



UNITED  
NATIONS

EP

UNEP/MED WG.506/3/Rev.1 |



UNITED NATIONS  
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

13 April 2021  
English

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

Videoconference, 28 April 2021

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

**EcAp MED III Project Annual Workplan 2021-2022**

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## 1. Introduction

1. This document summarizes the activities of the EcAp MED III Project expected to be implemented in the period April 2021- March 2022.

## 2. Annual Work Plan April 2021 – March 2022

2. In this Section, details are given on the activities expected to be performed for each Output of the Project during the period April 2021 – March 2022, together with an indication of their contribution towards the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. Revised timelines from the original workplan, where applicable, are highlighted in red font.

**Outcome 1: Effective ‘On the ground’ national IMAP implementation with beneficiary countries providing quality assured data for the development of a quality-assured, region-wide and data-based (Evidence-based) 2023 MED QSR**

Output	Planned Activities April 2021- April 2022 and Original Timeline	Details of Activities and Revised Timeline
<i>Output 1.1: National and Joint Monitoring carried out of selected Common Indicator(s) (CIs) in beneficiary countries based on national IMAP</i>	<b>March/April 2021</b>  1.1.1 Design concrete monitoring plans for each beneficiary country for Pollution, Marine Litter and Biodiversity	<b>June-August 2021</b>  This activity will be implemented with some expected delays, due to the situation induced by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of national lockdowns and travel restrictions.
	<b>March/April 2021</b>  1.1.2 Prepare and support implementation of field survey programmes for each beneficiary country for Pollution, Marine Litter and Biodiversity  <b>September 2021:</b> first set of data reported by countries on IMAP Info System following the implementation of the survey programme	<b>August-November 2021</b>  The submission of the first set of data by beneficiary countries to the IMAP Info System, originally scheduled for <b>September 2021</b> , will be delayed to <b>November/December 2021</b> for the Biodiversity cluster, and to <b>January/February 2022</b> for the Pollution and Marine Litter cluster.
	<b>November 2021</b>  1.1.4 Prepare national assessment factsheets for the selected indicators (CI 13, 14, 17, 21, 22, 23)	<b>January/February 2022</b>  The first draft of national assessment factsheets for the selected indicators, originally expected for <b>November 2021</b> , is expected to be prepared in <b>January 2022</b> for the Biodiversity cluster, and <b>January/February 2022</b> for the Pollution and Marine Litter cluster, based on the data submitted as a result of the field survey programmes, as well as on data coming from IMAP-MPA Project execution, 2017 MED QSR data.

		These factsheets will then be validated in subsequent national meetings/workshops (Activity 1.1.3), for finalization in <b>October 2022</b> and discussion at national validation meeting/workshop in December 2022, as per original workplan.
<p><b><u>Contribution of Output 1.1 to 2023 MED QSR:</u></b></p> <p><u>In the next reporting period, the design of concrete monitoring plans for each beneficiary country for Pollution, Marine Litter and Biodiversity are expected to be finalized, and field survey programmes will be implemented.</u></p> <p><u>The first sets of data as indicated in the QSR Table of Content, are expected to be reported by the beneficiary countries in the IMAP Info System in late 2021-early 2022, and will be used to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR in April 2022.</u></p>		
<p><b><i>Output 1.2: Joint monitoring pilots designed and implemented (NIS);</i></b></p>	<p><b>February/March 2022</b></p> <p>1.2.1 Implement Joint Monitoring and Assessment programme on NIS at national and sub-regional level and reporting of results through IMAP Info System</p>	<p><b>February/March 2022</b></p> <p>The implementation of the Joint Monitoring and Assessment programme of NIS on the field will start as soon as the Legal Instruments with SPA/RAC and with the national Implementing Partners will be finalized (May 2021).</p> <p>The set of data on NIS is expected to be submitted to the IMAP Info System by <b>March/June 2022</b>, as per original workplan.</p>
	<p><b>December 2022, March/April 2023</b></p> <p>1.2.2 Support a baseline national, sub regional and regional assessment for NIS</p>	<p><b>December 2022</b></p> <p>The draft baseline national, sub-regional and regional assessment for NIS, which started in 2020-2021, will continue in 2021-2022. It will be presented to the CORMON Biodiversity and Fisheries meeting in June 2021. The baseline NIS assessment is expected to be delivered in <b>December 2022</b>, as per original workplan.</p>
	<p><b>December 2022, March/April 2023</b></p> <p>1.2.3 Develop national and sub-regional assessment factsheets</p>	<p><b>December 2022</b></p> <p>The development of national and sub-regional assessment factsheet will start in <b>May/June 2022</b>, i.e., after the submission of data as per Activity 1.2.1, with the aim to finalize the first draft in <b>December 2022</b> and submit them to the CORMON meeting in March/April 2023</p>
<p><b><u>Contribution of Output 1.2 to 2023 MED QSR:</u></b></p> <p><u>In the next reporting period, the Joint Monitoring and Assessment Programme on NIS will be conducted for the seven species agreed in the Eastern Mediterranean region (beneficiary countries:</u></p>		

Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon, plus three non-beneficiary countries of Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey), in collaboration with GFCM.

The set of data on NIS, expected for March/June 2022 as per Project workplan, will be used to develop assessment factsheets and to perform integrated assessment at the level of EO 2 (Non-Indigenous Species), for inclusion in the second draft of the 2023 MED QSR (December 2022). In parallel, the first steps to develop the Baseline NIS Assessment will be discussed at the CORMON meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries (10-11 June 2021). The Baseline Assessment will be undertaken at first based on existing data, and will then be updated with the new data coming from the implementation the Joint Monitoring and Assessment Programme.

<p><b><i>Output 1.3: Undertake baseline sub- regional assessments for CI 15 and support implementation of monitoring CI 16 in at least one area per beneficiary country.</i></b></p>	<p><b>Start of the Project-December 2022</b></p> <p>1.3.1 Provide technical support to data monitoring and processing for CI 16 including reporting in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia:</p> <p><b>August 2021</b> National meetings conducted to support the monitoring country teams in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia monitoring, including data collection and processing for CI 16</p>	<p><b>June/July 2021-December 2022</b></p> <p>The support to data monitoring and processing for CI 16 will start as soon as the Legal Instruments with PAP/RAC (expected by the end of April 2021) and national implementing Partners will be finalized (expected by May 2021), with the final aim to report data on CI 16 by August 2022, as per original workplan.</p> <p><b>August 2021</b> The national meetings to support the six beneficiary countries on CI 16 are expected to be held in August 2021, as per original workplan</p>
	<p><b>February/March 2022, December 2022</b></p> <p>1.3.2 Develop methodology and conduct baseline assessment for CI 15 in all eligible countries</p>	<p><b>May 2021-February/March 2022, December 2022</b></p> <p>This work will start upon signature of the Legal Instrument with PAP/RAC (expected by end of April 2021); it will be presented for review and approval at the thematic CORMON Coast and Hydrography, October/November 2021 (tbc), and will be submitted for CORMON review in February/March 2022.</p> <p>The final baseline national assessment factsheet for CI 15 will be submitted for CORMON review in December 2022, as per original workplan.</p>

**Contribution of Output 1.3 to 2023 MED QSR:**

In the next reporting period, activities will focus on the development of a methodology to collect data for CI 15 and define the baseline for the assessment of the location and extent of habitats impacted

by hydrographic alterations. This methodology will be applied to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR (chapter on EO 7, hydrography).

