



MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN - UNEP



Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas - Tunis

Meeting of the working group on criteria
for the preparation of inventories of the elements
of biological diversity in the Mediterranean
(Tunis, 6-7 March 1997)

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP
ON CRITERIA FOR THE PREPARATION OF
INVENTORIES OF THE ELEMENTS OF BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

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Introduction

The Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its Protocols (1-4 July 1996) invited the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) to prepare common criteria and guidelines for the preparation of inventories of sites, species and other elements of biodiversity.

Within the fulfilment of this mandate, SPA/RAC established an *ad hoc* working group composed of representatives of international organizations competent in this domain.

A meeting of the above-mentioned working group was convened by SPA/RAC in Tunis (Tunisia) on 6 and 7 March 1997. The Agenda of the meeting is attached as Annex I to the present report.

A document containing draft common criteria for site selection and preparation of inventories and a proposal for the definition of the geographic scope of the inventories was prepared by SPA/RAC and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and proposed as working basis for the meeting.

Participants

A list of participants is attached as Annex II to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

The Director of SPA/RAC opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He warmly thanked the organizations represented at the meeting for having accepted the invitation to join the working group, what was expected to enhance the already fruitful collaboration among SPA/RAC and those organizations in the Mediterranean region. He gave an overview of the activities undertaken by SPA/RAC with a view to assisting the Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations concerning the preparation of inventories pursuant to the relevant provisions of the MAP Phase II and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean. These activities included *inter alia* the elaboration of common criteria for the preparation of the inventories, to be agreed and adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The meeting of the working group was expected to represent a major step in the process of elaboration of the criteria, its outcomes having to constitute the main working basis of a meeting of experts representatives of the Contracting Parties, expected to finalize the criteria with a view to their adoption, presumably at the occasion of the X Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 2: Background information on the framework of the project: MAP Phase II and Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean

As an introduction to the work of the meeting, the expert of SPA/RAC gave the participants an overview of the process which led to the recent revision of the institutional, programmatic and legal framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan. He briefly illustrated the outlines of the two instruments relevant to the object of the meeting, namely the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II) and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean.

Agenda item 3: Drawing up of draft criteria for the preparation of inventories of the elements of biological diversity in the Mediterranean

3.1 Object of the inventories

The objective of discussions under this sub-item was the elaboration of a proposal by the group concerning the actual object of the inventories, having as a reference the relevant articles of MAP Phase II (section 2.1) and of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (art. 3 and 15). The following main points were agreed:

- (i) The main objective of the preparation of the inventories shall be the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity; in this connection, the inventories should be conceived in such a way that they could represent an effective operational instrument for the protection and management of biological diversity in the region;
- (ii) regular updating is expected to represent a key element in the maintaining of the inventories, greatly enhancing their efficacy for conservation purposes; clear provisions in this regard are contained in the MAP PHASE II. Regular updating implies the establishment of monitoring systems aimed at regularly assessing the state of the elements that are the subject of the inventories;
- (iii) as a consequence of the previous points, the inventories should not be regarded as simple listing of elements, but should contain for each listed element the information useful at its conservation and monitoring;
- (iv) species and natural sites should constitute the elements of separate inventories, at least at the national level;
- (v) the inventories of species should take the form of Red Lists, being therefore limited to endangered and threatened species.

3.2 Geographic scope of the inventories

In the absence of a precise definition of the geographic coverage of the MAP Phase II and the Protocol, in particular as regards terrestrial coastal areas, the meeting recognized that it would be opportune that an operational definition of geographic

scope limited to the purpose of the inventories be agreed among the Parties.

However the difficulty was recognized of identifying a generally acceptable definition of the term "coastal". Three distinct definitions of "coastal sites" and "coastal species" were elaborated, with a view to be submitted as alternative options to the planned meeting of experts representative of the Contracting Parties. They are attached to the present report as Annex III.

Regarding marine areas, the meeting considered that the definition of the Mediterranean Sea Area delimited in Art. 2 of the Protocol should logically apply to the inventories.

3.3 Elaboration of draft criteria and identification of standards for the preparation of inventories

3.3.1 National inventories of sites

The discussions of the meeting on this sub-item led to the following main proposals by the group:

(i) The inventories should include both already protected and unprotected sites.

(ii) The presence of sensitive elements of biological diversity being indicated by the relevant articles of MAP Phase II and the Protocol as the main criterion for the selection of sites to be listed in the inventories, the preparation of reference lists of these elements was suggested. In particular, the preparation of a list of threatened habitats and of a list of threatened species was proposed. These lists, to be commonly agreed among the Parties at the outset of the process of preparation of the inventories, should constitute one of the main tools for the identification of sites to be listed.

(a) Concerning the list of threatened habitats, the opportuneness of referring in its elaboration to already existing classification systems was stressed. In particular, the CORINE Habitat Classification (CEC, 1991) and its extension to the Palaearctic region (Devillers P. & Devillers-Tershuren J.;, 1994), and their applications to contexts such as the Habitat Directive/Natura 2000 network and Resolution No. 4 (1996) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention were recommended as a reference.

(b) Concerning the list of threatened species; it should include the species in the area of application of the inventories classifiable as "endangered" or "threatened" as per the relevant definitions provided by the Protocol. However, in order to make use of already existing compilation works, an equivalence between the Protocol definitions and other existing, widely accepted standards such as the threatened species categories of IUCN/SSC should be determined.

