMAP IS. The Coordinator confirmed detailed check would be undertaken in bilateral consultations between the MED POL and the concerned country.

91. Taking note of the explanations provided by the Secretariat, the Chair invited the Secretariat to undertake control of the compatibility of one national assessment with the assessment findings presented to the Meeting, as well as any individual concerns which might be expressed by countries to reach the common understanding. She also confirmed that the present assessment finding for CI 21 can be considered accepted.

92. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

### **Agenda item 3.2.3: The Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR: IMAP Common Indicator 19**

93. Under this agenda item, the Monitoring and Assessment Officer presented the Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR related to IMAP Common Indicator 19 as provided in Addendum 1 to the working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3, given team of REMPEC was prevented of attending the Meeting.

94. One meeting participant took the floor to express the position of her country by also submitting it in writing for consideration by the Secretariat – REMPEC. She explained that the assessment of CI 19 should be based on verified data sets. In the present proposal, only MEDGIS-MAR provides data certified by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention. It covers both oil and HNS spills from different types of sources (land and sea). The MEDGIS-MAR data could be efficiently integrated with the Lloyd data and information, but they are related to shipping accidents only. She explained that the major concern for assessment of this CI is related to illegal releases (i.e. offshore spills). In that context, it should be noted that the CleanSeaNet EMSA's service is a useful tool to alert competent authorities, but it needs on-site verification to confirm a spill. Therefore, for her country, this source of information could not be considered reliable for the purpose of CI 19 assessment. She also reminded of the obligation of the users to refer to MEDGIS-MAR regarding verified (true spill). Regarding the levels at which an acute pollution event should be considered as 'significant', she expressed the opinion that it is not completely defined. In that context, she suggested the use of the following criteria: spatial extension of the spill, the tonnage volume, setting a minimum threshold or different classes for all the different criteria, as well as the type and behavior of the spilled substance, sensitivity and vulnerability of the threatened area and possible interaction between substances represent useful criteria. She also advised envisaging an in-depth analysis for illicit discharge detection systems (floating/sinking substances) and a crosscheck dataset for land-based sources of pollution.

95. Another meeting participant suggested the trend analysis by using only data reported by the CPs to REMPEC. He also asked for the correction of Table 4.5.1 by assigning colors to blank cells, as well as by marking all statuses instead of having only the highest statuses marked in this table.

96. One more participant took the floor by expressing an opinion that the present assessment can be considered good work at the first stage. He asked for improvement of the terminology used i.e., expert judgment is not the right term given expert work behind any assessment, however, assessment is based on the data/results assessed by experts. Small spills need to be distinguished i.e. if the frequency of small spills is high, they can contribute to pollution much more than big spills. It is also necessary to assess the spilled volume. Considering the GES definition for CI 19, spill effects on biota need to be assessed. Given this is not provided in the present assessment, he asked the Secretariat to define future steps that will allow assessment of the effects as required for CI 19.

97. The Monitoring and Assessment Officer thanked the countries for the suggestions, confirming that table 4.5.1 will be corrected, along with providing a clearer concept for improvement of CI 19 assessment regarding the negative effects of spills on biota. The proposed additional criteria will be considered by REMPEC in terms of their use for the present assessment of CI 19. In that regard, the Deputy Coordinator further explained that additional work was provided by REMPEC regarding an update of threshold values of CI 19 and assessment of spills` impact on biota in line with the experience and practice of other Regional Seas Programmes. This work will be submitted for consideration at the upcoming Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points. He also commented on the lack of data reported by CPs to REMPEC and the use of the alternative sources for the present assessment, by explaining that despite to formal obligation for data reporting there are still a few countries only which report data, and as it has always been the case, the alternative sources have been used, such as the Lloyd list. Although alternative sources of data might not be fully confident, this was the only option available for the present assessment. To improve the assessment of CI 19, the countries need to comply with the obligation for data reporting.

98. Further to the explanations provided by the Secretariat, the Chair invited the Secretariat to amend assessment findings for their submission to the Integrated CORMONS Meeting.

99. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 3.3.1: The Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR: IMAP Common Indicator 26 and 27**

10. Under this agenda item, Mr. Alessio Maglio, an expert member of the ACCOBAMS, responsible for the scientific support for noise assessment, presented the Proposal of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR related to IMAP Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27 (cCIs 26 and 27), as prepared in collaboration of the UNEP/MAP and the ACCOBAMS Secretariat, and provided in the working document UNEP/MED WG.556/3.

100. One meeting participant sought clarifications: on the exceedance of thresholds was calculated for cCI26; selection of species for the assessment and how results for different species were integrated into GES/non-GES assessment findings; criteria applied for selection of one or more species; iv) the worst case scenario chosen for providing the assessment findings for Candidate Common Indicator 27, and v) whether the noise management measures were considered/developed.

101. Another meeting participant informed that the initial noise assessment was undertaken by national experts, suggesting their feedback be shared with ACCOBAMS.

102. Another meeting participant asked about the use of the vessels without an AIS system for positioning.

103. One more meeting participant asked for the following clarifications: i) how noise levels were calculated for ships i.e., if they were provided as the estimations or measurement; ii) what is the depth layer shown in the noise maps for cCI27; iii) were the rules being established for data reporting from

countries with regards to cCI26 and cCI27, and iv) is the impact of noise on fish catches considered now or this issue will be considered in future.

104. Another meeting participant asked whether the impacts of the recreational craft were addressed, especially small leisure boats that may overcrowd certain areas during touristic seasons and which do not have an AIS system onboard.

105. One meeting participant asked for explanations related to i) the selection of the threshold values of 10% and 20%; ii) the relationships and synergies of noise with other anthropogenic pressures and iii) whether stranding data were considered.

106. Another meeting participant suggested adding the legend in the maps prepared for the assessment, whereby also asking about obligation related to the data reporting by the countries.

107. Regarding the calculation of the exceedance of thresholds for cCI26, the expert of the ACCOBAMS explained that seismic surveys for oil and gas and geophysical exploration, as well as the use of sonar, were represented as a polygon, while pile driving, and explosives were represented as points. A buffer of 20 km (based on scientific literature) was applied around point sources to account for the propagation of noise, while no buffer was applied to polygons as these were considered as an alternative way to account for the propagation. The areas of noise events were summed up yearly and the proportion of habitat of a species of cetacean covered by noise events was calculated.

108. The expert of the ACCOBAMS explained that for the present assessment, the cetacean species were selected given they are known to be impacted by noise. Integration of results deriving from the use of different species in the assessment is still an open issue that needs to be addressed in the next assessment cycle. The species were selected further to the optimal information found about the noise impacts in the scientific literature. He confirmed that the worst-case scenario was chosen for the assessment of cCI 27 by selecting the month of July since it represents a period of the highest levels of ambient noise. He also added that management measures were established for Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) by IMO. However, this aspect is also expected to be fully addressed during the next assessment cycle.

109. Regarding the involvement of the national experts, the representative of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat confirmed that optimal coordination will be set within ongoing EU-funded projects on noise and other relevant initiatives of the ACCOBAMS.

110. It was also explained that only AIS vessels are considered in the present assessment given scientific literature indicates that navigating ships are the main contributors to ambient noise levels in the low frequencies which are the frequencies of interest for cCI27. Since all such ships (cargos, container - ships, tankers, etc.) must have an AIS emitter/receiver onboard under IMO rules, the related modeling approach was robust enough for the purposes of the present assessment. However, the local scale of noise effects may be generated by the fishing vessels and recreational boats which might not have AIS systems onboard. These effects shall be addressed in the future, for example, by including VMS data for fishing vessel positioning and satellite imagery for locating recreational craft.

111. The expert of the ACCOBAMS addressed another set of clarifications requested. He explained that the propagation models were used to estimate the noise propagated from ships, whereby the maps produced show estimated noise levels. These models were calibrated in the WMS Sub-region further to measurements of underwater noise undertaken within the EU-funded QUIETMED project. The measurements were compared to validate the model. However, further improvements may be necessary for other sub-regions. The surface layer is shown in the map (i.e. noise levels at 0-10 meters). It was also explained that fish catches and their impact on fisheries are not currently addressed, however, indicating that the synergies with Ecological Objective 3 may be considered in the future. Regarding data reporting, the ACCOBAMS informed that data calls were launched, and countries were invited to gather data from impulsive noise and continuous noise.

