



UNITED  
NATIONS

**EP**

UNEP/MED WG.506/5



ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

20 May 2021  
Original: English

First Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project

Videoconference, 28 April 2021

### Report of the Meeting

For environmental and economic reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2021

## Table of contents

**Report of the Meeting .....1-7**

**Annex I:** List of Participants

**Annex II:** Agenda of the Meeting

**Annex III:** Conclusions and Recommendations

**Annex IV:** Tentative Calendar of EcAp MED III Project Milestones (including recruitments) to be Submitted for Review by the Ecosystem Approach Governance Structure and Other MAP Bodies

## Introduction

1. The First Steering Committee Meeting of the Project “*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)*” took place via videoconference on 28 April 2021, at the invitation of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP). The EcAp MED III Project is funded by the European Union’s (EU) Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV) in the framework of the Programmed GPGC Strategic Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Commission (EC) and UNEP.

2. The overall aims of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project are: to further assist the Southern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to implement the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP), adopted in 2016, as part of the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap; and to contribute to the preparation and delivery of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR), in line with the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap milestones at national, sub-regional and regional level.

3. The Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project reviewed the progress achieved in Project implementation and the Workplan 2021-2022. Moreover, it oversaw the Project Communication and Visibility Plan for 2021-2022.

4. 2. The Steering Committee Meeting was attended by all the Members of the Steering Committee, as follows: two representatives of European Union – the Head of Unit ENV C.2 and the EC Programme Manager on the European Commission side; a representative of the chair of the EcAp Coordination Group; and from UNEP/MAP Secretariat’s side, the UNEP/MAP Coordinator (Chairperson), the Associate Administrative Officer, and the 2023 MED QSR Individual Contractor. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

### **Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda**

5. The Steering Committee Meeting was opened on Wednesday, 28 April 2021 at 11:00 (Eastern European Time), by the Chairperson of the Meeting, Mr. Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP Coordinator.

6. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast. He thanked the European Commission for the continuous support and contribution provided to the implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) on the ground, and to the scientific and technical work to develop the methodologies for integrated assessment of Good Environmental Status, which are essential to support the preparation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR).

7. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator highlighted how, despite the challenges posed by the widespread and persisting limitations due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the work of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project has marked a good progress. On the one side, the activities started to support the beneficiary countries in the effective implementation of IMAP on the ground, laying the basis for the delivery of high-quality data on the status of the marine and coastal environment and its main pressures and impacts, which will be reported in the IMAP info System and which will be used for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. On the other side, the scientific and technical work to develop the methodologies for integrated assessment of the Good Environmental Status is progressing, thanks also to the active collaboration of experts from all Contracting Parties through the regular Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on IMAP Implementation (CORMON). He underlined how tight links have been established and nourished with the other EU-funded projects, especially with IMAP-MPA and Marine Litter MED II, for a coordinated and effective implementation of IMAP

in the beneficiary countries, and for the development of methodologies to support GES assessment, which will contribute to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

8. Ms. Silvia Bartolini, Head of Unit at the EC DG ENV, Marine Environment and Water Industry (ENV.C.2), thanked UNEP/MAP for organizing and hosting the Meeting, and welcomed the participants. She stressed the importance of the EcAp MED III Project for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach policy in the Mediterranean and the preparation of the data-based 2023 MED QSR, as key elements that contribute to the achievement of the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast. She highlighted how the UNEP/MAP Ecosystem Approach policy is an integral component of the policies of all of the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties, including the Member States of the EU, as also shown at the last Meeting of the MAP Focal Points. To this respect, she reaffirmed the importance of the role of the Regional Sea Conventions in general, and of the Barcelona Convention and IMAP implementation in particular, for the successful implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the achievement of Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean.

9. Ms. Sabina Hadziahmetovic, representative of the Chair of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group *in lieu* of its Chair, Ms. Sabina Cengic, welcomed the Meeting and joined the EC Head of Unit in highlighting the importance of the EcAp MED III Project to contribute to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and the achievement of GES in the Mediterranean.

10. The Steering Committee Meeting reviewed and adopted the provisional Agenda, which appears as Annex II to the present report.

11. The working language of the meeting was English.

**Agenda item 2: Introduction of Members of the Steering Committee**

12. After recalling the Terms of References and the relevant mandate of the Steering Committee Meeting included in the Project document, the Chairperson of the meeting briefly introduced all participants and the organizations which they represent.

