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8th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group

Videoconference, 9 September 2021

Agenda Item 3: Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap**Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap****VI. Revision of existing monitoring programmes for ongoing assessment and regular updating of targets****Corrigenda**

In paragraph 42 of the original text, *substitute* UNEP/MED WG.514/7 and UNEP/MED WG.514/8) *with* (UNEP/MED WG.514/Inf.11 and UNEP/MED WG.514/Inf.12).

In paragraph 42 of the original text, *substitute* (UNEP/MED WG.514/10, UNEP/MED WG.514/11, UNEP/MED WG.514/12) *with* (UNEP/MED WG.514/7, UNEP/MED WG.514/8, UNEP/MED WG.514/9).

In paragraph 51 of the original text, *substitute* (UNEP/MED WG.514/Inf.9 and Inf.10) *with* (UNEP/MED WG.514/Inf.13 and Inf.14).

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**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

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Agenda Item 3: Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap

Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2021

Note by the Secretariat

The present report prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with MAP components, provides information on the status of implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap, adopted by the 15th meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 15) through Decision IG. 17/6, as well as of the Ecosystem approach-related Decisions adopted respectively by COP 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21.

It provides updated information on the status of implementation of the seven steps of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap, with more detailed description of achievements during the 2020-2021 biennium and their results.

The current report is an updated version of the report submitted to the 7th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Group on the implementation of Ecosystem Approach Roadmap (2019). The updated information is presented in bold for ease of reference.

Review of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap implementation (COP15 Decision IG. 17/6) and the Ecosystem Approach related Decisions of COP 17, 18, 19 and 20 (Decisions IG.20/4, IG.21/3, IG.22/7 and IG.23/6)

Ecosystem Approach Roadmap Steps	Status
I. Definition of an ecological vision for the Mediterranean	Completed
<p>1. With regards to the implementation of the first step of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap, the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2008 (COP15) agreed on the following ecological vision for the Mediterranean in its Decision IG.17/6:</p> <p><i>“A healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse for the benefit of present and future generations”</i></p>	
II. Setting of common Mediterranean strategic goals	Completed
<p>2. COP15 also agreed upon a set of strategic goals for marine and coastal areas, with its Decision IG.17/6, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>To protect, allow recovery and, where practicable, restore the structure and function of marine and coastal ecosystems thus also protecting biodiversity, in order to achieve and maintain good ecological status and allow for their sustainable use.</i> b) <i>To reduce pollution in the marine and coastal environment so as to minimize impacts on and risks to human and/or ecosystem health and/or uses of the sea and the coasts.</i> c) <i>To prevent, reduce and manage the vulnerability of the sea and the coasts to risks induced by human activities and natural events;</i> 	
III. Identification of important ecosystem properties and assessment of ecological status and pressures	Completed
<p>3. A number of assessment products have been prepared by the Secretariat since the adoption of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap, with the contribution of Contracting Parties, all MAP Components, relevant partners and regional stakeholders, with the view to provide a clearer image of the state of environment in the Mediterranean and define the main pressures and their sources. More in particular:</p> <p>4. The Initial Integrated Assessment of the Mediterranean Sea and Coastal Areas was prepared in 2011, based on available knowledge and information. This initial assessment was undertaken at sub-regional and regional levels. A summary for decision makers, providing the main findings and priorities was submitted and endorsed by the COP17 with its Decision IG. 20/4.</p> <p>5. The State of the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Environment Report (SoER MED 2012) was prepared and published in 2012. It provides valuable information on the main human induced pressures, the state and impacts on the Mediterranean Ecosystems, while its last part presents the regional regulatory framework and identifies gaps and key steps for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach. Furthermore, a methodology was developed to assess cost benefit and ecosystem services. The Initial Assessment report included a chapter on socio economic aspects.</p> <p>6. The UNEP/MAP system delivered in 2017 the first ever Quality Status Report for the Mediterranean (2017 MED QSR, https://www.medqsr.org/). The MED 2017 QSR was based on region-wide Ecological Objectives and IMAP Common Indicators. It was built upon existing data and complemented with inputs from numerous diverse sources.</p>	

7. The preparation of MED QSR 2017 has followed a multi-step comprehensive review process, which has involved all relevant MAP Components, the CORMON experts, MAP Component Focal Points and Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group. Key partners such as the GFCM and ACCOBAMS have also contributed to this process.

8. The MED QSR 2017 was endorsed by Decision 22/6 on the 2017 MED QSR of COP 20 (Tirana, Albania, December 2017) and presented as an online interactive report, complemented by an executive summary and policy recommendations.

9. In line with the 6-year ecosystem approach cycle and the IMAP implementation timeline, the next MED QSR will be delivered in 2023.

10. Following Decision IG.23/6 of COP 20 (Tirana, Albania, December 2017), as well as the recommendations of the IMAP Best Practices Meeting laid out in UNEP/MED WG.450/3, the Secretariat has prepared the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment. It provides for a vision of DPSIR-based GES assessment of the 2023 MED QSR along with a short list of key priority needs, main processes and milestones and related outputs. The 87th Meeting of the Bureau considered and welcomed the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment that was thereafter presented to members of the EcAp Coordination Group for written consultation, and consequently concluded by the end of 2018, as requested by COP 20. This document was approved by Decision IG.24/4 of COP 21 (Naples, Italy, December 2019). The Roadmap outputs were integrated into the Programme of Work for 2020-2021 and proposed Programme of Work for 2022-2023 as well as in the new UNEP/MAP MTS 2022-2027.

11. The work of the UNEP/MAP system in the 2020-2021 biennium focused on the implementation of identified priority activities required for the successful delivery of the 2023 MED QSR. To this aim, an Operational Plan was developed including concrete activities per each Milestone/Output of the Roadmap, supported by the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021 and proposed Programme of Work 2022-2023, and externally funded Projects (namely, the EU-funded EcAp MED III, IMAP MPA, Marine Litter Med II, and GEF Adriatic Projects) (Document UNEP/MED WG.514/Inf.7).

12. The work focused on two parallel streams: a) supporting the implementation of the national monitoring programmes in a number of Contracting Parties to deliver real-time and quality-assured data that would contribute to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR; and b) undertaking further analysis of available data and methodologies to support the assessment component of IMAP, i.e., to progress in reaching a common understanding and agreement on monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, thresholds and baselines values, and progressing in developing aggregation rules towards integrated assessment for GES for a number of IMAP Common Indicators. These proposals were discussed, reviewed, and generally agreed by the CORMONs per each cluster, and by the respective MAP Components Focal Points which considered these proposals as evolving documents. Testing and further work in 2021 and in the first half of 2022 for their validation is needed. It has been agreed that work will continue through CORMONs and Online Working Groups (OWGs) in close collaboration with the Contracting Parties that would volunteer for their testing and application

13. The Secretariat also worked towards the finalization of the 2023 MED QSR Development Approach and Structure through discussion at the Integrated CORMON meeting (December 2020) and further refinement in consultation with Contracting Parties in 2021 for possible endorsement at the present meeting (UNEP/MED WG.514/5).

14. The preparation of the updated Transboundary Diagnostics Analysis (TDA) for the Mediterranean, funded through the GEF MedProgramme project, has started in 2021. The table of contents has been elaborated by the Secretariat in 2021, including the identification of priority transboundary issues. Also, to perform an accurate analysis of the needs of the beneficiary countries (i.e., Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Montenegro,

Tunisia and Turkey), an assessment was performed of their National Action Plans, as well as of existing scientific knowledge, to further develop the TDA Work Plan and to identify consultancy needs to support the TDA update process in each project eligible country.

15. Coordination for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR with the TDA has been ensured through regular meetings at UNEP/MAP Secretariat level and with involved MAP Components, aiming to identify and ensure complementarities and synergies between the processes of preparation of the two reports.

16. The study on trends and outlook of marine pollution from ships and activities and of maritime traffic and offshore activities in the Mediterranean, has been prepared by REMPEC and reviewed by the 14th REMPEC Focal Points. This Study will contribute to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR and Med2050.

IV. Development of a set of ecological objectives corresponding to the vision and strategic goals

Completed

17. COP17 adopted a set of 11 Ecological Objectives based on Article 18 of the Barcelona Convention and in line with the agreed ecological vision and strategic goals for the Mediterranean under the ecosystem approach (Decision IG. 20/4).

18. The 11 Ecological Objectives are the following:

EO 1. Biodiversity, EO 2. Non-indigenous species, EO 3. Harvest of commercially exploited fish and shellfish, EO 4. Marine food webs, EO 5. Eutrophication, EO 6. Sea-floor integrity, EO 7. Hydrography, EO 8. Coastal ecosystems and landscapes. EO 9. Pollution, EO 10. Marine litter, EO 11. Energy including underwater noise.