In parallel, activities to provide technical support to monitoring and data processing for CI 16 in the six beneficiary countries (i.e., Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) will start upon finalization of the Legal Instrument with PAP/RAC and national implementing partners (May 2021). The activities will be implemented based on the existing guidance factsheet for CI 16, and will be conducted by the national teams with technical support from PAP/RAC. To this respect, national meetings are planned to be held in August 2021 to organize activities, including the definition of the length of coastline to be covered by monitoring. The data are expected to be reported in the IMAP Info System in August 2022, as per original workplan.

<p><b>Output 1.4:</b> <b>IMAP Info System expanded to include all mandatory CI of IMAP, fully operational enabling the Contracting Parties to report their monitoring data in 2020, 2021 and 2022.</b></p>	<p><b>June 2021</b></p> <p>1.4.1 Upgrade hardware and software (HW &amp; SW) platform</p>	<p><b>December 2021</b></p> <p>The update and upgrade of the IMAP Info System is expected to be finalised in December 2021.</p>
	<p><b>March/April 2021, June 2021</b></p> <p>1.4.2 Develop Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) for CORMON review and approval, and implement data flows (EO3 not included)</p>	<p><b>March/April 2021, June 2021</b></p> <p>DSs and DDs for all additional Common Indicators are expected to be further elaborated for submission to the next CORMON thematic meetings (Pollution: 26-28 April 2021; Biodiversity: 10-11 June 2021) and to the 8<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group meeting (September 2021). The intention is to have the IMAP Info System ready to host data on all IMAP CIs by June 2022 at the latest.</p>
	<p><b>June 2022</b></p> <p>1.4.3 Assess the capacity, compatibility and interoperability with IMAP Info System of National information systems</p>	<p><b>June 2022</b></p> <p>The analysis of national data collection systems of the beneficiary countries, and the interface of national systems with IMAP Info System, which started already in 2020-2021, is expected to continue as per original workplan. The results will be presented for CORMON review.</p>
	<p><b>October 2021-April 2022, December 2022</b></p> <p>1.4.4 Define and implement QA/QC procedures</p>	<p><b>October 2021-April 2022, December 2022</b></p> <p>The definition and implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) procedures will start in October 2021, as per original workplan, based on the work currently performed by MEDPOL in 2020-2021. They will be submitted to CORMON in April 2022 for finalization in December 2022.</p>
	<p><b>2021, 2022, 2023</b></p>	<p><b>2021, 2022, 2023</b></p>

	1.4.5 Provide dedicated support to beneficiary countries to use IMAP Info System	Continuous technical support has already started in 2020-2021, and will be provided by INFO/RAC, in close cooperation with the CU and other MAP components, to beneficiary countries throughout the next period 2021-2022 in the use of the information system, including quality assurance aspects, and skills for interfacing the IMAP Info System operationally with national information systems.
	<b>March/April 2021, June 2021</b>	<b>June 2021, September 2021</b>
	1.4.6 Implement IMAP data policy	The IMAP Data Policy will be finalized for review at thematic CORMON meetings in Spring 2021, and at the 8 <sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group review in September 2021, as per original workplan.

**Contribution of Output 1.4 to 2023 MED QSR:**

In the next reporting period, activities will be performed to upgrade and deliver a fully operational IMAP Info System, including the development of DSs and DDs for all CIs and of QA/QC procedures. The IMAP Info System will be fully operational to host new data submitted by Contracting Parties in 2021 for the Common Indicators already included in the IMAP Info System and for all other Common Indicators in June 2022 at the latest. In this way, it is expected that all new datasets coming from IMAP implementation (at national and sub-regional levels where appropriate) would be available by September 2022 to support the preparation of the second draft of the 2023 MED QSR in December 2022. The intention is to accelerate this process to the extent possible, considering also the different timelines and frequencies of reporting across CIs. In parallel, continuous technical support will be ensured by INFO/RAC, CU, and relevant MAP components in 2021-2022 to allow the smooth use of the information system, including quality assurance aspects, and provide support for interfacing the IMAP Info System operationally with national information systems.