**Agenda item 3: Progress on EcAp MED III Project Implementation:**  
**a. Status of Project Implementation**  
**b. Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives**

13. The Chairperson of the Meeting invited the 2023 MED QSR Individual Contractor, Mr. Emanuele Bigagli, to present for the UNEP/MAP Secretariat the document UNEP/MED WG.506/2/Rev.1 “Progress Report on Project Implementation”. The Secretariat informed the Meeting on the status of progress of the activities of the EcAp MED III Project, from its start in September 2020 to March 2021, as well as on the contribution of each Output of the Project to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

14. Regarding Outcome 1 (Effective on-the-ground national IMAP implementation), the Secretariat presented the current progress for each Output, which is summarized below:

- Output 1.1 – Work started for the design of monitoring plans and implementation of field survey programmes for the Pollution and Marine Litter, and Biodiversity and Fisheries clusters of IMAP, in the seven beneficiary countries of the Project. To this respect, the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of lockdowns, border closures, and travel restrictions was highlighted, which has delayed to some extent the implementation of the national activities of the EU-funded project IMAP-MPA, upon which the national activities envisaged in the context of the EcAp MED III Project are based, as well as the first phase of the negotiations of Legal Instruments with the beneficiary countries.
- Output 1.2 – Work started for the elaboration of the Baseline assessment of Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) based on the list of NIS recorded in national waters, as instrumental for the

implementation of the related Joint Monitoring and Assessment Programme. It was underlined that the Baseline Assessment, based on existing data, will be included in the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR, expected for April 2022, while the new data gathered through the Joint Monitoring and Assessment Programme will be used to draft the second version of the QSR for December 2022.

- Output 1.3 – The activities related to the Coast & Hydrography IMAP cluster will start upon operationalization of the Legal Instrument with the relevant MAP component (PAP/RAC), which has been signed by both parties and would be finalized by the end of April 2021. The results of the activities to develop a methodology for baseline assessment of Common Indicator 15, and the technical support to data monitoring and processing for Common Indicator 16, will be presented in a dedicated CORMON meeting of the Coast & Hydrography IMAP Cluster, which will be held in October/November 2021 (date tbc).
- Output 1.4 – The expansion of the IMAP Info System to include all mandatory Common Indicators of IMAP proceeds as per workplan. The hardware and software platforms are being upgraded, and Data Standards and Data Dictionaries are being developed for all IMAP Common Indicators. Moreover, continuous technical support is provided to beneficiary countries to use the IMAP Info System, while the IMAP Data Policy is being expanded and will be presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group meeting (September 2021). The Secretariat underlined the current aim that, by the end of 2021, the new data submitted by Contracting Parties for the Common Indicators already supported will be available in the IMAP Info System, and that by June 2022 at the latest data will be available for all the other Common Indicators. In this way, all new datasets coming from IMAP implementation would be available to support the preparation of the second draft of the 2023 MED QSR (expected for December 2022 as per original Workplan).

15. Regarding Outcome 2 (Regional scale progress and consensus for the monitoring and assessment as well as reporting processes), Outputs 2.1.1-2.1.4, the Secretariat underlined how the work for the definition of scales of assessment/reporting, and for the proposal/update of assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values is proceeding as per original Workplan. The outcomes of this work were discussed at the last Integrated CORMON Meetings (December 2020). The technical documents were then further reviewed and upgraded at the level of informal Online Working Groups established per each IMAP cluster, for their presentation and discussion at the thematic CORMON Meetings held in March-June 2021. The methodologies developed will be tested during 2021, and will be used to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR for April 2022.

16. In relation to Outputs 2.2.1-2.2.4, the following achievements were highlighted:

- the drafting of the 2023 MED QSR Communication and Visibility Strategy by the Secretariat;
- the identification of the pilots and countries for strengthening the Science-Policy Interface (SPI);
- the mapping of data sources and partners, upon which the Secretariat plans to organize a meeting to establish mechanisms and timeline for data sharing to integrate data to be submitted from Contracting Parties;
- the progress in the development of the methodology, structure, and outline of the 2023 MED QSR; and
- the ongoing submission in the IMAP Info System by Contracting Parties of the available monitoring data generated prior to 2020 and of new 2020 monitoring data, which will be used to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR (April 2022).