19. The development and negotiation of these ecological objectives were based on the initial assessment report.

V. Derivation of operational objectives with indicators and target levels

Completed

20. As indicated above, COP 17 adopted 11 Ecological Objectives. For each Ecological Objective a set of Operational Objectives and indicators were also adopted on that occasion (IG.20/4). The purpose was to break down and complement the ecological objectives to support their achievement, guide monitoring and assessment and as such the progress towards Good Environmental Status (GES).

21. Although COP 17 (Decision IG.20/4) adopted indicators for all the operational objectives, it was decided to focus, during the initial phase of Ecosystem Approach Roadmap implementation, on those ecological objectives for which data availability and methodological advancements would allow their effective monitoring. Therefore, COP18, on the basis of article 18 of the Barcelona Convention and relevant provisions from its related Protocols, adopted an integrated list of Mediterranean Good Environmental Status definitions and related targets.

22. The integrated list of GES definitions and related targets as presented in Decision IG.21/3 covers the following Ecological Objectives: a) Biodiversity (Operational Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4), EO 2 on NIS (Operational Objectives 2.1, 2.2), EO 5 on Eutrophication (Operational Objectives 5.1, 5.2, 5.3), EO 7 on Hydrography (Operational Objectives 7.1, 7.2, 7.3), EO 8 on Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes (Operational Objective 8.1), EO 9 on Pollution (Operational Objectives 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5) and EO 10 on Marine Litter (Operational Objectives 10.1, 10.2).

23. The Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) per each cluster and the Correspondence Group on GES and Targets (CORGEST) groups, with the overall guidance of the Ecosystem Approach

Coordination Group and with technical support of the Secretariat and the MAP components, concluded a list of IMAP Common and Candidate Indicators covering most of the Ecological Objectives (with the exception of EO 4 and EO 6 for which conditions were not mature enough to ensure monitoring feasibility) with the aim to serve as the basis for the integrated monitoring and assessment at regional and national levels.

24. The list of IMAP indicators was adopted by COP 19 (Decision IG.22/7).

25. In 2021, SPA/RAC, in cooperation with GFCM and in the context of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project, started to develop assessment factsheets for Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) related to fisheries, in line with the list of common species to be monitored at regional level, which was previously agreed through the EU-funded EcAp MED II Project.

26. The proposed PoW 2022/2023 includes the development of Common Indicators for EO3 (Harvest of commercially exploited fish and shellfish) and EO4 (Marine food webs), led by SPA/RAC.

27. SPA/RAC is working in 2021 to develop a proposal of Good Environmental Status (GES) definitions, related targets and common indicators for EO6 (sea-floor integrity).

VI. Revision of existing monitoring programmes for ongoing assessment and regular updating of targets

Completed at regional level;
Ongoing at national/subregional level

28. COP19 adopted the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related Assessment Criteria (IMAP, Decision IG.22/7). The IMAP implementation covers the period from 2016 to 2021.

29. IMAP sets out all the required elements to establish the first region-wide Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme, covering in an integrated manner monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and fisheries, pollution and marine litter, coast and hydrography, based on region-wide common indicators.

30. The core of IMAP is the 23 regionally-agreed common indicators and the 4 candidate indicators, for which scientific knowledge and information is not yet fully developed to allow for regional monitoring and assessment. In any case, Contracting Parties are encouraged to develop pilot monitoring programmes.

31. Overall, the IMAP indicators cover 9 out of 11 Ecological Objectives, namely the EO 1, EO 2, EO 3, EO 5, EO 7, EO 8, EO 9, EO 10, EO 11.

32. IMAP provides the basis for the development of candidate indicators towards common indicators, based on outcomes of pilot monitoring activities, additional expert knowledge and scientific development. It also foresees the refinement of specifics of agreed common indicators, in particular on geographical scales.

33. During the initial phase of IMAP (2016-2019) the Contracting Parties finalized and/or updated their national monitoring and assessment programmes in line with IMAP structure and principles and based on the agreed common indicators.

34. In the framework of the MAP Programme of Work (2018-2019 and 2020-2021) and with the support of the EcAp-MED II project and GEF Adriatic project, the national monitoring programmes were finalized and/or updated to implement IMAP on Pollution and Marine Litter; Biodiversity and NIS and Coast and Hydrography Clusters. To this aim, technical and financial support was provided by the Coordinating Unit or through the MAP components to Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, and Tunisia in updating/developing their national monitoring programmes based on IMAP.

- 35. SPA/RAC has supported several Contracting Parties (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia), through the EU funded EcAp-MED II project, to develop national monitoring programmes on Biodiversity and NIS based on IMAP. The adopted national monitoring programmes based on IMAPs are available on the SPA/RAC website (http://www.rac-spa.org/fr/ecapmed_ii).**
- 36. PAP/RAC supported the Contracting Parties to progress on monitoring and assessment programmes (national IMAPs) for Coast and Hydrography indicators. To date, the development of national IMAPs with regards to EO7 Hydrography and EO8 Coastal Ecosystems and landscapes, through EcAp Med II Project is finalized in Algeria, Israel, Lebanon, State of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as for Albania and Montenegro as part of the Integrated Monitoring Programme, through the GEF Adriatic project.**
- 37. With the support of GEF Adriatic project, first integrated monitoring programmes fully based on IMAP, taking into consideration all the adopted EOs in an integrated manner, were prepared for Albania and Montenegro. In addition, as part of the GEF Adriatic project, two marine surveys/monitoring based on IMAP were conducted, one in Montenegro (selected monitoring stations throughout the entire marine area of the country) and one in Albania (Patok-Rodoni Bay). The MAP Focal Point for Albania reported that the national Integrated Monitoring Programme was adopted; the formal (government) adoption of the Integrated Monitoring Programme for Montenegro is expected soon.**
- 38. MED POL has supported the preparation and/or the update and implementation of national IMAPs with regard to EO5, EO9 and EO10 for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Montenegro, Libya, Morocco and Turkey.**
- 39. During the biennium 2020-2021, support to the implementation of national monitoring programmes based on IMAP is being ensured through the EU-funded EcAp MED III, IMAP MPA, and Marine Litter MED II Projects in seven beneficiary countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia). Work started in 2021 through the design of concrete monitoring plans and the preparation and support of implementation of field survey programmes for Pollution and marine litter, and Biodiversity and Fisheries clusters; the finalization of monitoring plans and the implementation of field survey programmes, is expected in 2021-2022, with the aim to report the first sets of data by the end of 2021, which will be used to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR in time for April 2022.**
- 40. The GEF MedProgramme child project 1.1 titled: “Reducing Pollution from Harmful Chemicals and Wastes in Mediterranean Hotspots and Measuring Progress to Impacts” has an important component on IMAP Implementation including a section for the preparation of the Offshore monitoring strategy. This includes the definition of minimum 20 locations for offshore reference monitoring stations in beneficiary countries (namely, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia). The preparatory process for the definition of this important assignment is ongoing; a first discussion of the approach is expected to be held with the Steering Committee of the TDA process in late Autumn 2021, and then with the respective CORMON in late 2021 or early 2022.**
- 41. During the period 2016-2018, MED POL database was updated with new datasets related to eutrophication, Egypt (2012, 2015), France (2013-2016), Israel (2013, 2015, 2017), Montenegro (2016-2017), Morocco (2013-2015), Tunisia (2015), Turkey (2014-2015)] and contaminants, France (2015-2016), Israel (2015, 2017), Montenegro (2016-2018), Morocco (2016-2018), Slovenia (2016) and Turkey (2014 -2015). Following on MEDPOL’s work on preparation of all data sets related to contaminants in biota/sediments, chlorophyll a, nutrients and biomarkers as available in the MEDPOL Data base, as well as of data directly reported to MEDPOL, INFO/RAC undertook the migration of these data into the IMAP Pilot Info System, which was completed in 2020-2021. The monitoring data have been received from Mediterranean countries from 2005 to 2015-2017 and**

include some MEDPOL Info System datasets dating back to the early 1990s, in compliance with the LBS Protocol. The datasets are now available on the IMAP Info System in the format of Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for CIs 13,14 and 17.

42. Work on scales of assessment, assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for IMAP implementation and the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR was performed in the context of UNEP/MAP PoW 2020-2021 and the EU-funded EcAp MED III and IMAP MPA Projects. Proposals on monitoring and assessment scales, thresholds and baseline values for CIs 3, 4 and 5 related to marine mammals and marine turtles were discussed with the thematic relevant online working groups (OWGs) and approved at the CORMON Biodiversity meeting and SPA/BD Focal Points meeting (June 2021) for submission to the present meeting (UNEP/MED WG.514/7 and UNEP/MED WG.514/8). Proposals on the CIs related to habitats, sea birds and non-indigenous species are under discussion with the OWGs before their discussion during the next CORMON Biodiversity meeting (2022, tbc). As for the Pollution and Marine Litter cluster, Updated Baseline Values and Proposal for Threshold Values for CI 22; Background (Assessment) Concentrations (BC/BAC) for CI 17 and Upgraded Approach for Environmental Assessment Criteria (EAC) for CIs 17, 18 and 20; and Assessment Criteria Methodology for IMAP Common Indicator 13: Pilot Application in Adriatic Sub-region have been reviewed by the CORMON Pollution Meeting (April 2021) and submitted to the MEDPOL Focal Points meeting, which reviewed them on 9 July 2021 for submission at the present meeting (UNEP/MED WG.514/10, UNEP/MED WG.514/11, UNEP/MED WG.514/12). With regard to the Coast and Hydrography cluster, the work on assessment criteria and a guiding document for the application of the assessment criteria for CI 16 has started and will be presented to the next cluster CORMON meeting (October/November 2021, tbc). It should be noted that the scale of assessment for this CI covers the complete coastline of the countries and, due to specificities in each country, a common GES and threshold cannot be set. The guiding document is meant to assist countries in the process of determining country-specific GES and thresholds, by taking into account several criteria such as geographical setting, historical and cultural connotations, socio-economic context, national policies regarding spatial development.