112. Furthermore, the expert of the ACCOBAMS explained that the threshold values of 10% and 20% represent the proportion of habitat of a noise-sensitive species exposed to loud underwater noise levels that can impact cetaceans. The risk was considered regarding the local extinction of cetaceans due to noise disturbance. The methodology applied in the present assessment assumes that the loss of good-quality habitat due to noise disturbance is directly related to the reduction of population size. Hence, the risk of extinction grows with the % of habitat exposed to noise. 10% and 20% are therefore considered low to the negligible risk of extinction, and hence tolerable status.

113. The expert explained that the integration rules between indicators of EO11 and other EOs have not been established yet. It should also be noted that the separate assessments were provided for cCI26 and cCI27.

114. He responded that stranding was not considered given it can be related to short-term/acute effects caused by single very loud noise events. Instead, the present assessment addresses the long-term/chronic effects of exposure to multiple noise events. For this reason, impacts such as “displacement from portions of habitat” better suit the scope of the assessment.

115. Regarding suggestions related to the maps within the present assessments, it was confirmed that the suggested improvements will be addressed.

116. Noting explanations provided by the ACCOBAMS, the Chair invited the Secretariat and ACCOBAMS to amend assessment findings for their submission to the Integrated CORMON Meeting, whereby the present assessment finding for cCIs 26 and 27 can be considered accepted.

117. The conclusions and recommendations under this agenda item are presented in Annex III of this report.

**Agenda item 4: Any Other Business**

118. No issues were raised for this agenda item.

**Agenda item 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

119. Further to expressing its appreciation to the work undertaken by the Secretariat, the Meeting reviewed, commented on, and approved the draft Conclusions and Recommendations as amended and attached to the present report as Annex III.

**Agenda item 6: Closure of the Meeting**

120. After expressing the usual courtesies, the Chair declared the Meeting closed at 17:30 on Thursday 2 March 2023.

**Annex I**  
**List of Participants**

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES / REPRESENTANTS DES  
PARTIES CONTRACTANTES**

<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/ BOSNIE HERZÉGOVINE</b>	<b>Ms. Ana Sudar</b>  <b>Ms. Senida Dzajic – Rghei</b> Researcher
<b>CROATIA/ CROATIE</b>	<b>Ms. Jelena Lusic</b>  <b>Ms. Slavica Matijević</b>
<b>CYPRUS/ CHYPRE</b>	<b>Mr. Konstantinos Antoniadis</b>
<b>EGYPT/ EGYPTÉ</b>	<b>Mr. Sameh Ayoub</b> Water Pollution Expert, MEDPOL Focal Point  <b>Ms. Shaimaa Abdelazim</b> Researcher
<b>FRANCE / FRANCE</b>	<b>Mme. Dorothée Vincent</b> Project manager for eutrophication and pelagic habitats  <b>Mr. Jacek Tronczynski</b> Research scientist  <b>Ms. Lugdiwine Burtschell</b>  <b>Ms. Marine Paul</b> Environmental Engineer
<b>GREECE/ GRÈCE</b>	<b>Ms. Catherine Tsangaris</b> Research Director  <b>Mr. Ioannis Chatzianestis</b>  <b>Ms. Ioanna Varkitzi</b> Senior Research Scientist PhD
<b>ISRAEL/ ISRAEL</b>	<b>Mr. Dror Zurel</b>  <b>Ms. Yael Segal Rozenberg</b>
<b>ITALY/ ITALIE</b>	<b>Ms. Erika Magaletti</b>  <b>Sra. Giulia Romanelli</b>
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	<b>Mr. Salih Diryaq</b>
<b>MALTA/ MALTE</b>	<b>Ms. Roberta Debono</b> Environment Protection Officer
<b>MONTENEGRO/ MONTÉNÉGRO</b>	<b>Ms. Milena Bataković</b> Senior Advisor  <b>Ms. Milica Rudic</b>
<b>MOROCCO/ MAROC</b>	<b>Mr. Mohammed El Bouch</b> Département de l'Environnement  <b>Mr. Samir Benbrahim</b>
<b>SLOVENIA/ SLOVÉNIE</b>	<b>Ms. Elizabeta Gabrijelcic</b>  <b>Ms. Mateja Poje</b> Environmental Engineer
<b>SPAIN/ ESPAGNE</b>	<b>Ms. Candela García Gómez</b> Instituto Español de Oceanografía  <b>Ms. Nerea Valcarcel-Perez</b> Instituto Español de Oceanografía  <b>Mr. Rubén Moreno-González</b> Instituto Español de Oceanografía
<b>SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC/ RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE</b>	<b>Mr. Ahmad Naman</b>  <b>Mr. Muhammad Daher</b> MAP-Barcelona Convention National Focal Point in Syria
<b>TUNISIA/ TUNISIE</b>	<b>Ms. Afef Fathalli</b>  <b>Mr. Lassaad Chouba</b> Professor research



**REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND  
OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS / REPRESENTANTS DES  
INSTITUTIONS SPECIALISEES DES NATIONS UNIES ET AUTRES  
ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES**

<p><b>AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS OF THE BLACK SEA, MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND CONTIGUOUS ATLANTIC AREA/ACCORD SUR LA CONSERVATION DES CETACES DE LA MER NOIRE, DE LA MEDITERRANEE ET DE LA ZONE ATLANTIQUE ADJACENTE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Alessio Maglio</b>  <b>Ms. Mailys Salivas</b></p>
<p><b>IAEA- MESL</b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Philippe Bersuder</b> Laboratory Head</p>
<p><b>COMMISSION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE BLACK SEA AGAINST POLLUTION</b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Iryna Makarenko</b> <b>PMA Officer</b></p>
<p><b>THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE RED SEA AND GULF OF ADEN (PERSGA)</b></p>	<p><b>Dr: Mohammed Ismail Ahmed</b> Coordinator of Economic Valuation and Sensitivity Mapping Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</p>

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS / ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES**

<b>AIR CENTRE - ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE/ CENTRE AIR -</b>	<b>Mr. Andre Valente</b>
<b>TURKISH MARINE RESEARCH FOUNDATION/</b>	<b>Ms. Ülgen Aytan</b>

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME – COORDINATING UNIT AND  
COMPONENTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN  
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT – UNITÉ DE  
COORDINATION ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

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**Annex II**  
**Agenda of the Meeting**

## **Agenda**

- Agenda item 1:** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda item 2:** Organizational Matters
- Agenda item 3:** 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (QSR): Pollution Ecological Objectives (EO5, EO9):
- 3.1. Chapters on EO5 (Eutrophication):
    - 3.1.1 Common Indicators 13 and 14
  - 3.2. Chapters on EO9 (Pollution):
    - 3.2.1 Common Indicator 17
    - 3.2.2 Common Indicator 18
    - 3.2.3 Common Indicator 19
    - 3.2.4 Common Indicator 20
    - 3.2.5 Common Indicator 21
  - 3.3. Chapters on EO11 (Noise):
    - 3.3.1 Candidate Common Indicator 26 and 27
- Agenda item 4:** Conclusions and recommendations
- Agenda item 5:** Any other business
- Agenda item 6:** Closure of the Meeting

**Annex III**  
**Conclusions and Recommendations**

## Conclusions and Recommendations

On 1 and 2 March 2023, the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring was held in Athens, Greece. The Meeting was organized by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat (MED POL Programme).

Following the review and discussion of the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3 “Proposals of the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters of the 2023 MED QSR”, the Meeting reached the following conclusions with regards to the assessment of IMAP Common Indicators 13 and 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26 and 27:

### IMAP Common Indicators 13 and 14:

1. The Meeting approved the assessment findings related to the NEAT GES Assessment of the Adriatic Sea Sub-region as presented in the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3. The Meeting recommended the submission of the final version to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to incorporating the supplementary information provided by several participants as presented in the Meeting report.
2. The Meeting agreed to amend assessment findings related to the Simplified G/M Comparison Assessment in the Alboran Sea Sub-division in the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-region with a view to ensure their submission to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 by considering additional information on the finest spatial assessment units of Spain and the use of algorithm to improve accuracy of the satellite derived *Chla* data from COPERNICUS subject to the submission of additional information to the Secretariat no later than 17 March 2023.
3. The Meeting agreed to amend assessment findings related to the Simplified G/M Comparison Assessment in the Levantine Sea Subdivision of the Aegean-Levantine Sea Sub-region with a view to ensure their submission to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 by addressing the request to better clarify the use of an additional assessment, tentatively performed for every satellite-derived *Chla* point of the data grid.
4. In order to finalize chapters related to assessment of eutrophication for their submission to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023, and due to the lack of in situ measurements, the Meeting agreed to the use of satellite-derived *Chla* data for the application of the Simplified G/M comparison for the assessment of the remaining sub-divisions of the Aegean-Levantine Sea, the Central Mediterranean Sea, and the Western-Mediterranean Sea Sub-regions by also taking note of additional information to be submitted to the Secretariat no later than 17 March 2023, with exception of the Tyrrhenian Sea Sub-division where the Ecological Quality Ratio (EQR) methodology will be applied further to the significant quantum of data reported for this subdivision.
5. Although it is impossible to elaborate on additional data which still might be reported to IMAP Info System after 31 October 2022, the cutoff date for data reporting, the Countries are encouraged to continue reporting data on nutrients and *chl<sub>a</sub>*, as available, with a view to their use for checking the assessment findings based on satellite-derived *Chla* data.

### IMAP Common Indicator 17:

6. The Meeting approved assessment findings related to the NEAT GES Assessment of the Adriatic Sea and the Western Mediterranean Sea Sub-regions as presented in the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3. The Meeting recommended the submission of the final version to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to



incorporating the supplementary information and requests provided by several participants as presented in the Meeting report.

7. The Meeting recognized the lack of availability and the non-homogeneity of data while noting difficulties that the Contracting Parties had faced for timely submission of the required data. The Meeting agreed that the submission of additional data and information might not be possible to optimally address at this final stage of the 2023 MED QSR preparation process.
8. The Meeting concurred that both NEAT and CHASE+ assessment methods produce comparable results with respect to good/moderate statuses assessment. The Secretariat committed to further streamlining both assessment methods in the future, as appropriate.

**IMAP Common Indicator 18:**

9. In view of lack of availability of data on biomarkers, and difficulties the Contracting Parties had faced in uploading data online in the IMAP Info System, the Meeting approved assessment findings as presented in the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3. The Meeting recommended the submission of the final version to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to analyzing possible complementary use of additional data which might be submitted offline to the Secretariat by 17 March in the format of CI 18 Data Dictionaries. The Meeting agreed that the submission of additional data and information might not be possible to optimally address at this final stage of the 2023 MED QSR preparation process.

**IMAP Common Indicator 19:**

10. The Meeting agreed to amend assessment findings for their submission to the Integrated CORMON Meeting by considering additional supplementary information provided by several participants as presented in the Meeting report.

**IMAP Common Indicator 20:**

11. Taking into consideration the lack of availability of data on Common Indicator 20, and difficulties the Contracting Parties had faced in uploading data online in the IMAP Info System, the Meeting approved assessment findings as presented in the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3. The Meeting recommended the submission of the final version to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to analyzing possible complementary use of additional data which might be submitted offline to the Secretariat by 17 March in the format of CI 20 Data Dictionaries. The Meeting agreed that additional data and information might not be possible to optimally address at this final stage of the 2023 MED QSR preparation.

**IMAP Common Indicator 21:**

12. The Meeting approved the assessment findings related to bathing water quality as presented in the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3. The Meeting recommended the submission of the final version to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to considering the compatibility of one national assessment with the assessment findings presented to the Meeting. The Meeting also agreed that any individual Contracting Party would address its individual concerns with the Secretariat to reach the common understanding and solution.

**IMAP Candidate Indicators 26 and 27:**

13. The Meeting approved the assessment findings related to impulsive and continuous noise as presented in the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.556/3. The Meeting

recommended the submission of the final version to the Integrated CORMON Meeting to be held in June 2023 further to considering additional supplementary information provided by several participants as presented in the Meeting report.

**The Meeting:**

14. Agreed on a necessity to address needs for capacity building of the Contracting Parties regarding the use of the assessment methodologies as part of the proposed activities in the PoW to be submitted to COP23 for the biennium 2024-2025.
15. Expressed its appreciation for the support provided by the Partners and the Contracting Parties of UNEP/MAP regarding the use of data and scientific literature for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR IMAP Pollution Cluster.