17. Finally, the Secretariat reported the progress on Project Management, underlining the following achievements and challenges:

- Operationalization of the budget in the UN financial system (Umoja) in December 2020, and roll over of unspent funds from 2020 to 2021;
- Successful submission of the first Annual Project Progress Report, covering the period September-December 2020;

- The current delays in the recruitment of a P3 Project Manager, whose post was classified and whose recruitment is expected to be completed by Summer 2021. To this respect, the Secretariat presented to the Meeting the possibility to recruit an international United Nations Volunteer (UNV) in its place and until the formal recruitment is terminated, so as to ensure a smooth implementation of the Project. The process of recruitment of the QSR Programme Officer is expected to be finalized by June/July 2021;
- The Legal Instruments with MAP components have been prepared and submitted in the UNEP Partners Portal, and are expected to be signed by both parties in April 2021. To this respect, the full/partial telecommuting arrangements of the UNEP staff, and the absence of a Project Management officer, have delayed the start of their elaboration.
- The preparation of the Legal Instruments with national implementing partners has started at the UNEP/MAP Secretariat level with the identification of the activities. The challenges induced by the current COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, and especially its impacts on the implementation of the EU-funded IMAP-MPA Project at national level, have caused some delays on the initiation of EcAp MED III national activities on the ground, which are however expected to be overcome in the upcoming period;
- The synergies of the EcAp MED III Project with other EU-funded projects, namely IMAP-MPA, Marine Litter MED II, and MEDREGION which were ensured in the reporting period;
- The initiatives and activities to promote gender balance and equality, on occasion of the invitation to the Integrated CORMON meetings and of the election of the officers, which was performed ensuring a gender-balanced participation;
- The communication, visibility, and outreach activities of the Project performed, which include: the publication of a news item on the Integrated CORMON Meetings; the publication of a page dedicated to the Project in the UNEP/MAP website; the drafting of a brochure of the Project; and the sending of an official letter to MAP Focal Points, informing them of the launch of the Project.

18. The presentation of the Secretariat was followed by a discussion of the Steering Committee Members on the state of project implementation, during which they gave some strategic comments and suggestions.

19. The Head of Unit of DG ENV.C.2 thanked the UNEP/MAP Secretariat for the comprehensive and detailed presentation. She welcomed the progress of the Project activities despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. She highlighted the importance of expediting the project manager recruitment process and supported the identification of solutions by the Secretariat aiming at ensuring the sustainability of project management functions until the project manager is on board.

20. The EC Programme Manager, Ms. Marijana Mance thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and the detailed picture provided of the status of implementation of the Project. She asked for some clarifications on the timeline of implementation of specific activities, and additional information on how the initial delays reported will be compensated so as to not affect the timeline of the Project activities nor jeopardize the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR which should be delivered according to the original workplan. The EC Programme Manager expressed concern over the delay in recruiting the Project Manager, for which planning of the budget has been done in order to coordinate this large-scale project in timely manner. She pointed out that this has not been the case with any of the other large-scale GPGC projects, irrespective of the COVID-19 situation, and that, therefore, further explanation than the one provided was necessary. Furthermore, she expressed concern over the very significant delays in concluding the Legal Instruments with the MAP components, which are a prerequisite for the timely implementation of the different work-streams of the Project. The Secretariat replied explaining in a detailed way how the current delays relate to the start of the activities, project management and implementation of the project, and that progress will be accelerated during 2021-2022 with the aim to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR by April 2022 as per original workplan. The EC Programme Manager thanked the Secretariat for the detailed reply, and kindly requested that a table is presented to accompany the Report of the Steering Committee meeting,

indicating timelines for the delivery of all the planned activities (including recruitments) in order to meet the needs for delivery of the data-based 2023 MED QSR.

21. The EC Programme Manager pointed to the need to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap for the preparation and delivery of the data-based 2023 MED QSR. To this purpose, she highlighted the challenge of the back-to-back arrangement for the meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group and the MAP Focal Points meeting. These meetings are currently held back-to-back and, in order to have a smooth transmission of the documents endorsed by one meeting for discussion at the other meeting, it may be necessary to anticipate it in the draft decisions that will be presented for the MAP Focal Points meeting, as COP-22 will be the last COP before the COP that is expected to adopt the 2023 MED QSR. This relates in particular to the ecosystem approach policy under the Governance Decision, which the EU/Member States already proposed at the MAP Focal Points meeting in April 2021, but it may be needed that the Secretariat examines which technical work under the Project may require to be addressed at the MAP Focal Points meeting, and already anticipate it in the draft documents to be submitted for the MAP Focal Points meeting. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator thanked the EC Programme Manager for this suggestion, and underlined that while maintaining the practice of back-to-back setting of the two meetings which allows for an efficient fulfilment of the respective tasks and responsibilities, adequate reflection and planning will be undertaken regarding the EcAp-related documents that need to be submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting.