43. With the view to moving towards integrated GES assessment, a document addressing several cross-cutting issues including assessment criteria and scale of assessments, was presented to the Regional Meeting on IMAP Implementation: Best Practices, Gaps and Common Challenges (Rome, Italy, 10-12 July 2018). As a follow up, an initial proposal was prepared by MED POL for consideration of the scales of monitoring along with the scales of assessment as a condition to define the adequate nested approach of the monitoring units into assessment scales for IMAP Common Indicators. This document aims to present concrete guidance and propose the steps forward in the selection of the scales of monitoring and assessment under IMAP in relation to current practices. This document was approved by the Meetings of CORMON on Pollution Monitoring (2-3 April 2019) and by the 7th EcAp Coordination Group Meeting (9 September 2019). A more detailed Proposal of “Integration and Aggregation Rules for Monitoring and Assessment of (IMAP Pollution and Marine Litter Cluster)” was submitted to the CORMON Pollution Meeting (26-28 April 2021). Considering the evolving nature of this document, the CORMON Pollution Meeting agreed to recommend its use as a basis for progressing towards integrated GES assessment methodologies for IMAP EO5, EO9 and EO10, and recommended its submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (July 2021), which in turn recommended this document to be returned to the CORMON for further clarifications with a view to avoiding possible confusion with issues that do not belong to the scope/mandate of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. Meanwhile, the proposed methodology will be subject to testing by volunteer Contracting Parties at national and, where appropriate, at subregional or area level, and the findings will be reported to CORMON Pollution in early 2022.

44. The IMAP Pilot Info System, developed as deliverable of EcAp MED II project, is ready, operational and able to collect data from 1st July 2019. It was developed by INFO/RAC in close consultation with UNEP/MAP Components and presented for the first time during COP 20 (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017). The IMAP Pilot Info System is able to collect data according to the proposed Data Standards and

Data Dictionaries (DDs and DSs) that set the basic information on data reporting within IMAP, for 11 Common Indicators (1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 23).

45. The testing phase of the IMAP Pilot Info System has been realized during the biennium 2018-2019 with the voluntary participation of the interested countries, who have been invited to start providing data flows for the 11 selected Common Indicators to implement the EcAp roadmap. The testing phase has been concluded within the launch of the IMAP call in June 2020. INFO/RAC, in close cooperation with CU and the other MAP Components and through a dedicated help desk, has provided continuous technical support to Contracting Parties to facilitate understanding, access, and use of the IMAP Pilot Info System functions, and technical assistance to help them in the process of filling-in of DSs and of data submission. In addition, in the biennium 2020-2021, Bilateral Assistance/Training meetings have been organized to provide to the majority of Contracting Parties via videoconference an organic and structured presentation for monitoring data reporting.

46. With respect to data sharing, work is ongoing to establish a specific cooperation with GFCM with the view to primarily support data and information sharing in relation to the development of the 2023 QSR and IMAP implementation. This partnership will facilitate the inclusion of data and information from Fishery associated Common Indicators into the IMAP Info system. Terms of Reference for a bilateral agreement have been drafted together with a draft Roadmap to facilitate close cooperation with GFCM. Both aim to provide a framework for the strengthening of the knowledge base to safeguard the marine environment and threatened species which result from fishing activities in the Mediterranean Region; Improvement in their capacities for managing and sharing environmental data and information specifically related to the fishery sector; Promotion of data and information exchanges and sharing of the cooperation results as may be considered appropriate; and in particular the sharing of common data sets relevant for the implementation of IMAP Common Indicators of Ecological Objective 3.

47. The IMAP Pilot Info System website (<http://imappilot.info-rac.org/>) is accessible to the general public. Login for Contracting Parties (CPs) and MAP users is needed to access the reserved sections. Full support is provided to all users interested to test its functionalities and want to upload available data sets. An IMAP Pilot Info System User Guide (<http://www.info-rac.org/en/infomap-system/imap-pilot-user-guide-1.docx>) has been developed to provide general assistance to users and a dedicated e-mail account has been set up (imap@info-rac.org) to support CPs during the data upload.

48. Work in 2020-2021 focused on the upgrade and update of the IMAP Info System to include all CIs in line with 2023 MED QSR Roadmap, with the aim to deliver a fully operational IMAP Info System in June 2022. Technical support has been provided to upgrade the hardware and software platform of the IMAP Info System, to accommodate the DSs and DDs that are being developed for the additional CIs, and to support the implementation of data flows for all the remaining CIs.

49. INFO/RAC developed Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) for 11 selected IMAP Common Indicators in Excel file spreadsheets format. Namely, Common Indicators: 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 23, were selected with the aim to cover all clusters of IMAP (Biodiversity and NIS, Pollution and Litter, Coast and Hydrography). Based on the initial discussion during the IMAP Best Practices Regional Meeting, DSs and DDs have been further discussed by Contracting Parties in the 5 CORMON Meetings of all clusters, as well as 14th Meeting of MED POL Focal Points and the 14th Meeting of SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points held in 2019. They have been finalized after agreement at the CORMON meetings, and additional work has been carried out to align the system with the changes and to implement the corresponding data flows.

50. In 2020-2021, some DS/DD related to the 11 CIs selected for the pilot phase of the IMAP Info System, have been updated taking into account the criticalities found by the Countries during the testing phase of the system. In the IMAP Info System, the GIS standards for the CIs related to hydrographic alterations induced by coastal and offshore infrastructures and to the level of coastal artificialization have also been updated.

51. Further work continued in 2020-2021 to develop DS/DD for the remaining CIs for CORMON review and approval, and to implement data flows (EO3 not included). MEDPOL prepared a proposal of the DSs/DDs for CIs 18 and 20 (UNEP/MED WG.492/8, Annex II) for consideration of the CORMON Pollution Meeting (26-28 April 2021). Further to comments received from the Meeting participants, the proposal has been further improved. The work on DSs/DDs for CI 18 and 20 has been finalized by INFO RAC and MEDPOL; given that these DD/DS were not considered by the MEDPOL Focal Points meeting /July 20219, they are included as Information Document for the present meeting (UNEP/MED WG.514/Inf.9 and Inf.10).

52. DDs for CIs 3 and 4 for marine mammals and marine turtles have been presented by INFO/RAC for review at the Integrated CORMON meetings (December 2020). They have been further elaborated in 2021 based on the feedback received, and based on the outcomes of a meeting organized by INFO/RAC in April 2021 with ACCOBAMS and SPA/RAC to discuss the harmonization of DSs with the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative. A revised version of DSs and DDs for CI 3, 4 and 5 for marine mammals and marine turtles, and a first version for CI 3, 4 and 5 for sea birds and monk seals were reviewed by the CORMON Biodiversity Meeting (June 2021), which agreed to discuss the document within the relevant informal online working group before its submission for adoption to the next CORMON Meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries (2022).

53. A first draft proposal for DSs and DDs for the Candidate CI 25 (land cover change) is in preparation for the submission to the next Coast & Hydrography CORMON Meeting (October/November 2021, tbc).

54. As part of the GEF Adriatic project, in 2021 national databases for Albania and Montenegro, fully based on IMAP Info System, were developed and filled with the existing data. These databases were developed to ensure easy reporting towards the IMAP Info System. In parallel, a series of trainings on IMAP databases were organized for national experts and interested institutions, also with the support of INFO/RAC.

55. According to Specific Objective 19 of the Regional Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have agreed to contribute to the development of a quality assurance programme for data reporting and collection in line with IMAP.

56. Science-Policy Interface workshops (SPI workshops) have been organized by Plan Bleu and have contributed to IMAP implementation with the overall aim to enhance interaction across scientists and between them and policy-makers (practitioners and the ones who develop marine policies) on the ecosystem approach implementation, with focus on the specific IMAP requirements.

57. Five SPI workshops took place from 2015 to 2017 (Inception Meeting, Pollution SPI workshop, Biodiversity SPI workshop, Integrated SPI workshop on the Risk-based Approach and SPI workshop on temporal and geographical scales of Monitoring and Assessment) and allowed scientists and policy makers working on Policy needs and Science gaps.