***Outcome 2: Regional scale progress and consensus for the monitoring and assessment as well as the reporting processes at national, sub-regional and regional levels***

Output	Planned Activities 2020-2021 and Timeline	Progress Report
<b><i>Output 2.1.1: Analysis for each IMAP cluster on knowledge gaps, with a focus on the scales of assessment/reporting prepared/agreed and scales of monitoring for all IMAP Common</i></b>	<b>April 2022</b>	<b>April 2022</b>
	2.1.1.2 Propose updated/new scales of monitoring and assessment for all mandatory Common Indicators as applicable	
	<b>March 2022-September 2022</b>	<b>March 2022-September 2022</b>
	2.1.1.3 Prepare GIS atlas for scales of monitoring	



<b>Indicators agreed/progressed</b>	and scales of assessment to be integrated into IMAP Pilot Info System	
	<b>April 2022, March/April 2023</b>  2.1.1.4 Develop a proposal on integrated assessment scales as appropriate across clusters	<b>April 2022</b>  The development of a proposal on integrated assessment scales across clusters, as appropriate, will continue throughout 2021 and will be finalized for review by CORMON in April 2022, as per original workplan.
	<b>March/April 2021</b>  2.1.1.5 Undertake a desk review of available data sources, best practices and methodologies in the Mediterranean and under MSFD for the monitoring and assessment of seafloor damage	<b>December 2021</b>  The desk review is expected to be finalized by December 2021.
<b><u>Contribution of Output 2.1.1 to 2023 MED QSR:</u></b>		
<u>The development of scales of assessment will continue in the next reporting period; updated/new scales of assessment and monitoring are expected to be discussed at the CORMON meetings in Spring 2021. Depending on the agreement reached at CORMONs, these methodologies will be tested and further developed in 2021-2022. Progress in this work will be further reviewed at CORMON meetings in Spring 2022 and the hopefully defined/agreed scales of assessment in 2021/early 2022 will be used to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR (April 2022). The preparation of the GIS atlas is expected to be based on the submission of relevant spatial distribution maps of the monitoring and assessment areas as defined within implementation of national IMAP-based monitoring programmes, and will be useful for the further elaboration of the assessment scales at national level.</u>		
<b>Output 2.1.2: Assessment criteria/thresholds/baseline values proposed/updated for the 10 IMAP Common Indicators included in the current IMAP Pilot Info System as well as one candidate indicator (Noise)</b>	<b>April 2022, March/April 2023</b>  2.1.2.1 Update/upgrade and develop assessment criteria using trend and threshold approach as appropriate for 10 CI already included in the IMAP Info System (CI 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23)	<b>April 2022, March/April 2023</b>
	<b>April 2022, December 2022</b>  2.1.2.2 Develop guiding documents for the application of assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for all	<b>April 2022, December 2022</b>