22. The EC Programme Manager took note of the postponement of the CORMON Meeting of the Coast and Hydrography from Spring 2021 to October/November 2021, and expressed concern that the scientific and methodological work to be discussed at that meeting will not be submitted to the EcAp Coordination Group meeting, scheduled for September 2021. To this respect, in order to ensure that all the Project documents that need review and possible endorsement by the meetings of the relevant governance bodies of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system (namely, the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meeting and the MAP Focal Points Meeting, and with a view to submit them for the endorsement of the COP), are effectively and timely consulted with the Contracting Parties, it will be needed to prepare an updated timeline of the Outputs of the Project (taking into account delays) and ensure that those Outputs that need to be endorsed by the Contracting Parties for the data-based 2023 MED QSR are timely submitted to the Contracting Parties for review and possible endorsement. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator replied that this exercise will be undertaken, whilst underlining that the competent body for the identification of the draft Decisions to be submitted for approval by COP is the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, and that this discussion for the COP 22 Decisions will be held in the 91<sup>st</sup> Bureau meeting on 7-8 July 2021. He further added that documents that are part of previous COP Decisions implementation may not necessarily require endorsement through new COP Decisions. The EC Programme Manager, acknowledging the time concerns to be considered, proposed that the Secretariat prepares the assessment of the Outputs of the Project that require review and possible endorsement by the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group and other MAP governance bodies, with a link to the calendar of their respective meetings and/or possible written consultations. In cases where the alignment of Outputs with the EcAp Coordination Group meetings calendar would not be possible, the EC Programme Manager proposed that a written consultation process with EcAp Coordination Group members could be followed. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator thanked the EC Programme Manager for this proposal. After discussion, the Meeting agreed that the Secretariat would prepare the abovementioned calendar and, if timely feasible, present it as Annex to the Report of the Steering Committee Meeting for indicative purposes. A tentative calendar of EcAp MED III Project Outputs to be submitted for review by the Ecosystem Approach governance structure and other MAP bodies is presented in Annex IV to this report for indicative purposes, that could be updated at a later stage to reflect any updates in the status of Project implementation.

23. The EC Programme Manager requested clarifications on the timeline for expansion and finalization of the IMAP Info System, covered by Output 1.4 of the Project. The Secretariat replied explaining in detail the activities that have already been performed and those that are scheduled for

2021-2022, towards the upgrade and delivery of a fully operational IMAP Info System for all IMAP Common Indicators by June 2022 at the latest, so as to allow that by September 2022 all new datasets would be available and ready to support the preparation of the second draft of the 2023 MED QSR for December 2022, in line with the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap Implementation Plan.

24. The EC Programme Manager asked the Secretariat for further details on the activities performed and scheduled for 2021-2022 to fill current data gaps and to identify data sources to support the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR alongside the compulsory submission of data from Contracting Parties. The Secretariat clarified that the existing mapping of the scientific projects and institutions was further expanded with the inclusion of additional data sources, with a clear indication of the types of data hosted and their potential contribution to the related IMAP Common Indicator(s). Moreover, the Secretariat reaffirmed that a meeting will be organized with these scientific projects and institutions in May-June 2021, in order to confirm data availability and agree on a clear timeline for data sharing, in line with the timeline for preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

25. In relation to Project Management, the EC Programme Manager expressed concerns on the delays in the recruitment of the P3 Project Manager, as these may have negative impacts on the timely implementation of Project activities in 2021-2022, and asked the Secretariat to further explore the reasons for this delay with UNEP Corporate Services Division (CSD). The UNEP/MAP Coordinator joined these concerns, reassuring the EC of all efforts made by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat side in ensuring the timely launch of the recruitment process. In order to mitigate the problem and provide a viable temporary solution to this problem, he reaffirmed the proposal of the Secretariat to recruit an International UNV until the recruitment of the Project Manager is successfully completed, which was welcomed by the Steering Committee Members.

26. The EC Programme Manager asked for clarifications on the reasons behind the delays in the finalization of the Legal Instruments with the MAP Components. The Secretariat explained that delays were due to the telecommuting arrangements of UNEP, UNEP/MAP, and MAP Components staff due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, and to the fact that the UNEP Umoja platform does not allow adequate access to non-UNEP staff members. The Secretariat added that the Legal Instruments were all submitted in the UNEP Partners Portal, and were expected to be finalized and signed by both parties in the last week of April 2021, and reassured the Meeting that the delays experienced will not have a negative impact on smooth Project implementation.