58. Two crucial publications on Science Policy Interface have been drafted (in 2018 and 2019) to provide recommendations for IMAP clusters:

- 3 Brochures: *"Science-Policy Interface (SPI) to support monitoring implementation plans as well as sub-regional and regional policy developments regarding EcAp clusters on pollution, contaminants & eutrophication, marine biodiversity & fisheries, coast & hydrography"*.
- Technical report: *"Strengthen, structure and sustain a Science Policy Interface (SPI) for IMAP implementation in the Mediterranean"*.

59. The strengthening of SPI networks of scientists and policy makers for IMAP implementation is ensured in 2021-2022 in the context of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project, through the set-up of 2 national SPI pilots in two beneficiary countries. The objective is to promote sustainable collaborating

networks of different stakeholders from scientific community and policy makers for IMAP implementation, which is indispensable for its successful implementation after the project cycle. At the Integrated CORMONs Meetings in December 2020, an agenda item was dedicated to the SPI as basis of identification of relevant existing frameworks, processes and institutions at national level, and to present and discuss the first strategic orientations for the contribution of UNEP/MAP to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, with SPI as a central pillar of IMAP implementation. In 2021, work started for the identification of the pilots and the countries where they will be implemented. Potential countries include Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. Furthermore, UNEP/MAP-MEDPOL contributed to the preparation of the SciNMeet Programme for the Mediterranean that was submitted for review of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), as well as to the Med Paper within the Ocean Decade Community White Papers (CWPs) on the Global South at Ocean and Coastal Research.

VII. Development and review of relevant action plans and programmes

Ongoing

60. The implementation of the final step of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap is looked at on a multi-layer perspective, covering all the aspects of the legal and policy framework of the UNEP/MAP- Barcelona Convention. In a nutshell, the ecosystem approach has been raised by the Contracting Parties to the programmatic level, reaffirmed as an overarching principle of the Barcelona Convention and as such has been integrated into the legal and policy framework of the Barcelona Convention including legally and non-legally binding instruments. More specifically:

A. Programmatic level

61. The ecosystem approach has been repeatedly affirmed as an overarching principle of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention. Firstly, the Decision IG.19/17, adopted by COP 16 (Marrakesh, Morocco, November 2009), provides that *“the holistic ecosystem approach will be an overarching principle of the Five-Year Programme of Work”*. Furthermore, ecosystem approach has been recognized by COP 18 as an overarching principle of the Barcelona Convention – MAP Integrated Assessment Policy. Finally, the Athens Declaration, adopted by COP 19, reaffirms *“the application of the ecosystem approach as an overarching principle to achieve the Mediterranean Ecological Objectives and related targets towards good environmental status of the Mediterranean and to contribute to sustainable development”*.

62. Furthermore, the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021 (Decision IG. 22/1, MTS) and the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, and the proposed Mid-Term Strategy 2022-2027 and Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023 fully integrate the ecosystem approach and its vision, as well as the specific steps of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap.

B. Streamlining ecosystem approach and GES targets to the regulatory and policy instruments at regional level

63. During the last years, the legal and policy framework of the Barcelona Convention has been significantly strengthened, with the adoption of new or updated regional plans and programmes, providing for measures to support the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, based on the article 4 of the Barcelona Convention and respective articles of its Protocols. Since the recognition of ecosystem approach as an overarching principle of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, these regional instruments have been developed in an integrated manner, aiming at streamlining the Good Environmental Status in their implementation.

64. The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (Decision IG.22/2, COP 19), is a concrete example of the strong linkages between the environmental pillar of sustainable development and GES/ecosystem approach.

65. The thematic regional policy and regulatory instruments developed or updated since 2008 that take into account ecosystem approach and relevant GES targets include the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (see Decision IG.21/7, COP 18), Species and Habitats Actions Plans in the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol (see Decision IG.21/4, COP 18, Decision IG.22/12, COP 19, Decisions IG.23/8 and IG.23/10, COP 20, Decision IG.24/7, COP 21), the Action Plan for the implementation of the ICZM Protocol for the Mediterranean (2012-2019) (Decision IG.20/2, COP 17, Decision IG.23/7, COP 20, Decision IG.24/5, COP 21), the Action Plan for the implementation of the Offshore Protocol (Decision IG.22/3, COP 19), the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) (Decision IG. 22/4, COP 19), the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean (Decision IG.22/05, COP 19), the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas (Decision IG.22/6, COP 19), the Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to Achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean (Decision IG 22/13) and the List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI List, Decision IG 22/14).

66. The Common Regional Framework (CRF) on ICZM was prepared by PAP/RAC in 2018-2019 in consultation with the Contracting Parties as a strategic instrument meant to facilitate the implementation of the ICZM Protocol. It provides methodological guidance aiming to support the implementation of the ICZM Protocol towards the achievement of EcAp Ecological Objectives (EO) and GES, in a coordinated and integrated manner with the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention System (thus considering the other Protocols and related key documents), and in light of the relevant international instruments. It was adopted by the Contracting Parties with Decision IG.24/5 at COP 21 (Naples, Italy, December 2019), which recognized the living nature of the Appendix to the CRF and the need to keep it under review, requesting the Secretariat to continue refining it.

67. The proposed methodological guidance is based on three major phases that will allow to achieve GES:

- Phase A - Elaboration of a matrix of interactions between the EcAp EOs and the economic activities and natural and cultural elements that have great relevance for the coastal areas, according to the content of the ICZM Protocol (hereafter briefly called “elements of the ICZM Protocol”);
- Phase B - Detailed analysis of the provisions of the main relevant documents part of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention System related to key interactions between EcAp EOs and ICZM elements. The analysis is performed by clusters of EOs: 1. Biodiversity, 2. Fisheries, 3. Coast and Hydrography, 4. Pollution and Litter; and
- Phase C - Identification of operational recommendations to implement the CRF on ICZM with the aim of contributing to the achievement of EcAp Eos and GES, coherently with other instruments of the Barcelona Convention System.

68. The Conceptual Framework for the implementation of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) was adopted at COP 20, Tirana 2017 (Decision IG.23/7); it provides the methodology to consider IMAP indicators in the MSP planning process in an integrated and coordinated way. Based on this and on the CRF on ICZM, as part of the GEF Adriatic project, PAP/RAC supported the government of Montenegro in developing the first MSP based on the ecosystem approach towards achieving GES, using the results of IMAP.

69. During the biennium **2018-2019**, the Secretariat, in coordination with relevant MAP Components, undertook a review of the status of implementation of the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan which was presented to the Second Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact (Athens, Greece, 27-28 June 2019). The meeting acknowledged the progress achieved so far and recommended that recent developments under the MAP Barcelona Convention, especially on the Ecosystem Approach and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), should be taken into account by

the Contracting Parties, with support from the Secretariat, in the course of the implementation of the Action Plan.

C. State of play of existing regional measures and their contribution to GES: Potential new/updated measures

70. The Secretariat has worked to assess the existing regional measures and identify potential new/updated measures to achieve GES.

71. An Initial Ecosystem Approach Gap Analysis was prepared in 2013, with a focus on the existing regional legal framework to achieve GES. During the 2016-2017 biennium, the Secretariat undertook a deeper analysis of the regional measures taking into consideration the pressures, GES and related targets.

72. The regional measures were therefore assessed in relation to the key pressures on the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean and main gaps in achieving/maintaining GES were identified. On the basis of this analysis and taking into account other available regional analyses and reports, areas were identified where measures are efficient but require strengthened implementation, and others where new/updated measures should be considered in order to bridge the gaps between GES and the current situation.

73. A proposed list of new/updated potential measures has been developed for further consideration by the Contracting Parties on the way forward for the period 2020-2030.

74. In accordance with UNEP/MAP's 2020-2021 Programme of Work three new and/or revised Regional Plans were prepared by the Working Groups of Experts established by Decision IG.24/10 (COP 21, Naples, Italy 2019), namely the Regional Plan on Urban Wastewater Treatment and of the Regional Plan on Sewage Sludge Management, as well as in the update of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management. These Plans were agreed by the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points (27-28 May 2021) and approved for submission to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points (13-17 September 2021). In parallel, a study was prepared to enable the Parties to assess the costs of implementation of the main regional and national measures proposed in the three Regional Plans and associated socioeconomic benefits.

75. In line with the PoW and Budget 2020-2021, UNEP/MAP-MEDPOL undertook the preparation of the following assessments: i) Assessment of Agricultural practices and discharged pollutants reaching the Mediterranean marine environment; ii) Assessment of aquaculture practices and discharged pollutants reaching the Mediterranean marine environment; and iii) Assessment of the state of storm water management in the Mediterranean. These assessments were reviewed by the Meeting on Evaluation of Implementation of National Action Plans and Assessments, and Tools to Estimate Pollutants Loads from Diffuse Sources (22-23 April 2021) and were submitted to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting (9 July 2021) for their approval "to use as a background document" for the preparation of the related Regional Plans. They will also contribute to the preparation of the chapters of the 2023 MED QSR on the links between economic sectors, pressures, and GES.