	IMAP clusters at the national level	
	<b>December 2022/January 2023</b>	<b>Expected start: December 2021-December 2022</b>
	2.1.2.3 Test integrated assessment approaches/methodologies, including approaches to interrelate pressures/impacts/state of the marine environment	The testing of the approaches/methodologies for integrated assessment will start at the end of 2021, as soon as these will be finalized, as per original workplan, and will continue until December 2022.
<b><u>Contribution of Output 2.1.2 to 2023 MED QSR:</u></b>		
<u>In 2021-2022, work will continue for the development and application of assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for IMAP CIs, which will be further discussed at CORMON meetings in Spring 2021, so as to reach a consensus on the respective proposals by the Secretariat. The thresholds approach will be used to the extent possible for a considerable number of Common Indicators to prepare the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR (April 2022). The development and application of assessment criteria, and thresholds and baseline values will continue in 2021-2022, and will be further discussed at CORMON meetings in Spring 2022.</u>		
<b><i>Output 2.1.3 Regular regional/sub-regional expert group meetings, i.e., expert group per sub-region per topic established and operational to address monitoring and assessment scales, monitoring protocols and assessment criteria</i></b>	<b>April 2022</b>  2.1.3.1 Support organization of regional/sub-regional expert group meetings to share experience between countries	<b>April 2022</b>
<b><u>Contribution of Output 2.1.3 to 2023 MED QSR:</u></b>		
<u>In the next reporting period, sub-regional coordination meetings will be organized back-to-back with CORMONs, with one meeting expected for each IMAP cluster. The aim of these meetings will be to involve experts engaged in national-level activities in each beneficiary country, to allow an exchange of lessons learnt between the countries, and to address key cross-cutting issues across clusters on monitoring and assessment topics. The participation of expert networks identified as part of SPI-related activities (Output 2.2.2) will be ensured. In this way, the IMAP implementation and the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR will be supported.</u>		
<b><i>Output 2.1.4: Support to CORMON meetings per cluster ensuring strong participation and inputs to its work from expert</i></b>	<b>April 2022</b>  2.1.4.1, 2.1.4.2 Support organization of CORMONs (for all three clusters as well as integrated CORMON), with participation of experts	<b>April 2022</b>  Thematic CORMON meetings for the three IMAP Clusters are scheduled for April 2021 (Pollution), June 2021 (Biodiversity and Fisheries) and October/November 2021 (Coast & Hydrography, tbc).

<i>networks established at sub regional level for the beneficiary countries</i>	from country and sub-regional teams	Integrated and thematic CORMONs meetings for all three clusters will be organized in April 2022, as per original workplan.
<p><b><u>Contribution of Output 2.1.4 to 2023 MED QSR:</u></b></p> <p><u>The CORMON meetings scheduled for April 2022 will be instrumental in reviewing the progress marked on the elaboration of scales of assessment/reporting/monitoring (Output 2.1.1), assessment criteria/thresholds/baseline values (Output 2.1.2), together with experts from countries and regional teams, and to present the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR. They will provide inputs for further elaboration of these aspects and the preparation of the second draft of the 2023 MED QSR (December 2022).</u></p>		
<i>Output 2.2.1: Establish and implement a communication and visibility strategy for the MED 2023 QSR; Outreach to key partners is undertaken and relevant meetings held</i>	<p><b>September 2021/September 2023</b></p> <p>2.2.1.1 Develop and implement a communication and visibility strategy/plan for 2023 MED QSR</p>	<b>September 2021/September 2023</b>
	<p><b>April 2022, March/April 2023, August 2023</b></p> <p>2.2.1.2 Develop and implement a collaboration mechanism and Partnership Plan for the 2023 MED QSR</p>	<b>April 2022, March/April 2023, August 2023</b>
<p><b><u>Contribution of Output 2.2.1 to 2023 MED QSR:</u></b></p> <p><u>The 2023 MED QSR Communication and Visibility Strategy is expected to be submitted for approval at the 8<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group meeting in September 2021, after which it will started to be implemented. In this way, the whole process of preparation and delivery of the 2023 MED QSR (in particular, for the next reporting period, the process of preparation and submission of the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR for April 2022) will be given the necessary visibility and outreach among all relevant stakeholders at Mediterranean, national and local level.</u></p>		
<i>Output 2.2.2: Strengthen SPI networks of scientists and policy makers for the IMAP and its implementation; Design and implement 1-2 pilots at country level</i>	<p><b>June 2021</b></p> <p>2.2.2.1 Identify relevant existing frameworks, processes and institutions at national level</p>	<b>September 2021</b>
	<p><b>April 2022</b></p> <p>2.2.2.2 Provide inputs to CORMONs and EcAp CG meetings on issues related to regional/sub-regional topic-specific SPI work</p>	<b>April 2022</b>
		<p>The identification of existing frameworks, processes and institutions already started with the work presented at the Integrated CORMONs Meetings in December 2020 by Plan Bleu.</p> <p>Inputs are expected to be provided on the implementation of the pilots and on issues related to SPI work through a dedicated agenda item during the CORMONs meetings in April 2022, as per original workplan.</p>