27. The representative of the Chair of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group underlined the importance of the active involvement of national and local partners, as key for the successful implementation of the Project activities on-the-ground.

28. The Meeting's final conclusions and recommendations concerning this agenda item are presented in Annex III to this report.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Work Plan and Communication Plan 2021-2022**

29. The Secretariat briefly presented the Project Annual Workplan 2021-2022 (UNEP/MED WG.506/3/Rev.1), highlighting the proposed changes in the timeline of implementation of some specific activities, namely:

- Output 1.1 – The activities on-the-ground for the design of monitoring plans and the implementation of the field survey programmes in the seven beneficiary countries, and the preparation of national assessment factsheets for the selected indicators, which will be implemented with some expected delays due to the situation induced by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of national lockdown and travel restrictions;
- Output 1.3 – The provision of technical support to data monitoring and processing for Common Indicator 16, as well as the development of the methodology for the baseline assessment of Common



Indicator 15, which will start upon signature of the Legal Instruments with the competent MAP component and the national implementing partners (expected by May 2021);

- Output 1.4 – the update and upgrade of the IMAP Info System, which is expected to be finalized in December 2021;
- Output 2.1.1 – The undertaking of the desk review on seafloor damage monitoring and assessment, which will start as soon as the Legal Instrument with the competent MAP component will be finalized, and will be delivered in December 2021 instead of April 2021;
- Output 2.2.2 – the identification of existing frameworks, processes, and institutions at national level as a preliminary activity to build SPI networks, which already started with the work presented at the Integrated CORMON Meetings (December 2020) and will continue until September 2021.

30. The Head of Unit of DG ENV.C.2 and the EC Programme Manager welcomed the Annual Workplan 2021-2022, acknowledging that it is in line with the Progress Report presented under agenda item 3 and well reflects the current constraints being faced in the implementation of the Project, and which were already discussed under agenda item 3. The EC Programme Manager highlighted again the importance of implementing activities in line with the workplan, so as to ensure the successful and timely preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

31. The Secretariat presented the Project Communication and Visibility Plan 2021-2022 (UNEP/MED WG.506/4) listing the activities scheduled for the period April 2021-March 2022, which include:

- Development of a brochure presenting the EcAp MED III Project;
- Development of an annual joint communication document/bulletin;
- Set up and regular update of the EcAp MED III Project webpage;
- Dissemination of the latest news of the EcAp MED III Project through regular publication of news features and press briefs in e-newsletter and on social media;
- Communication of national Project results by local partners through local media (TV, radio, press) and social media;
- Development and implementation of 2023 MED QSR communication strategy;
- Dissemination of Project data monitoring results through the IMAP Info System;
- Production of specific communication products and tools aimed at a wider audience, such as short educational/awareness raising videos, posters, brochures.

32. The Meeting welcomed the updated communication and visibility plan without comments or requests of revision. The EC Programme Manager recommended that synergies are ensured with the other EU-funded projects for the coordinated implementation of the communication and dissemination activities.

33. The Meeting's final conclusions and recommendations concerning this agenda item are presented in Annex III to this report.

**Agenda Item 5: Any Other Business**

34. No other business was raised under this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

35. The Chairperson presented verbally the main conclusions and recommendations of the Steering Committee Meeting, which were approved by the participants. They are presented in Annex III to the present report.

**Agenda Item 7: Closure of the Meeting**

36. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Meeting was declared closed at 13:45 (Eastern European Time) on Wednesday, 28 April 2021 by the Chairperson.

**The Steering Committee Members:**

---

UNEP/MAP Coordinator  
Gaetano Leone

---

European Commission, DG Environment Head  
of Unit  
Silvia Bartolini

---

---

For the Chair of the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecosystem  
Approach Coordination Group  
Sabina Hadziahmetovic

