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Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

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English only

Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Marine Litter Monitoring

Videoconference, 31 May 2022

Report of the meeting

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2022

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Introduction

1. In the framework of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2022-2023, the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Marine Litter Monitoring (CORMON Marine Litter) was held via videoconference on 31 May 2022, organized by the United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention Secretariat (UNEP/MAP) and its Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL).

Participation

2. The following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were represented at the Meeting: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, and the European Union.

3. The following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, convention secretariats and intergovernmental organizations were represented as observers: the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS).

4. The following non-governmental organizations and other institutions were also represented as observers: , the European Topic Center (ETC) – University of Malaga, the Mediterranean Information Office for the Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), the National Institute of Oceanography and Experimental Geophysics (OGS), Ocean Care, SFAX/ACG, and the University of Sienna

5. The full list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

6. The Meeting was opened on Tuesday 31 May 2022 at 10.00 a.m. by Mr. Mohamad Kayyal, MED POL Programme Management Officer, UNEP/MAP, Barcelona Convention Secretariat. He welcomed the participants and recalled the main objectives of the Meeting to review and approve proposals on Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24; draft guidelines for monitoring riverine inputs of marine litter; and discuss and agree on the application of the NEAT tool application for GES assessment for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (Beach Macrolitter) in the Adriatic Sea. He also referred to the progress made in the implementation of the roadmap for the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) and of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) in relation to Marine Litter, noting the importance of the preparation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) as a significant milestone in the implementation of IMAP.

Agenda item 2: Organizational matters

UNEP/MED WG.534/1; UNEP/MED WG.534/2; UNEP/MED WG.534/Inf.1

a) Adoption of the Agenda

7. The Meeting adopted its agenda on the basis of the Provisional Agenda and Provisional Annotated Agenda, including the proposed timetable, circulated in documents *UNEP/MED WG.534/1* and *UNEP/MED WG.534/2*, respectively.

8. The agenda is attached as **Annex II** to the present report.

b) Election of officers

9. The Meeting agreed that the rules of procedure for Meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Environment and the Coastal Region of the

Mediterranean and its Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) would apply mutatis mutandis to their deliberations.

10. Subject to Rule 20 of the rules of procedure mentioned at para. 2(a), the Meeting unanimously elected the following officers from among the representatives of the Contracting Parties:

Chairperson: Ms. Pilar Zorzo (Spain)

Vice-chairpersons: Mr. Yassine Marzougui (Tunisia)
Mr. Marco Mattidi (Italy)
Mr. Konstantinos Antoniadis (Cyprus)

Rapporteur: Ms. Sabina Hadžiahmetović (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

11. The discussions were held in line with the agenda. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French was provided during the Meeting.

Agenda item 3: Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Common Indicator 24
UNEP/MED WG.534/3; UNEP/MED WG.534/Inf.2; UNEP/MED WG.534/Inf.3; UNEP/MED WG.534/Inf.4; UNEP/MED WG.534/Inf.5

12. Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis, UNEP/MAP Secretariat, presented the working document UNEP/MED WG.534/3 “Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Common Indicator 24 (Ingestion and Entanglement on Marine Turtles”, which provides the basis for the development of the respective IMAP InfoSystem Modules to enable the upload of relevant data by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

13. He noted that the DS and DD are solely based on the standardized region-wide methodologies¹ for extracting marine litter ingested from dead and live individuals that were jointly developed by UNEP/MAP and the EU-funded INDICIT and Marine Litter MED Projects.

14. The Secretariat requested the Meeting participants to provide their review comments as well as to approve this document. The Secretariat informed them of its intention to subsequently further advance with the development of the respective IMAP InfoSystem Modules.

15. Several participants took the floor and welcomed the version of the Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) prepared by the Secretariat. They stressed the fact that the said DS-DD are solely based on the common region-wide agreed protocol; however, no substantive changes were introduced.

16. Other participants took the floor and highlighted the need to better distinguish in the document UNEP/MED WG.534/3, from an editorial point of view, the mandatory fields from those which are not mandatory. In response, the Secretariat indicated that it will introduce the editorial changes after the meeting, in line with the approach already used for the DS-DD of the other EOs/CIs, to change the mandatory fields from **bold-black-color** to regular black color, and the non-mandatory fields from regular-black-color to regular-red-color. The Secretariat indicated that it will share the revised version of the document with the Meeting participants together with the final version of the report of the Meeting.