76. UNEP/MAP's 2018-2019 Programme of Work Activity 2.1.1.1 mandated MED POL to prepare reports on the implementation of existing Regional Plans. Evaluation of status of implementation is built around the legal, institutional and technical measures included in each of the 10 existing Regional Plans. Conclusions and recommendations are presented to highlight success stories, gaps and way forward. The findings of this evaluation were submitted as "draft" for review of the MED POL Focal Points Meeting in May 2019. The evaluation was finalized after validation of provided data and relevant findings by the Contracting Parties further to completion of the quantitative analysis of NBB data which were further updated after its 4th reporting cycle was formally and successfully concluded in August 2019. Accordingly, the Secretariat completed its updating of the evaluation reports by end September 2019. Subsequently, the Midterm Evaluation was reviewed and

agreed during the Meeting on National Baseline Budget Methodologies, Assessments of new Regional Plans and Evaluation of National Action Plans under the LBS Protocol (22-23 April 2021).

77. Acknowledging that the year 2021 corresponds to a major milestone in the Mediterranean region, marking the end of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) and the Regional Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), simultaneously the Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 11-13 June 2019) requested the Centre to a) review the progress made in the field of prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships in the Mediterranean region by analysing information gathered in the NAPs as well as any other relevant information; b) launch a wide consultation process involving national competent authorities, relevant regional and international institutions and stakeholders addressing challenges and offering expertise, resources, and funding to progress in the improvement of the prevention of and response to marine pollution from ships in the Mediterranean region and c) submit the draft post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships to the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points, for consideration. Within this process the Mediterranean Strategy and Action Plan on Ships' Ballast Water Management will be simultaneously updated, as required.

78. Accordingly, in 2020-2021 REMPEC delivered the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (post 2021), that was considered by the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (31 May–2 June 2021). The Strategy and its Action plan pay due consideration and streamline ecosystem approach implementation at all levels.

79. The Mediterranean Ballast Water Management Strategy (2022-2027) was submitted to the 14th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC and to the 15th Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points, for its consideration.

80. Concerning endangered species and key habitats, in 2018-2019 SPA/RAC updated the Action Plans for the conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans), marine turtles and marine vegetation in the Mediterranean as well as the Regional Strategy for the conservation of the monk seal in the Mediterranean.

81. As requested by Decision IG.24/6 (COP 21, Naples, Italy, December 2019), and based on the most recent developments in the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework elaboration process and other regional and global processes, SPA/RAC started the elaboration of a Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean, for consideration of COP 22 (Antalya, Turkey, December 2022). The final draft resulting from the input of these preparatory consultations was submitted to and endorsed by the SPA/BD Focal Points Meeting (June 2021).

82. In 2020-2021, SPA/RAC updated the Action Plans for the conservation of cetaceans as well as the Action Plan for the conservation of habitats and species associated with seamounts, underwater caves and canyons, aphotic hard beds and chemo-synthetic phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea (“Dark Habitats Action Plan”), where the monitoring sections have been updated to be in line with the MAP Ecological objectives, IMAP and its related monitoring Protocols. The related working documents have been reviewed by the SPA/BD Focal Points meeting (23-25 June 2021) and will be submitted to the next MAP Focal Points meeting (September 2021) and COP 22 (December 2022) for approval.

83. In 2020-2021, SPA/RAC developed also the First elements to elaborate the List of Reference of Pelagic Habitat Types in the Mediterranean Sea, in line with the Decision IG.24/14 (COP 20, Tirana, Albania, 2019).

84. In the biennium 2018-2019 SPA/RAC has undertaken, in collaboration with Contracting Parties, the evaluation of SAP BIO implementation, after 15 years since its adoption, aimed to assess the actions achieved, existing gaps and pending issues at regional and national levels, calibrating the

added value played by the role of SAP BIO for all Mediterranean countries, and providing options for a new post-2020 SAP BIO structure, elaboration steps and timeline.

85. The evaluation and the methodology for the analysis of the coherence between the SAP BIO and ICZM Protocol provisions with the view to contributing to the SAP BIO revision was discussed at the 5th National Correspondents Meeting of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAP BIO - Marseille, France, 13-14 February 2019). In the same meeting the Contracting Parties provided inputs for the draft SAP BIO evaluation including information on SAP BIO implementation at national level. The results of the evaluation were again verified by the 6th meeting of National Correspondents of SAP BIO (Portoroz, Slovenia, June 2019) and were presented to the 14th SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points meeting (Portoroz, Slovenia, 18-21 June 2019). Following the outcome of COP 21, it was requested to the Secretariat to prepare in 2020-2021 the “Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region” (Post-2020 SAP BIO), aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, harmonized with the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework through the optic of the Mediterranean context, and following the recommendations and roadmap proposed in the evaluation document. The Post-2020 SAP BIO will be ready for consideration of the COP 22.

86. Recalling the Regional Strategy for Prevention and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, Decision IG.24/8 (COP 21, Naples, Italy, December 2019) adopted a roadmap for a proposal for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an emission control area for sulphur oxides pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, and agreed to extend the mandate of the MAP sulfur oxides Emission Control Area (SOx ECA) Technical Committee of Experts until 30 April 2021, to oversee the completion of the knowledge gathering and the preparations of further studies. To this end, REMPEC prepared, in consultation with the Secretariat, IMO, Plan Bleu/RAC and MED POL, a plan for the implementation of Decision IG.24/8. Accordingly, in 2021 the knowledge gathering and further studies have been carried out on the quantification of the impacts associated with deposition of PM2.5 and air toxics; land-based emissions controls; additional economic impact evaluation; and fuel supply and technology.

87. The finalized draft joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the Med SOx ECA was agreed upon at the Regional Expert Meeting (online, 27-28 April 2021) and was endorsed by the REMPEC Focal Points Meeting (31 May-2 June 2021) for submission to the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points, for further endorsement and submission to the 78th session of the IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 78) scheduled for 2022. In parallel, REMPEC submitted an information document related to the adoption of Decision IG.24/8 to the IMO Secretariat ahead of the 76th session of the MEPC (10-17 June 2021).

D. National Programmes of Measures

88. Further to the regional measures, the national programmes of measures, adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to implement specific Protocols and Regional Plans, should also take into account the need to streamline the Ecological Objectives and achieve/maintain GES.

89. A concrete example on this national implementation was the development of updated National Action Plans (NAPs) in the framework of the LBS Protocol and SAP MED, which has been done in accordance with the pollution-related Ecological Objectives (EO 5, EO 9 and EO 10), with the aim to achieve/maintain GES on pollution and litter. The majority of the Contracting Parties updated their NAPs during the period 2015-2016, based on NAP Update Guidelines, prepared by the Secretariat. The updated NAPs have been endorsed by the COP 19 (Decision IG 22/8). With regard to the Contracting Parties which are EU Member States, it was agreed that the pollution-related part of the national Programmes of Measures (PoM) developed in the framework of the EU MSFD, represent the updated NAPs, providing that they take into account the specificities of the Barcelona Convention system and comply with the requirements of the Convention and its Protocols.

90. Further to COP 19 Decision IG.22/8, in the biennium 2020-2021 UNEP/MAP-MED POL undertook the Midterm Evaluation Report of the NAPs' Implementation using data and information sources selected in line with the NAP/H2020 indicators, further to their availability in various technical studies and reports. Subsequently, the Midterm Evaluation was reviewed and agreed during the Meeting on National Baseline Budget Methodologies, Assessments of new Regional Plans and Evaluation of National Action Plans under the LBS Protocol (22-23 April 2021).

91. National Action Plans (NAPs) on NIS and marine habitats have been developed in the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol, considering the IMAP priorities. In 2018-2019, SPA/RAC supported the elaboration of the NAPs concerning species introduction and invasive species in Libya and Turkey and the preparation of the NAPs for the conservation of Marine Turtles in Algeria, Libya, Lebanon, Spain and Tunisia. National strategy to reduce illegal trade of marine turtles in Tunisia has been elaborated and adopted since 2019.

92. In 2020-2021, the SPA/BD Focal Point of Israel has been contacted in order to start the preparation of the elaboration of NAP on Non-Indigenous Species (NIS), with SPA/RAC assistance. With the assistance of SPA/RAC, Montenegro is preparing its NAP for the conservation of coralligenous species and Malta its National Action concerning species introduction and invasive species. The NAP for the conservation of the coralligenous species in Lebanon was prepared and nationally adopted with the SPA/RAC assistance. The NAP for the conservation of marine turtles in Libya has been discussed and approved during an online national workshop held on 16 December 2020.

93. Based on the Guidance Document for the preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ship (2016-2021) agreed upon by the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, addressing Ecological Objectives (EO 2, EO 9, EO 10 and EO 11), with the aim to achieve/maintain GES on non-indigenous species, pollution, litter and underwater energy/noise respectively, Albania, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey prepared their NAPs, including a national assessment. In the biennium 2020-2021, the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) was completed by Egypt; similar plans had been developed by Albania, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey.