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



## List of participants

<p><b>UNEP/MAP – United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan</b></p> <p><i>PNUE/PAM – Programme des Nations Unies pour l’Environnement / Plan d’Action pour la Méditerranée</i></p>	<p><b>Mr. Gaetano Leone</b> Coordinator E-mail: <a href="mailto:gaetano.leone@un.org">gaetano.leone@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Stavros Antoniadis</b> Associate Administrative Officer E-mail: <a href="mailto:stavros.antoniadis@un.org">stavros.antoniadis@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Emanuele Bigagli</b> 2023 MED QSR Individual Contractor E-mail: <a href="mailto:emanuele.bigagli@un.org">emanuele.bigagli@un.org</a></p>
<p><b>EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPEENNE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Silvia Bartolini</b> Head of Unit European Commission, DG Environment - Quality of Life - Marine Environment and Water Industry (ENV.C.2) E-mail: <a href="mailto:silvia.bartolini@ec.europa.eu">silvia.bartolini@ec.europa.eu</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Marijana Mance</b> Policy Officer, Marine Protection European Commission, DG Environment - Quality of Life - Marine Environment and Water Industry (ENV.C.2) EC Programme Manager E-mail: <a href="mailto:marijana.mance@ec.europa.eu">marijana.mance@ec.europa.eu</a></p>
<p><b>ECOSYSTEM APPROACH COORDINATION GROUP / GROUPE DE COORDINATION DE L’APPROCHE ECOSYSTÉMIQUE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Sabina Hadziahmetovic</b> Senior Researcher Hydro-Engineering Institute Sarajevo E-mail: <a href="mailto:sabina.hadziahmetovic@heis.ba">sabina.hadziahmetovic@heis.ba</a></p> <p><b>In lieu of Ms. Selma Sengic</b> Executive Director Hydro-Engineering Institute Sarajevo Chair of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group E-mail: <a href="mailto:selma.sengic@heis.ba">selma.sengic@heis.ba</a></p>



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





## **Agenda of the Meeting**

**Wednesday, 28 April 2021**

- Agenda Item 1:** Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda
- Agenda Item 2:** Introduction of the Members of the Steering Committee
- Agenda Item 3:** Progress on EcAp MED III Project Implementation:  
a. Status of Project Implementation  
b. Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives
- Agenda item 4:** Work Plan and Communication Plan 2021-2022
- Agenda Item 5:** Any Other Business
- Agenda Item 6:** Conclusions and Recommendations
- Agenda Item 7:** Closure of the Meeting

## **Annex III**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Conclusions and Recommendations of the  
First Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project  
Videoconference, 28 April 2021**

1. The First Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project took place via videoconference on 28 April 2021.
2. The Steering Committee Meeting was attended by all the Members of the Steering Committee, as follows: two representatives of European Union – the Head of Unit ENV C.2 and the EC Programme Manager on the European Commission side; a representative of the chair of the EcAp Coordination Group; and from UNEP/MAP Secretariat's side, the UNEP/MAP Coordinator (Chairperson), the Associate Administrative Officer, and the 2023 MED QSR Individual Contractor.
3. Following the presentation by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat of the working documents prepared for the needs of the EcAp MED III Steering Committee Meeting (i.e., UNEP/MED WG.506/2/Rev.1, 506/3/Rev.1, and 506/4) and their review and discussion, the Steering Committee Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

**Agenda Item 3: Progress on EcAp MED III Project Implementation:**

**a. Status of Project Implementation**

**b. Synergies and Cooperation with other Projects and Initiatives**

- The Steering Committee Meeting welcomed the good progress in the implementation of Project activities, in spite of constraints, including COVID-19 restrictions.
- The Steering Committee Meeting expressed concerns on the delays occurred in the recruitment of the ECAP MED III Project Manager and the impacts that this delay might have on the implementation of project activities. It further encouraged the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to continue finding appropriate solutions to mitigate the risks from this post vacancy, including with the recruitment of an International UN Volunteer until the Project Manager is on board.
- The Steering Committee Meeting expressed concerns with the delayed conclusion of the Legal Instruments with the MAP components.
- The Steering Committee Meeting recommended to prepare at the earliest possible convenience a calendar of EcAp governance mechanism meetings including key milestones and the planning for their endorsement by the Contracting Parties, as COP-22 will be the last COP before the due date for delivery of the 2023 MED QSR, whilst acknowledging the constraints for the definition of exact meeting dates, including especially the need for coordination with Headquarters for meeting platform availability.
- The Steering Committee Meeting recommended to assess more in detail the outcomes of the Project that require review and possible endorsement by the EcAp Coordination Group and/or MAP Focal Points/COP meetings, so as to ensure that the timeline of the EcAp governance meetings enables submission as appropriate to the MAP decision making bodies and ensure effective implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and delivery of the data-based 2023 MED QSR. In cases where meetings alignment is not possible, written consultation with EcAp Coordination Group members should be considered.
- The Steering Committee Meeting approved the revised work plan and highlighted the importance of implementing activities in line with the work plan and the milestones, which will lead to the successful and timely preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

**Agenda Item 4: Work Plan and Communication Plan 2021-2022**

- The Steering Committee Meeting welcomed the Project Communication and Visibility Plan 2021-2022 (UNEP/MED WG.506/4), and recommended the Secretariat to continue ensuring synergies with other EU-funded projects for coordinated communication and dissemination activities.