¹ “Protocols for monitoring interactions between marine litter and marine turtles (ingestion and entangling) with a view to harmonizing methods of data collection for monitoring and assessment”

17. The meeting participants provided comments on the need to align the coding of the respective marine litter/ plastic items with those of the EU MSFD TGML hierarchical list. The Secretariat responded that the matter of aligning the UNEP/MAP-MED POL marine litter lists with those of the EU MSFD TGML hierarchical list will be tackled in a coordinated and consistent manner through the next Programme of Work (PoW) for 2024-2025 and the introduction of a relevant targeted activity.

18. The Meeting agreed to move forward with this document after:

- a) Deleting the table under Section 3 “List of recognized litter codes and categories” under the understanding that this list is redundant with the list included under Section 2.3 of the same document;
- b) Introducing the revised terminologies on “By-catch” and “Entanglement” under Annex I (Glossary) of the document.

19. The Meeting approved document UNEP/MED WG.534/3 “Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Common Indicator 24 (Ingestion and Entanglement on Marine Turtles)”.

20. The Secretariat will circulate the revised version of the document together with the final version of the report of the meeting and will also include the revised document as an information document to the next CORMON Marine Litter Meeting to be held at the end of 2022 (tbc).

21. The conclusions and recommendations regarding the Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Common Indicator 24 (Ingestion and Entanglement on Marine Turtles) are presented in **Annex III** to this Report.

Agenda item 4: Development of Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine inputs of Marine Litter
UNEP/MED WG.534/4

22. Mr. Ioakeimidis presented the working document UNEP/MED WG.534/4 “Draft Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine inputs of Marine Litter” developed in the framework of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED II project. He indicated that the guidelines were prepared considering the need to fill the methodological gaps on monitoring riverine inputs of marine litter entering into the marine/coastal environment.

23. Following the discussions, several representatives stressed the importance for the need to further improve the document along the following aspects; i.e., to:

- Improve the structure of the document along the two major thematic pillars: (a) macro-litter/plastics and (b) micro-litter/plastics;
- Align the document with the relevant efforts undergoing under the OSPAR framework;
- Focus the document on the methodological elements for visual observations for monitoring of macro-litter, as well as monitoring microlitter.

24. Following the review and discussions related to the document, the Meeting requested to the Secretariat to enable the Online Working Group on Marine Litter (OWG-ML) to further improve and update the guidelines in line with the above-listed aspects.

25. The Meeting conclusions and recommendations regarding the development of the Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine inputs of Marine Litter are presented in **Annex III** to this Report.

Agenda item 5: Methodology and Results of the NEAT Tool Application for GES Assessment for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (Beach Macrolitter) in the Adriatic Sea

26. Mr. Ioakeimidis gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Methodology and Results of the NEAT Tool Application for GES Assessment for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (Beach Macrolitter) in the Adriatic Sea.

27. The Meeting welcomed the work undertaken and stressed the importance and need to primarily focus GES assessment on clear and simple integration rules (i.e., through the establishment of Threshold Values), as well as that all upcoming new assessment tools (i.e., Neat Tool, Chase+ Tool) are not to substitute the simple integration rules.

28. The Meeting agreed that the Neat Tool application in the Adriatic could be used to fulfil the preparation process of the 2023 MED QSR, as well as in other sub-regions/sub-areas subject to data availability, taking into account integration rules and thresholds for the delivery of assessment findings.

29. The Secretariat reminded the Meeting participants to the urgent need to submit datasets for IMAP EO10, Common Indicators 22 and 23, through the IMAP InfoSystem, no later than mid-June 2022 for the need of updating the Baseline Values (BV) and establishing Threshold Values (TV), and no later than October 2022 for the needs of preparation of the 2023 MED QSR marine litter chapters.

30. The Meeting conclusions and recommendations regarding the regional operational strategy for monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 are presented in **Annex III** to this Report.

Agenda item 6: Any Other Business

31. No additional element was presented under this agenda item.

Agenda item 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

32. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat invited the Meeting participants to review the draft conclusions and recommendations. The Meeting approved the conclusions and recommendations as slightly amended by the Meeting and contained in **Annex III** to the present report.