E. Technical Guidelines

94. The implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols is facilitated by technical Guidelines, prepared in close coordination with the Contracting Parties. These guidelines clarify and provide guidance on technical aspects of the implementation of the Protocols and Regional Plans. Every effort has been made to take into account and streamline the ecological objectives and GES targets in the MAP guidelines delivered in the last 6 years.

95. Some recent examples include the Updated Guidelines under the Dumping Protocol (Guidelines for Management of Dredged Material and Placement for Artificial Reefs) as well as the Updated Guidelines for Management of Desalination Activities. The ultimate objectives set out in these Guidelines is the achievement/maintenance of GES for pollution and litter, taking into account relevant Ecological Objectives, which go beyond the strictly pollution-related ones, such as EO 1 on biodiversity, EO 6 on sea-floor integrity, EO 8 on coastal ecosystems and landscapes, etc.

96. Concerning threatened species, marine key habitats and Non-Indigenous Species (NIS), more than 14 guidelines and tools have been developed by SPA/RAC (or with the contribution of SPA/RAC), in line with the IMAP requirements and made available to Contracting Parties through the SPA/RAC website or in hard copies.

97. In accordance with the Decision IG.23/8, SPA/RAC, in close consultation with the Contracting Parties and regional experts, has elaborated the Updated Classification of benthic marine habitat types and the Updated Reference List of Marine Habitat Types for the Mediterranean region which was discussed during the meeting of Experts on the finalization of the Classification of benthic marine habitat types for the Mediterranean region and the Reference List of Marine and Coastal Habitat Types in the Mediterranean (Rome, Italy, 22-23 January 2019) and the 14th meeting of the SPA/BD thematic focal points and will be submitted to the MAP Focal Points meeting and the COP 21 for its adoption.

98. In the **2018-2019** biennium, important progress has been achieved by MED POL including the following achievements:

- Guidance on Application of the Water Typology and related Monitoring and Assessment Aspects for concentration of chlorophyll a (CI 14) in the water column;
- updated Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20 and 21 related to the Ecological Objective 5 (Eutrophication) and Ecological Objective 9 (Contaminants); for the first-time proposed Guidance Factsheets for the Candidate Indicators 26 and 27 related to Ecological Objective 11 (Energy including underwater noise) that were approved by the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points;
- summary of the main monitoring methodologies in use by the Contracting Parties in the marine environment, along with the traditional methods which are still valid;
- preliminary proposal of the “Methodological Elements for Monitoring Floating Microplastics” that will be further elaborated in the biennium 2020-2021;
- Protocol for monitoring interactions between marine litter and marine turtles with a view to harmonizing methods of data collection for monitoring and assessment in the Mediterranean.
- Updated List of Priority Contaminants under UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention within the MED POL Monitoring Programme and will continue to contribute to coordinated efforts at different levels to fill in the gaps related to knowledge on priority contaminants with the view to their potential consideration in the framework of IMAP.

99. In accordance with the MAP Programme of Work (PoW) 2020-2021, in the framework of the collaboration with the Marine Environment Studies Laboratory (MESL) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), MED POL prepared the Monitoring Guidelines related to IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18 and 20 along with the Monitoring Guidelines related to Analytical Quality Assurance and Reporting Monitoring Data. These Monitoring Guidelines, composed of 98 specific Protocols, have been submitted for approval of the Meeting of MEDPOL Focal Points (Part II, 6-7 October 2021), following on their acceptance by the Integrated CORMON Meetings (1-3 December 2020), and by the Meeting of the CORMON Pollution (26-28 April 2021). Monitoring Guideline/Protocols for Floating Microplastics were also agreed by the Meeting of CORMON Marine Litter (30 March 2021) for submission to the Meeting of MEDPOL Focal Points (Part II, 6-7 October 2021).

100. UNEP/MAP-MED POL developed three guiding documents: “Guideline on estimation techniques and applied methodologies for non-point sources release from agriculture” (UNEP/MED WG.505/3); “Guideline on estimation techniques and applied methodologies for point source releases from aquaculture” (UNEP/MED WG.505/4); and “Guideline on estimation techniques and applied methodologies for non-point sources release from catchment runoffs” (UNEP/MED WG. 505/5). These documents aim to complement the NBB/PRTR Methodology for the 5th Cycle of the National Baseline Budget (NBB). These documents were reviewed and agreed by the Meeting on Evaluation of Implementation of National Action Plans and Assessments, and Tools to Estimate Pollutants Loads from Diffuse Sources, held on 22-23 April 2021.

101. In the context of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED II Project, the Regional Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 was developed and endorsed at the CORMON Marine Litter meeting (March 2021), whose aim is to provide practical guidelines to the Contracting Parties to design and develop monitoring programmes to collect standardized data on marine litter ingested by sea turtles, and to assess how Good Environmental Status (GES) can be achieved.

102. In concurrence with its mandate, as well as with activities under the bilateral Cooperation Agreement signed on 9 October 2019, with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), UNEP/MAP - MED POL has also prepared a document on “Common methodologies and techniques for the assessment and monitoring of adverse impacts of dumping activities”. This document is intended to bring together all relevant available methodologies and techniques that can be used by the Contracting Parties for implementation of the Dumping Protocol, with a particular focus on: (i) monitoring of dredging operations from harbours, ports, navigation channels and infrastructure projects such as cables and pipelines; and (ii) monitoring of disposal sites of dredged material at sea. This document (which is complemented by a “Compendium of Best Practices on Implementation of Dumping Protocol”), was reviewed and accepted with a number of recommendations during the Joint Meeting with IMO on Sharing the Best Practices for Implementation, Compliance and Enforcement related to Dumping Protocol, remotely held on 2 March 2021.

103. In the biennium 2018-2019 PAP/RAC has worked towards adjusting Common Indicator 15 (EO7) by a simplified version, and updating Common Indicator 16 and has prepared the Guidance Factsheet for the Candidate Indicator 25 (EO8). CI 15 is proposed for replacement with “Location and extent of the habitats potentially impacted by hydrographic alterations” after suggestions expressed at the 6th EcAp Coordination Group Meeting (Athens, Greece 2017) and at several other occasions such as at the PAP/RAC Focal Points meetings and the Sub-regional meeting on Coast and Hydrography (December 2017). The new Guidance Factsheet for CI 15 as well as the updated Guidance Factsheets for CI 16 (EO8) and for Candidate Indicator 25 (EO8), were presented and agreed at the CORMON meeting on Coast and Hydrography (Rome, Italy, 21-22 May 2019) and were adopted by the 7th EcAp Coordination Group Meeting (UNEP/MED WG.467/6 Indicator Guidance Factsheets for EO7 and EO8 Coast and Hydrography Common Indicators 15, 16 and 25).

F. Governance to foster ecosystem approach implementation

104. At COP 18, the Contracting Parties adopted a governance mechanism in Decision IG. 21/3 to ensure the efficient and coordinated implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap.

105. They established the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group consisting of MAP Focal Points, together with three specific correspondence groups, (on GES and targets: COR GEST, on monitoring: CORMON and on economic and social analysis, COR ESA), composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties, invited experts and respective MAP components.

106. Since 2008, seven (7) Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meetings took place to review progress achieved and validate different outputs for the consideration by the MAP Focal Points meetings and COP.

107. Five CORGEST Meetings took place for each cluster (biodiversity and fisheries, pollution and marine litter, coast and hydrography), strengthened by an Integrated CORGEST Meeting to negotiate and propose the operational objectives, GES definition and related targets as well as a potential list of common indicators.

108. Furthermore, twenty-two (22) CORMON Meetings took place discussing specifics of monitoring and assessment needs and two (2) COR ESA Meetings were held, with a focus on socio-economic aspects of ecosystem approach implementation.

109. Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Task Force are held on a monthly basis including the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit, MED POL, SPA/RAC, PAP/RAC, INFO/RAC, REMPEC and Plan Bleu/RAC, to discuss key issues of implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap, including the organization of the Integrated and thematic CORMON meetings and the implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap, through ongoing and planned projects, and through activities planned as part of the Programme of Work for 2020-2021, for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

110. A reflection has started in 2021 within the Secretariat on how to further strengthen the EcAp Governance structure. This includes the possibility to hold EcAp CG meetings every year, if resources allow and considering the possibility to have online meetings; the need to consider the added value to maintain periodic meeting of the COR GES; and the need to clarify the role and mandate of the informal Online Working Groups (OWGs), which need to work under the leadership of, and report to the CORMON. A detailed proposal on how to strengthen the EcAp governance structure is presented as Annex I to the present document.

111. Additional external resources were mobilized to support the different steps of the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap and the Programme of Work.