**Agenda Item 6: Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations**

- The Conclusions and Recommendations were presented verbally by the Chairperson of the EcAp MED III Steering Committee Meeting, and were approved by the participants.

**Annex IV**

**Tentative Calendar of EcAp MED III Project Milestones (including recruitments) to be Submitted for Review by the Ecosystem Approach Governance Structure and Other MAP Bodies**



**Tentative Calendar of EcAp MED III Project Milestones (including recruitments) to be Submitted for Review by the Ecosystem Approach Governance Structure and Other MAP Bodies**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Status</b>
30 March 2021	CORMON Marine Litter	Addressing Interrelation of Pressures Impacts of Marine Litter and the Status of Marine Ecosystem Components	The Meeting endorsed the document, and agreed to integrate the input and information included in this document into the broader work under preparation by the MED POL programme pertinent to integration/aggregation aspects of the Pollution-Marine Litter Cluster of IMAP. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to include in this work a more quantitative analysis providing a direct link between monitoring and measures focusing on the various sources generating marine litter
		Regional Operational Strategy for Monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24	The Meeting endorsed the document, and highlighted the need to base the development of the future national monitoring programmes for Candidate Indicator 24 in the Regional Operational Strategy
		Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for Floating Microplastics	The Meeting endorsed the document, and agreed to submit it to the MED POL Focal Points meeting in May 2021
26-28 April 2021	CORMON Pollution	Adjusted Background (Assessment) Concentrations (BC/BAC) for Common Indicator 17 and Upgraded Approach for Environmental Assessment Criteria (EAC) for IMAP Common Indicators 17, 18 and 20	The Meeting took note on the findings and recommendations of this document, with the view of developing and testing of the methodology for GES assessment related to EO9 towards preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. Considering the evolving nature of this document, the Meeting agreed to use it as a basis for progressing towards development and testing of the methodologies for GES assessment related to Ecological Objectives 9 and 10 towards preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, and recommended its submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points for its

			consideration, while work on its further elaboration will continue
		Integration and Aggregation Rules for Monitoring and Assessment of Pollution and Marine Litter Cluster	Considering the evolving nature of this document, the Meeting agreed to recommend its use as basis for progressing towards integrated GES assessment methodologies for EOs 5, 9 and 10, and recommended its submission to the Meeting of the MEDPOL Focal Points, while work on its further elaboration will continue
		Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for CI 18	The Meeting recommended submission of this document for the consideration of the MED POL Focal Points Meeting
		Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for Analytical Quality Assurance and Reporting of Monitoring Data for CI 13, 14, 17, 18 and 20	The Meeting agreed to recommend the submission of this document to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points, with minor changes
27-28 May 2021 6-7 October 2021	MEDPOL Focal Points	Integration and Aggregation Rules for Monitoring and Assessment of IMAP Pollution and Marine Litter Cluster	These documents were not reviewed due to time constraints. This session was postponed to July 2021
		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	
		Assessment Criteria Methodology for IMAP Common Indicator 13: Pilot Application in Adriatic Sub-region	



		Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for CIs 13, 14, 17, 18, 20 and 23	Very technical documents agreed by CORMONs, which will be approved by the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points in the October 2021 session. After their approval, they will be operational for Contracting Parties
		Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for Analytical Quality Assurance and Reporting Monitoring Data for CIs 13, 14, 17, 18 and 20	
		Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for Floating Microplastics	
10-11 June 2021	CORMON Biodiversity and Fisheries	Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for CIs 3, 4, 5	Ongoing
		Proposal for updated monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for CIs 3, 4, 5, 6	
		Revised Guidance Factsheet for CI 6	
		Methodological approach for mapping interrelations between pressures-impacts and status of marine ecosystem for Biodiversity cluster	
June 2021	<i>Recruitment</i>	P3 Project Manager	<u>Early June</u> : post classification vacancy expected to be concluded <u>End of June</u> : vacancy expected to be published
End of June/Early July 2021	<i>Recruitment</i>	UNV for the management of the EU-funded EcAp MED III Project	Expected recruitment
July 2021	<i>Recruitment</i>	G5 Administrative Assistant (joint with ML MED II)	Expected classification of staff post and publication of vacancy
September 2021	8 <sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group	Progress of EcAp Roadmap implementation	Expected to be reviewed
		Progress of 2023 MED QSR Roadmap implementation	