### **Conclusions et recommandations**

La réunion du groupe de correspondance de l'approche écosystémique sur la surveillance de la pollution s'est tenue à Athènes, Grèce ;1 et 2 mars 2023. La réunion était organisée par le Secrétariat du PNUE/PAM (Programme MED POL).

Suite à l'examen et à la discussion du document de travail UNEP/MED WG.556/3 « Propositions des chapitres du QSR MED 2023 relatifs aux clusters de pollution IMAP », la réunion est parvenue aux conclusions suivantes concernant l'évaluation des indicateurs communs IMAP 13 et 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26 et 27 :

#### **Indicateurs communs 13 et 14 de l'IMAP :**

1. La réunion a approuvé les résultats de l'évaluation NEAT GES de la sous-région de la mer Adriatique tels que présentés dans le document de travail UNEP/MED WG.556/3. La réunion a recommandé de soumettre la version finale à la réunion intégrée CORMON qui se tiendra en juin 2023, après avoir incorporé les informations supplémentaires fournies par plusieurs participants, telles que présentées dans le rapport de la réunion.
2. La réunion a convenu de modifier les résultats de l'évaluation de la comparaison simplifiée G/M dans la sous-division de la mer d'Alboran dans la sous-région de la Méditerranée occidentale en vue d'assurer leur soumission à la réunion CORMON Intégrée qui se tiendra en juin 2023 en prenant en compte des informations supplémentaires sur les unités d'évaluation spatiale les plus fines d'Espagne et l'utilisation d'un algorithme pour améliorer la précision des données CHL<sub>a</sub> dérivées par satellite provenant de COPERNICUS, sous réserve de la soumission de documents d'information supplémentaires au Secrétariat au plus tard le 17 mars 2023.
3. La réunion a convenu de modifier les résultats de l'évaluation de la comparaison simplifiée G/M dans la subdivision de la mer du Levant de la sous-région de la mer Égée et de la mer du Levant en vue d'assurer leur soumission à la réunion CORMON Intégrée qui se tiendra en juin 2023 en répondant à la demande de mieux clarifier l'utilisation d'une évaluation supplémentaire, provisoirement réalisée pour chaque point CHL<sub>a</sub> de la grille de données dérivée par satellite.
4. Afin de finaliser les chapitres relatifs à l'évaluation de l'eutrophisation pour leur soumission à la réunion CORMON Intégrée qui se tiendra en juin 2023, et en raison du manque de mesures in situ, la réunion a approuvé l'utilisation des données satellitaires CHL<sub>a</sub> pour l'application de la comparaison simplifiée G/M pour l'évaluation des sous-divisions restantes des sous-régions de la mer Égée et de la mer du Levant, de la mer Méditerranée centrale et de la mer Méditerranée occidentale, en prenant également note des informations complémentaires à soumettre au Secrétariat au plus tard le 17 mars 2023, à l'exception de la sous-division de la mer Tyrrhénienne où la méthodologie de l'indice de qualité écologique sera appliquée en raison de la quantité importante de données rapportées pour cette sous-division.
5. Bien qu'il soit impossible d'élaborer sur les données supplémentaires qui pourraient encore être communiquées au système d'information IMAP après 31 octobre 2022, la date limite de communication des données, les pays sont encouragés à continuer à communiquer les données sur les nutriments et la CHL<sub>a</sub>, selon les disponibilités, en vue de leur utilisation pour vérifier les résultats de l'évaluation basés sur les données de CHL<sub>a</sub> dérivées par satellite.