	<p><b>June 2021</b></p> <p>2.2.2.3 Develop ToRs and set up 2 national SPI pilots in 2 beneficiary countries</p>	<p><b>June 2021</b></p> <p>The process of pilots' identification and selection is already ongoing, and is expected to be finalized in May-June 2021.</p>
	<p><b>April 2022, September 2022</b></p> <p>2.2.2.4 Organize national thematic events/workshops in line with the respective country priorities and needs</p>	<p><b>April 2022, September 2022</b></p> <p>The national thematic events/workshops in the pilot countries will be held in 2022, as per original workplan.</p>
	<p><b>April 2022, March/April 2023</b></p> <p>2.2.2.5 Undertake a desk review of existing literature with the view to identify and propose an emerging list of priority contaminants in the Mediterranean, to be also supported by the results and data coming from implementation of monitoring programmes on the ground</p>	<p><b>April 2022, March/April 2023</b></p>

**Contribution of Output 2.2.2 to 2023 MED QSR:**

Although not strongly contributing to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR per se due to their limited size and geographical scope, the SPI-related activities of the Project are expected to create sustainable networks of collaborations between decision-makers and scientific communities to support policy-making processes in the implementation of coastal and marine policies. The pilots to be implemented at national level will include actions to create, coordinate, and maintain a dedicated SPI regional network to support a coordinated and successful IMAP implementation also beyond the temporal scope of the Project.

<p><b><i>Output 2.2.3: Develop and implement a time-line for regional data sharing between partners</i></b></p>	<p><b>August 2021-August 2023</b></p> <p>2.2.3.1 Map sources of data and partners to address 2023 MED QSR data gaps, and establish mechanisms and a timeline for data sharing, technical advice and peer review</p>	<p><b>August 2021-August 2023</b></p>
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**Contribution of Output 2.2.3 to 2023 MED QSR:**

In the next reporting period, it is expected that the identified partners will be fully engaged through a dedicated Meeting to be organized by the UNEP/MAP Secretariat, aiming to identify the contribution of partners in terms of data to fill in the knowledge gaps identified and integrate the national data provided by Contracting Parties, upon which the first draft of the 2023 MED QSR will be prepared (April 2022). The timeline for regional data sharing will be developed in full alignment

with the timeline for data collection and reporting of the Contracting Parties, so that additional data will be used to prepare the 2023 MED QSR as per project workplan and in line with 2023 MED QSR Roadmap Implementation Plan.

<b>Output 2.2.4: Develop and Publish 2023 MED QSR in 2 languages; make it available online and present at COP 23</b>	<b>November 2020 - March/April 2021</b>	<b>November 2020 - March/April 2021</b>
	2.2.4.1 Define the methodology, outline, structure and contents of 2023 MED QSR  2.2.4.2 Collect, analyse data, prepare thematic assessment products and 2023 MED QSR including maps and graphics:  <b>April 2022:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of 2023 MED QSR	<b>April 2022</b>  The first draft of the 2023 MED QSR is expected to be prepared and presented for review by CORMON in April 2022 (final draft expected for March/April 2023), as per original workplan.

**Contribution of Output 2.2.4 to 2023 MED QSR:**

The structure and outline of the 2023 MED QSR will be submitted to the 8<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group meeting in September 2021, for further review and finalization.

The first draft of 2023 MED QSR (April 2022) will be prepared following the agreed structure and outline, and will be based on the analysis of the data that were collected through Output 1.1 in the beneficiary countries, as well as of data from other Contracting Parties, and on the assessment scales (Output 2.1.1), assessment criteria, baseline and threshold values, and integrated assessment methodologies (Output 2.1.2) defined/developed, in line with the project workplan and with the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap Implementation Plan.