		2023 MED QSR structure, outline, approach, and contents including timeline for its delivery	Expected to be approved
		Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for CI 3, 4, 5 and for CI 18, 19, 20	
		IMAP Data Policy	
		2023 MED QSR Communication and Visibility Strategy	
September 2021	MAP Focal Points Meeting	IMAP Data Policy	Expected to be approved
October 2021	<i>Recruitment</i>	G5 Administrative Assistant (joint with ML MED II)	Expected to be onboard
October/November 2021	CORMON Coast and Hydrography	Methodology for baseline sub-regional assessment of CI 15	Expected to be approved
End of November/December 2021	<i>Recruitment</i>	P3 Project Manager	Expected to be onboard
December 2021	22 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention (COP-22)	IMAP Data Policy	Expected to be endorsed
April 2022	Integrated CORMON Meetings including individual sessions per Cluster	Analysis of national data collection systems of beneficiary countries, and national systems interfaced with IMAP Info System	Expected to be reviewed
		Proposal for integrated scales of assessment across clusters	
		Analysis of national data collection systems of beneficiary countries, and national systems interfaced with IMAP Info System	
		Proposal for integrated scales of assessment across clusters	

		Analysis of national data collection systems of beneficiary countries, and national systems interfaced with IMAP Info System	
		Proposal for integrated scales of assessment across clusters	
		Analysis of national data collection systems of beneficiary countries, and national systems interfaced with IMAP Info System	
		Proposal for integrated scales of assessment across clusters	
		Analysis of national data collection systems of beneficiary countries, and national systems interfaced with IMAP Info System	
		Report of the outcome of the sub-regional expert group meeting	
		Report on status of implementation of 2023 MED QSR Communication and Visibility Strategy	
		Presentation of outcome of SPI work at national and regional level	
		Quality Assurance/Quality Control procedures for all Common Indicators	Expected to be approved
		Proposal for updated monitoring and assessment scales for all mandatory CIs	
		<b>First draft of 2023 MED QSR</b>	
		Report of the outcome of the sub-regional expert group meeting	

		Report on status of implementation of 2023 MED QSR Communication and Visibility Strategy	
		Presentation of outcome of SPI work at national and regional level	
		Regional/sub-regional SPI workshop	Expected to be held back-to-back with CORMON
March/April 2023	Integrated CORMON Meetings with individual sessions per Cluster	Quality Assurance/Quality Control procedures for all Common Indicators	Expected to be approved
		Final monitoring and assessment scales for all mandatory CIs	
		Final proposal for integrated scales of assessment across clusters	
		Final proposal for new/updated assessment criteria	
		Final updated guidance factsheets reflecting agreed assessment criteria	
		MAP methodology on integrated GES assessment adjusted/further developed, taking into account results of testing at pilot scales and the final proposal on integrated scales of assessment	
		Proposal on emerging priority contaminants	
		Final baseline national and sub-regional assessment factsheet for CI 15	
		Final baseline national and sub-regional assessment factsheet for CI 16	
		<b>Second draft of 2023 MED QSR</b>	

September 2023	9 <sup>th</sup> Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group Meeting	Progress of EcAp Roadmap implementation	Expected to be reviewed
		Progress of 2023 MED QSR Roadmap implementation	
		Report on status of implementation of 2023 MED QSR Communication and Visibility Strategy	
		Presentation of outcome of SPI work at national and regional level	
		Review of assessment criteria, aggregation and integration rules, methodologies for integrated assessment, baseline values, baseline assessment as indicated above, and possible approval	
		<b>Final draft of 2023 MED QSR</b>	
		Draft Decision for the second phase of IMAP implementation including its update as well as of Ecosystem Approach Roadmap update for the next period (2024-2030)	Expected to be approved
September 2023	MAP Focal Points meeting	<b>2023 MED QSR</b>	Expected to be approved
		Draft Decision for the second phase of IMAP implementation including its update as well as of Ecosystem Approach Roadmap update for the next period (2024-2030)	
December 2023	23 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention (COP-23)	<b>2023 MED QSR</b>	Expected to be endorsed
		Draft Decision for the second phase of IMAP implementation including its update as well as of Ecosystem	

		Approach Roadmap update for the next period (2024-2030)	
--	--	---	--