**Indicateur commun 17 de l'IMAP :**

6. La réunion a approuvé les résultats de l'évaluation NEAT GES des sous-régions de la mer Adriatique et de la Méditerranée occidentale, tels que présentés dans le document de travail UNEP/MED WG.556/3. La réunion a recommandé de soumettre la version finale à la réunion intégrée CORMON qui se tiendra en juin 2023, après avoir incorporé les informations et demandes supplémentaires fournies par plusieurs participants, telles que présentées dans le rapport de la réunion.
7. La réunion a reconnu le manque de disponibilité et la non-homogénéité des données, tout en notant les difficultés rencontrées par les parties contractantes pour soumettre les données requises dans les délais. La réunion a convenu qu'il pourrait ne pas être possible de traiter de manière optimale des données et informations supplémentaires soumises à ce stade final du processus de préparation du QSR MED 2023.
8. La réunion a convenu que les méthodes d'évaluation NEAT et CHASE+ produisent des résultats comparables par rapport à l'évaluation des statuts bon/modéré. Le Secrétariat s'est engagé à rationaliser davantage les deux méthodes d'évaluation dans le futur le cas échéant.

**Indicateur commun 18 de l'IMAP :**

9. Compte tenu du manque de disponibilité des données sur les biomarqueurs, et des difficultés rencontrées par les Parties contractantes pour télécharger les données en ligne dans le système d'information IMAP, la réunion a approuvé les résultats de l'évaluation tels que présentés dans le document de travail UNEP/MED WG.556/3. La réunion a recommandé de soumettre la version finale à la réunion intégrée CORMON qui se tiendra en juin 2023, après avoir analysé l'utilisation complémentaire possible des données supplémentaires qui pourraient être soumises hors ligne au Secrétariat avant le 17 mars au format des dictionnaires de données CI 18. La réunion a convenu qu'il pourrait ne pas être possible de traiter de manière optimale des données et informations supplémentaires soumises à ce stade final du processus de préparation du QSR MED 2023.

**Indicateur commun 19 de l'IMAP :**

10. La réunion est convenue de modifier les conclusions de l'évaluation en vue de leur soumission à la réunion CORMON Intégrée en tenant compte des informations supplémentaires fournies par plusieurs participants telles que présentées dans le rapport de la réunion.

**Indicateur commun 20 de l'IMAP :**

11. Compte tenu du manque de disponibilité des données sur l'Indicateur Commun 20, et des difficultés rencontrées par les Parties Contractantes pour télécharger les données en ligne dans le système d'information IMAP, la Réunion a approuvé les résultats de l'évaluation tels que présentés dans le Document de Travail UNEP/MED WG.556/3. La réunion a recommandé la soumission de la version finale à la réunion intégrée CORMON qui se tiendra en juin 2023, après avoir analysé l'utilisation complémentaire possible de données supplémentaires qui pourraient être soumises hors ligne au Secrétariat avant le 17 mars sous forme de dictionnaires de données CI 20. La réunion a convenu qu'il n'était peut-être pas possible de traiter de manière optimale les données et informations supplémentaires à ce stade final de la préparation du QSR MED 2023.

**Indicateur commun 21 de l'IMAP :**

12. La réunion a approuvé les conclusions de l'évaluation relatives à la qualité des eaux de baignade telles que présentées dans le document de travail UNEP/MED WG.556/3. La réunion a recommandé la soumission de la version finale à la réunion CORMON Intégrée qui se tiendra en juin 2023 suite à l'examen de la compatibilité d'une évaluation nationale avec les conclusions de l'évaluation présentées à la réunion. La réunion a également convenu que chaque Partie contractante adresserait ses préoccupations individuelles au Secrétariat pour parvenir à une compréhension et à une solution commune.

**Indicateurs candidats 26 et 27 de l'IMAP :**

13. La réunion a approuvé les conclusions de l'évaluation relatives au bruit impulsif et continu telles que présentées dans le document de travail UNEP/MED WG.556/3. La réunion a recommandé la soumission de la version finale à la réunion CORMON Intégrée qui se tiendra en juin 2023 après avoir examiné les informations supplémentaires fournies par plusieurs participants, telles que présentées dans le rapport de la réunion.

**La réunion :**

14. a également convenu de la nécessité d'aborder les besoins de renforcement des capacités des parties contractantes concernant l'utilisation des méthodologies d'évaluation dans le cadre des activités proposées dans le Programme de travail qui sera soumis à la COP23 pour la période 2024-2025.
15. a exprimé sa reconnaissance pour le soutien apporté par les partenaires et les Parties contractantes du PNUE/PAM concernant l'utilisation des données et de la littérature scientifique pour la préparation du QSR MED 2023 pour les clusters pollution de l'IMAP.