Agenda item 8: Closure of the Meeting

33. After the expression of usual courtesies, the Chair declared the Meeting closed at 17.30 on Tuesday, 31 May 2022.

Annex I

List of Participants

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

ALBANIA / ALBANIE	Ms. Enxhi Oga Specialist National Environment Agency
ALGERIA / ALGERIE	Mme. Fazia Dahlab Director, Ministry of environment
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE ET HERZEGOVINE	Ms. Selma Osmanagic Klico Legal and Institutional Expert Hydro Engineering Institute Ms. Sanela Krdzalic Technical Associate Hydro Engineering Institute Ms. Senida Dzajic – Rghei Hydro Engineering Institute
CYPRUS / CHYPRE	Mr. Konstantinos Antoniadis Department of Fisheries and Marine Research
EGYPT / EGYPTE	Mr. Sameh Ayoub, MED POL Focal Point Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA),
EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPEENNE	Mr. Georg Hanke European Commission-Joint Research Centre Mr. Luis Francisco Ruiz Orejon European Commission-Joint Research Centre
FRANCE /FRANCE	Mme. Camille Lacroix Head of Aquatic Litter Monitoring and Studies Department, Cedre, Brest
GREECE	Ms. Maria Gkini Director, Ministry of Environment and Energy
ISRAEL / ISRAEL	Mr. Dror Zurel Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection Ms. Yael Segal Israel Oceanographic & Limnological Research National Institute of Oceanography
ITALY /ITALIE	Mr. Marco Matiddi, Ispra, Roma
LEBANON / LIBAN	Ms. Jamila AL Hadi Environmetal Engineer, Ministry of environment Authority

MALTA	<p>Ms. Marta Curmi Environment Protection Officer Environment & Resources Authority</p> <p>Ms. Roberta Debono Environment Protection Officer Environment & Resources Authority</p>
MONTENEGRO / MONTENEGRO	<p>Ms. Ivana Stojanovic Head of Division, Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism</p>
MOROCCO / MAROC	<p>Mr. Mohammed EL Bouch Directeur, Département du Développement Durable</p> <p>Mr. Moulay Lahcen Ouahidi Laboratoire National des Etudes et de Surveillance de la Pollution (LNEBP) relevant du Secrétariat d'Etat chargé du Développement Durable</p> <p>Mr. Abdeslam Abid Department of Sustainable Development (DDD/MTEDD)</p>
SLOVENIA / SLOVENIE	<p>Mr. Uros Robic Institute for water of the Republic of Slovenia</p>
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	<p>Ms. Pilar Zorzo Technical, Centre for Harbours and Coastal Studies (CEDEX),</p> <p>Ms. Salud Deudero Profesora de Investigacion, Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia,</p>
TUNISIA / TUNISIE	<p>Mr. Yassine Marzougui Point Focal National MED POL Agence Nationale de Protection de l'environnement</p> <p>Mr. Nouredine Zaaboub National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology, Sousse</p>
TURKEY / TURQUIE	<p>Ms. Betül Keskin Çatal Senior Expert, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Ankara</p> <p>Ms. Sevil Oksuz Expert, Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Ankara</p>

**REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS/REPRESENTANTS DES ORGANISATIONS
INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES**

ACCOBAMS	Ms Celia Le Ravallec
DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH	Ms. Jingyue Hou
EC EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY	Mr. Mustafa Aydın
EUROPEAN TOPIC CENTRE ON INLAND, COASTAL AND MARINE WATERS (ETC ICM)	Mr. Gašper Šubelj
OCEANCARE	Mr. Ewoud Lauwerier Plastic Policy Expert
ACG	Mme. Sana Taktak Présidente
BIRDLIFE MALTA	Ms. Polina Venka-Viedienkina Ms. Manya Russo Project Manager
MEDITERRANEAN CONSERVATION SOCIETY	Ms. Yasemin Ulusoy
MIO-ECSDE	Ms. Thomais Vlachogianni Senior Programme/Policy Officer