- EU funded EcAp-MED I (2013-2015) supported the development of ecological objectives, operational objectives, GES definition and targets
- EU funded EcAp-MED II (2015-2019): The Mediterranean implementation of the Ecosystem Approach, in coherence with the European Union (EU) Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The EcAp MED II project has an overall objective to support UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and its Southern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to implement the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) in synergy and coherence with the implementation of the European Union (EU) (MSFD). With the ultimate objective of achieving the Good Ecological Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea, the project supports the Southern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to implement the EcAp Roadmap agreed in Decision IG. 21/3, through assisting them in establishing monitoring programmes in line with IMAP.
- **The EU-funded “Support to Efficient Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach-based Integrated Monitoring and Assessment of the Mediterranean Sea and Coasts and to delivery of data-based 2023 Quality Status Report in synergy with the EU MSFD (EcAp MED III) Project” (2020-2023) aims to support the implementation of the IMAP and data-based 2023 Quality Status Report in line with 2023 MED QSR Roadmap milestones at national, sub-regional and regional level with a particular focus on southern Mediterranean countries (namely, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia); and strengthen IMAP data management through the expansion of the IMAP Info-System covering all IMAP Common Indicators. The EcAp MED III project will also contribute to strengthening of the Science-Policy interface (SPI) at national and regional levels for IMAP implementation and delivery of 2023 MED QSR.**
- Marine Litter MED (2016-2019): The overall objective of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED project is to support UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and its Contracting Parties to prevent and manage marine litter through the implementation of the provisions of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (adopted by COP 18 in 2013), focusing on the implementation of key reduction and prevention measures on marine litter as identified in the updated National Action Plans (NAPs), in a coherent and coordinated way through the development of regional marine litter guidelines. The enhancement of international and inter-regional cooperation, with a particular focus on the cooperation with the Black Sea Commission, is also part of the objectives of the project. Project’s overall outcome is to progress towards achieving marine litter Good Environmental Status (GES) and marine litter reduction targets as agreed by COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention and the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, through the implementation of selected and common marine measures of the NAPs/Programme of Measures in selected pilot areas. This project is also supporting the work on the candidate marine litter indicator 24.
- **The EU-funded Marine Litter MED II project (2020-2023) which aims to: (i) support monitoring and assessment for marine litter addressing issues outside of the scope of IMAP; (ii) scale up and expand pilot project implementation of key marine litter prevention and reduction measures; and (iii) enhance interregional cooperation with a focus on Black Sea region and other European Regional Seas.**

- **The GEF-funded MEDProgramme, an assortment of seven child projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with more than 100 coordinated actions at regional and national levels in the 2020-2024 period, articulated around four components reflecting the priorities adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, namely: reduction of land-based pollution in priority coastal hotspots and measuring progress to impacts; enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience in the Coastal Zone; protecting Marine Biodiversity; and knowledge Management and Programme Coordination. The (10) beneficiary countries are Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Montenegro, Tunisia and Turkey. This includes the update of the Transboundary Diagnostics Analysis (TDA) as part of the MedProgramme Component 1 – *Reduction of land-based pollution in priority coastal hotspots, and measuring progress to impacts.***
- **GEF funded “Implementation of Ecosystem Approach in the Adriatic Sea through Marine Spatial Planning” (GEF-Adriatic Project), whose overall objective is to restore the ecological balance of the Adriatic Sea through implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and improve subregional management capacity through Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as a viable marine management tool.**
- **In addition, the project for defining the conceptual framework for marine spatial planning, piloted in Boka-Kotorska bay (Montenegro), was realized in 2016-2017 with the aim to analyze and point out the possibility of using the vulnerability analysis based on ecosystem approach principles.**
- **The Coastal Area Management Plan (CAMP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which started in 2020, is also based to great extent on Ecological Objectives of the ecosystem approach.**
- **EU funded SEIS project that supported the implementation of SEIS national action plans for a number of Contracting Parties.**
- **Exchanges of experiences and support to the work of UNEP/MAP on biodiversity were ensured through the following MAVA-funded projects: MedKey Habitats II, Marine Turtles, Species, “Mitigating dolphin depredation in Mediterranean fisheries – Joining efforts for strengthening cetacean conservation and sustainable fisheries”, and MedBycatch project-phase 2. These projects address specific biodiversity-related issues such as monitoring of marine turtles nesting sites and of marine megafauna species (marine mammals, sea birds and Elasmobranchs), and provision of support for the harmonization and interconnection between the POST 2020 SAP BIO and the new GFCM Mediterranean and Black Sea Fishery and aquaculture strategy, to ensure that both are tackling the mitigation of the incidental catches of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean.**
- **UNEP/MAP has agreed with DG NEAR of the EC to support the third phase of the MPA action with a complementary action on IMAP implementation, to be supported under the EU Green Med III Strategy with a Budget of EUR 4 million. The EU-funded “Towards achieving the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast through an Ecologically Representative and Efficiently Managed and Monitored Network of Marine Protected Areas (IMAP MPA Project)” (2020-2023), launched in 2020, aims to ensure that additional support is provided for the national implementation of IMAP and to address challenges related to the second phase of the IMAP (2019-2021) with particular focus on the integration aspect of national IMAP implementation. It also follows-up on the existing country specific capacity assessments to further the lessons learnt during the implementation of the EcAp-MED II Project. Moreover, the project aims to develop an MPA Network strategy which addresses the practical elements of effective MPA management and IMAP implementation.**
- **In the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea Protection (IMELS), a voluntary contribution of EUR 2,015,000 has been provided by Italy in support of the activities included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2018-2019. Several activities have been undertaken in the current biennium which contribute to implementation of several steps of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap addressing assessment,**

monitoring, measures, implementation at national level and regional policy update as well as maximizing synergies with the work under MSFD.

G. Synergies and visibility

112. Synergies have been established and strengthened with the relevant work under UNEP Regional Seas Programme, Global Programme of Action, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (EU MSFD), OSPAR, Black Sea Commission and HELCOM. Synergies have been established with several regional projects aiming at facilitating the implementation of the EU MSFD. Of major relevance is the establishment of the Marine Litter Regional Collaboration Platform comprising over 22 Regional Partners to support the coordinated implementation of the Marine Litter Management Regional Plan in the Mediterranean.

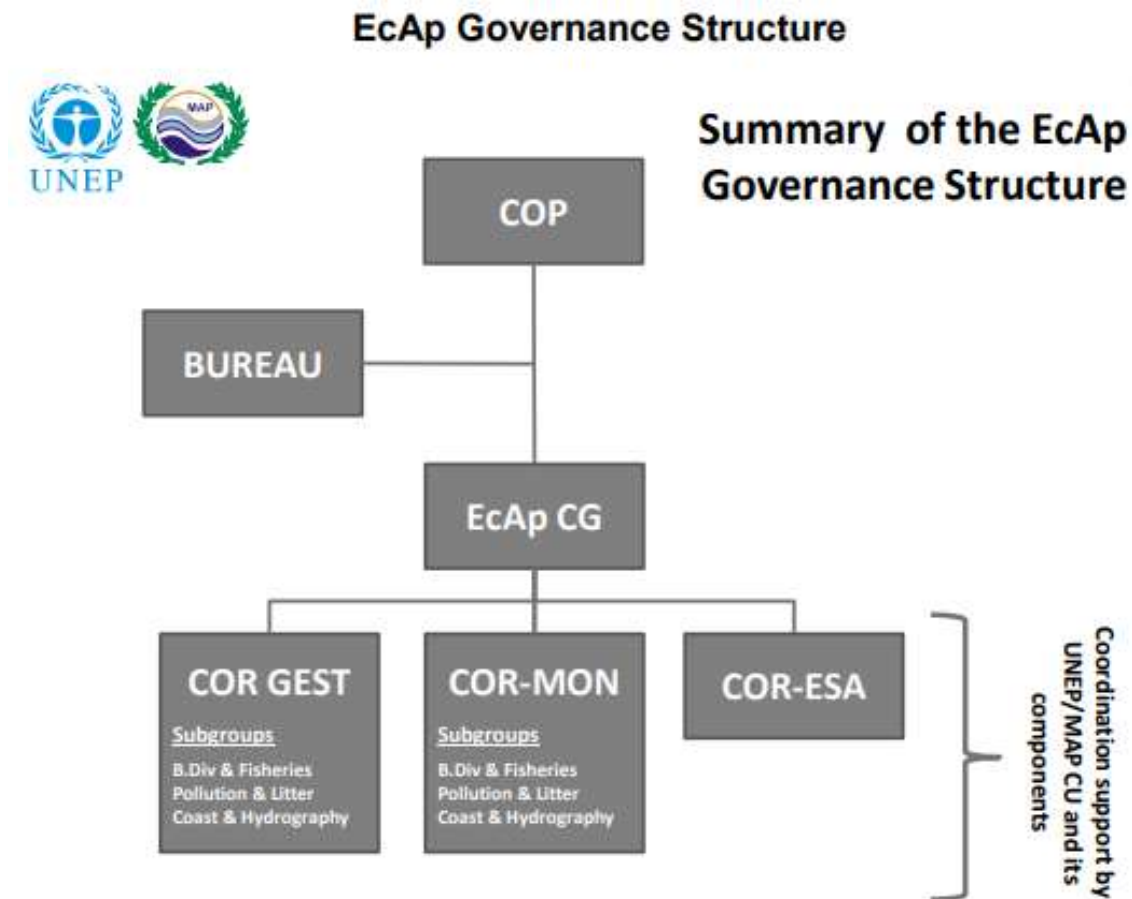
113. The Mediterranean experience, lessons learnt and key achievements of the implementation of Ecosystem Approach Roadmap were presented and projected in several global, regional and national events. Several meetings held in the framework of EU MSFD were attended and work of MAP presented by the Contracting parties and Secretariat. Currently every effort is being made to coordinate and maximise synergies with MEDREGION Project funded by the EU, aiming at supporting the Competent Authorities of the Contracting Parties which are EU Member States in the implementation of the second cycle of the EU MSFD, including the development of suggestions relating to the implementation of the New GES Decision and to ensure strong effective links with the work of the MAP Barcelona Convention on the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach. **The MED REGION Project was invited to present the main outcomes of the Project at the Integrated CORMON meetings in December 2020, related to critical aspects of IMAP implementation (completion of gaps in monitoring data in the Mediterranean; the support to the development and operational implementation of (sub)regional indicators, lists of elements, threshold values; and towards the support to the development of effective regional measures, with a special focus on biodiversity).**