(iii) In order to ensure full comparability within and among countries of the information relative to the listed sites, the development of a standard data form

was recommended. Without entering into technical details, expected to be examined when eventually elaborating the data form, the meeting suggested a tentative list of items/fields to be covered by data and information concerning each inventoried site. The list is attached as annex IV to this report. Again, compatibility with the ongoing initiatives, in particular Natura 2000 and the Emerald Network was strongly recommended.

3.3.2 Regional inventories of sites

Under this sub-item, the meeting discussed and amended the draft criteria for the selection of natural sites to be included in the regional inventory. The amended draft criteria are attached as Annex V to this report.

National inventories should represent the basis for the selection of sites to be included in the regional inventory. However, depending on the finally agreed geographical coverage for the inventories, the regional inventory could also include marine areas partly or wholly in international waters. The inclusion of transboundary areas would also be possible, and should be encouraged.

3.3.3 National inventories of species

3.3.4 Regional inventories of species

In compiling these inventories, expected to deal with endangered and threatened species, the meeting suggested the use of the new IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria (IUCN, 1994). It was however noted that the new IUCN Categories and Criteria were developed primarily for application on the global scale, i.e. for judging the extinction risk of a whole taxon. The application of the new categories at the national or regional level would require therefore the development of specific guidelines, which are however currently been developed within IUCN.

The meeting agreed to recognize the following equivalence between the definitions of endangered and threatened species according to the Protocol and the new IUCN categories: endangered (Protocol) = critically endangered and endangered (IUCN); Threatened (Protocol) = vulnerable (IUCN).

Concerning the national inventories, the opportuneness that information concerning each taxon be provided in a standardized format was agreed. In the eventual elaboration of a standard data form, the format used for the preparation of IUCN Red Lists was proposed as a reference.

4. **Closure of the meeting**

After the customary exchange of courtesies, the Director of SPA/RAC closed the meeting on Friday 7 March at 16,30.

ANNEX I

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Background information on the framework of the project: MAP Phase II and Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean
3. Drawing up of draft criteria for the preparation of inventories of the elements of biological diversity in the Mediterranean
 - 3.1 Object of the inventories
 - 3.2 Geographic scope of the inventories
 - 3.3 Elaboration of draft criteria and identification of standards for the preparation of inventories
 - 3.3.1 National inventories of sites
 - 3.3.2 Regional inventories of sites
 - 3.3.3 National inventories of species
 - 3.3.4 Regional inventories of species
4. Closure of the meeting

ANNEX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX IV

Format of information concerning the sites included in the national inventories (draft proposal by the Meeting of the working group on criteria, Tunis, 6-7 March 1997)

- site name
- site location
- area
- site length (if possible)
- description of the site:
 - threatened marine and coastal habitats (as per agreed reference list) present on the site and site assessment for them;
 - threatened marine and coastal species (as per agreed reference list) present in the site and site assessment for them;
 - other habitats and species of conservation interest;
 - invasive species;
 - other prominent natural features;
- reasons for choice
- conservation status
- threats
- human activities in and around the site and their impact
- land tenure
- protection status
- main conservation regulations
- international designation
- conservation projects being implemented
- management plans and practices

- authority responsible for the management of the site
- other institutions/organizations involved in site management (universities , NGOs, ...)
- date
- Documentation on the site:
 - site map
 - scientific publications and reports
 - aerial photographs
 - other pertinent material

ANNEX III

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE DEFINITION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE INVENTORIES

The following alternatives are proposed in order to define the geographical scope of the inventories:

1. Referring to the MAR Project for the conservation and management of temperate marshes, bogs and other wetlands, which in the 1965 publication "List of European and North African Wetlands of International Importance" defines coastal as "within 10km of the sea-shore or tidal-waters", the following tentative definitions are proposed:

Coastal sites: sites within 10km of the sea-shore or tidal water;

Coastal species: species regularly occurring in sites within 10km of the sea-shore or tidal water, in at least one stage of its life cycle.

2. Coastal sites: sites including a stretch of coastline or being directly affected by marine salinity (e.g. coastal lagoons, estuaries, etc. up to the limit of freshwater, tidal flats, dunes, cliffs, ...);

Coastal species: species directly linked to the marine environment in at least one stage of its life cycle and/or regularly occurring in coastal sites.

3. Coastal sites: sites including one or more coastal habitat types and/or supporting permanent or regularly occurring populations of coastal species;
- Coastal species: species characteristic of coastal habitats

(Note: reference lists of threatened marine and coastal habitats and of threatened marine and coastal species should be elaborated within the criteria for the preparation of the national inventories of sites)

ANNEX V

MEDITERRANEAN INVENTORY OF NATURAL SITES OF REGIONAL CONSERVATION INTEREST

CRITERIA FOR SITE SELECTION

The identification of regionally important natural sites needs to be based on a consistent set of criteria.

Sites should be selected on at least one of the following criteria:

- (i) they contribute substantially to the survival of species that are:
 - globally threatened, or
 - endangered in the Mediterranean region, or
 - threatened and endemic to the Mediterranean region, or
 - included in annex 2 and 3 of the Protocol;
- (ii) they support important populations of one or more species [e.g. it supports at least 1 % of the population of a species];
- (iii) they have a high diversity of species, communities, habitats or ecosystems;
- (iv) they contain an important sample of one or more endangered habitat types;
- (v) they contain highly representative habitat types or ecological processes;
- (vi) they contain outstanding natural features, landscapes or seascapes;
- (vii) the site is internationally recognised (e.g. Ramsar, World Heritage, Council of Europe Diploma site, SPAMI,...);
- (viii) they otherwise contribute substantially to the conservation of biological diversity in the Mediterranean.