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

<p>UNEP/MAP COORDINATING UNIT PNUE/PAM UNITÉ DE COORDINATION</p>	<p>Mr. Mohamad Kayyal Programme Management Officer E-mail: mohamad.kayyal@un.org</p> <p>Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis Associate Programme Management Officer E-mail: christos.ioakeimidis@un.org</p> <p>Ms. Jelena Knezevic Monitoring and Assessment Officer E-mail: jelena.knezevic@un.org</p> <p>Mr. Erol Cavus MED POL Pollution Control Officer E-mail: erol.cavus@un.org</p> <p>Ms. Joanne Foden Programme Management Officer, 2023 MED QSR E-mail: joanne.foden@un.org</p> <p>Mr. Philippe Théou IMAP-MPA Project Manager E-mail: philippe.theou@un.org</p>
<p>MEDWAVES, THE UNEP/MAP REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR SCP (FORMER SCP/RAC)</p>	<p>Ms. Magali Outters Team Leader Policy Area E-mail: moutters@gencat.cat</p> <p>Mr Pedro Fernandez Bautista Project manager E-mail: pfernandezb@gencat.cat</p>
<p>PLAN BLEU REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (PLAN BLEU/RAC) PLAN BLEU, CENTRE D'ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES (PLAN BLEU/RAC)</p>	<p>Mr. Antoine Lafitte E-mail: alafitte@planbleu.org</p>

Annex II
Agenda of the Meeting

Agenda of the Meeting

- Agenda Item 1:** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda Item 2:** Organizational Matters
- Agenda Item 3:** Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Common Indicator 24
- Agenda item 4:** Development of Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine inputs of Marine Litter
- Agenda Item 5:** Methodology and Results of the NEAT Tool Application for GES Assessment for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (Beach Macrolitter) in the Adriatic Sea
- Agenda Item 6:** Any Other Business
- Agenda Item 7:** Conclusions and Recommendations
- Agenda Item 8:** Closure of the Meeting

Annex III

Conclusions and Recommendations

Adopted Conclusions and Recommendations

On 31 May 2022, the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Marine Litter Monitoring was held by videoconference. The meeting was organized by UNEP/MAP Secretariat (MED POL Programme).

The Secretariat presented an overview of the proposal of Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24; the Elements for monitoring riverine inputs of marine litter; as well as the methodology and results of the NEAT tool application for GES assessment for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (Beach Macrolitter) in the Adriatic Sea.

Following the review and discussions of the agenda items, the following conclusions were reached:

1. The Meeting appreciated the work undertaken and documents prepared by UNEP/MAP Secretariat/MED POL Programme, and acknowledged the progress achieved in the implementation of the work pertinent to Integrated Monitoring and Assessment for IMAP EO10 Marine Litter in order to contribute to the successful delivery of the MED QSR 2023.
2. Following the review and discussions of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.534/3 “Data Standards (DS) and Data Dictionaries (DD) for IMAP Ecological Objective 10 (EO10) Common Indicator 24 (Ingestion and Entanglement on Marine Turtles),” and considering the supplementary information provided by several participants specified in the revised Working Document attached to these conclusions, the Meeting:
 - a) Approved the proposals of Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24 for its integration into the IMAP Info System for preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.
 - b) Requested the Secretariat (MED POL, SPA/RAC and InfoRAC) to prepare the relevant IMAP InfoSystem Module with a view to receiving monitoring data from the Contracting Parties for preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.
 - c) Agreed to review the final version of the respective IMAP InfoSystem Module in the next CORMON Meeting, and as appropriate in the MED POL Focal Points Meeting, for further guidance on next steps.
3. Following the review and discussions of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.534/4 “Draft Guidelines for Monitoring Riverine inputs of Marine Litter,” the Meeting requested to the Secretariat/MED POL to enable the Online Working Group on Marine Litter (OWG-ML) to further improve and update the guidelines to mostly focus on the methodological elements of the visual observations for monitoring of macro-litter, as well as monitoring microlitter. The OWG-ML to consist of Turkey, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Israel, Tunisia, France, Slovenia and JRC.
4. Following the discussion of the Secretariat’s PowerPoint Presentation on the Methodology and Results of the NEAT Tool Application for GES Assessment for IMAP Common Indicator 22 (Beach Macrolitter) in the Adriatic Sea, and with a view of preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, the Meeting approved the application of the NEAT GES assessment methodology in the Adriatic Sea Sub-region, as well as in other sub-regions/sub-areas subject to data availability for application of the NEAT GES assessment for IMAP EO10 Marine Litter, taking into account integration rules and thresholds for the assessments.
5. Finally, the Meeting called upon all Contracting Parties to make all possible efforts to improve the submission of the respective datasets for IMAP EO10 Common Indicator 23 (i.e., seafloor macrolitter and floating microplastic) into IMAP Info System no later than mid-June 2022 for the need of updating the Baseline Values (BV) and establishing Threshold Values (TV).