114. **An informal meeting was held by the Secretariat with the Contracting Parties that are Member States of the EU in March 2021, where: the commitment of these Contracting Parties towards data submission required for preparation of the 2023 MED QSR was reaffirmed; support was ensured by the Secretariat to address the timelines for MSFD implementation;**

Annex I
Proposal to further strengthen the EcAp governance structure

Proposal to further strengthen the EcAp governance structure

1. Decision IG.20/4 (COP 17, Paris, France, February 2012) established the ECAP Coordination Group consisting of MAP focal points, the Coordinating Unit, the MAP components and MAP partners to oversee the implementation of the ecosystem approach, identifying progress gaps in the implementation of the road map and find feasible solutions for the advancement of the ECAP agenda. This Coordination Group will inform the Bureau about the results and the MAP components on the action they need to take.
2. Decision IG.21/3 (COP 18, Istanbul, Turkey, December 2013) endorsed the governance structure established to advance the implementation of EcAp, through the Ecosystem Coordination Group and the Correspondence Groups on Good Environmental Status (GES) and Targets, Economic and Social Analysis (ESA) and Monitoring.
3. Annex V of Decision IG.21/3 details the EcAp Governance Structure as follows:



“The established governance structure of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp), in accordance with IG.20/4 is as follows:

The EcAp Coordination Group (EcAp CG) consisting of MAP Focal Points integrates and gives guidance to the work under the Barcelona Convention:

a) On the delivery of the ecosystem approach, making sure that all elements for its implementation are taken into account, weighting of priorities and resource implications; and

b) Coordinating Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP’s facilitation role, in support of Contracting Parties in their implementation of EcAp.

Three Correspondence Groups are formed in the process of application of EcAp in the Mediterranean and to support EcAP Coordination Group:

1. *The Correspondence Group on GES and Targets (COR GEST) composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties, and coordinated by the Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP components and the Coordinating Unit, works to ensure efficient coverage and in-depth discussions and analysis of all Ecological Objectives (EOs) in 3 clusters: 1) Pollution and litter (EOs 5, 9, 10 and 11); 2) Biodiversity and Fisheries (EOs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6); and 3) Coast and Hydrography (EOs 7 and 8).*

2. *The Correspondence Group on Monitoring (COR MON) composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties, and coordinated by Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP Coordinating Unit and MED POL, working to ensure efficient coverage and in-depth discussions and analysis regarding integrated monitoring and assessment, with reference to the outcomes of CORGEST, in 3 clusters mirroring the COR GEST working arrangements.*

3. *The Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA) is composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties and invited experts, and coordinated by Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP Coordinating Unit and BP/RAC. It develops a socio economic analysis of marine ecosystems uses, focusing on priority sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, recreational activities, and oil industry and offshore.”*

4. Based on the experience acquired since the adoption of the EcAp governance structure, the Secretariat considers important at this stage to engage the EcAp Coordination Group into an active exchange of ideas on how to strengthen it and further guide the Secretariat’s work for an effective implementation of the EcAp Road Map.

5. To this aim, the following considerations and suggestions to strengthen the EcAp governance structure may be considered for further discussion by the EcAp CG Meeting:

EcAp Coordination Group

- The role of the EcAp CG: consider the possibility to hold short annual online meetings to report on progress in the implementation of the EcAp Roadmap, if resources would allow.
- A reflection on the scope of decisions of the EcAp CG, to clarify to what extent technical documents may be formally endorsed by the Meeting. To this aim, two possibilities may arise:
 1. To maintain the current scope of the EcAp CG Meeting to include the review and endorsement of technical documents – in this case, it is advised either to consider a different composition of the EcAP CG to better reflect this dimension; or to ensure that all technical documents are submitted to EcAp CG meeting if they are finalized and fully cleared by the respective CORMON and MAP Component/Thematic Focal Point meetings in line with their mandates.
 2. To narrow the scope of the EcAp CG to exclude the review and endorsement of technical documents – in this case, a clear decision should be made to strengthen the mandate for endorsing these technical documents at the level of CORMONs and, subsequently, MAP Component/Thematic Focal Points meetings and for the Secretariat to inform the EcAp CG meeting on the progress achieved. The role of the EcAp CG meeting could be to take note of these developments and provide policy guidance on their implementation.

The Correspondence Group on GES and targets (CORGEST)

- Given the fact that no meetings of the CORGEST have been held in the last years, a reflection should be done on the possibility to either revise/strengthen its mandate and scope, or to discontinue it and, accordingly, strengthen the scope and mandate of COR MON.

The Correspondence Group on Monitoring (COR MON)

- CORMON meetings are very important for the timely delivery of the QSR and to foster IMAP implementation at all levels.
- The Secretariat has promoted annual meetings of CORMON in the last biennium. It is recommended to continue this practise.
- The formula of cluster-based CORMON meetings held back-to-back with Integrated sessions should be promoted to the extent possible.

The Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA)

- This Correspondence Group has been rarely mobilized since the adoption of the EcAp governance structure; however, the Secretariat is aware of the importance to maintain the practice of the COR ESA for an effective implementation of the EcAp Roadmap.
- Therefore, a discussion can be opened on how to maintain the operation of the COR ESA, with meetings held either regular meetings or on an *ad hoc* basis.
- An important prerequisite for maintaining the practice of the COR ESA, is to further institutionalize it, with a concrete definition of the terms of reference and of the frequency of its meetings.

The Informal Online Working Groups (OWGs)

- Informal Online Working Groups (OWGs) have been established since 2016 at the level of IMAP Clusters, to support the work of the UNEP/MAP Secretariat and MAP components with regard to IMAP implementation.
- So far, the experience of informal OWGs have been encouraging and for some clusters quite successful. There are issues that should be addressed in order to ensure that OWGs: a) do not pose additional administrative burden for the work of the Secretariat by giving them a formal status, i.e., to apply rules and procedures as for the other MAP meetings; as well as to b) enhance effectiveness of support to IMAP implementation.
- To this purpose, the following proposals may be considered by the EcAp CG:
 - Informal OWGs should be restricted in number, so as to ensure that they contribute effectively to the work under specific Ecological Objectives, Common Indicators, or issues, either at the level of IMAP clusters or across clusters;
 - A well-balanced geographical representation in their composition should be ensured;
 - The thematic mandate of informal OWGs should be established by the CORMON, in line with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work. More into detail:
 - o their agenda to be defined by the CORMON;
 - o their work should feed, support the CORMON work; and
 - o report to the CORMON;
 - o Informal OWGs do not replace CORMONs.
 - The mandate of the informal OWGs should be to provide concrete scientific inputs to the Secretariat and CORMONs on different aspects of IMAP implementation.

Science-policy interface (SPI) for IMAP implementation

In the new MAP MTS 2022-2023, there is a proposal to develop an SPI mechanism for IMAP implementation. The idea is to mobilize networks of scientists and related institutions to foster IMAP implementation and QSR delivery.

The Secretariat in the framework of MED 2023 QSR is planning to invite the scientific community in the region to contribute to this process. This new experience would also provide some ideas on the way forward for outlining an SPI in the Mediterranean for IMAP implementation.

6. The views of the EcAp Coordination Group on the above considerations are welcome in order to further guide the work of the Secretariat in the forthcoming biennium on these issues. On the basis of this discussion, the EcAp CG may also agree to develop the main elements related to EcAp governance mechanism that can be added to the proposed Draft Decision on the Governance submitted for the consideration of the MAP FP meeting.