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## MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

First meeting of technical experts on the  
Application of the Ecosystem Approach by MAP

Rome, Italy, 8-9 April 2010

### REPORT

## FIRST MEETING OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS ON THE APPLICATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH BY MAP



## Introduction

1. The First Meeting of Technical Experts on the Application of the Ecosystem Approach by MAP was held in Rome (Italy) on 8 and 9 April 2010 on the premises of the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA).

2. The objective of the Meeting was to take stock of the assessments being prepared by UNEP/MAP in accordance with Decision IG 17/6, by which the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008) decided to implement the Ecosystem Approach to the management of human activities that may affect the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean and adopted a road map for that purpose. The progress of the first assessments to be undertaken had been further specified by the Second Meeting of Government-designated Experts on the Application of the Ecosystem Approach by the Mediterranean Action Plan (Athens, Greece, 9 and 10 July 2008), organized with a view to the transition to Step 3 of the road map.

## Participation

3. The Meeting was attended by experts from the following Contracting Parties: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Croatia, Egypt, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Turkey.

4. The Meeting was also attended by representatives of two intergovernmental organizations, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the European Union's Joint Research Centre (JRC), and the following non-governmental organizations: the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET), the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Association for Forests, Development and Conservation (AFDC).

5. The full list of participants is contained in **Annex I** to this report.

## Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

6. Ms Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, Officer-in-Charge and Deputy Coordinator of MAP, welcomed the participants and thanked the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea and ISPRA, for hosting the First Meeting of Technical Experts. After expressing satisfaction that all the Parties had wished to be present, she recalled the decision adopted by the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to engage MAP in the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach. This was in itself only a means to an end, a milestone in the achievement of the objectives of the Barcelona Convention. With a view to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach, the Parties had agreed upon a road map, which envisaged in the short term the preparation of an assessment of the environmental status of the Mediterranean. This assessment would serve as a basis for the determination in the medium term of ecological objectives, which would be both ambitious and realistic, and then in the longer term the formulation of integrated assessment and monitoring policies. The assessment process had started a year earlier and the Meeting that was about to open was intended to: inform the participants of the preliminary results obtained so that they could determine whether the directions taken were appropriate, endorse them and/or make any adjustments that might appear necessary; decide on the methodology of the assessment and identify any gaps in this respect, and the means of overcoming them; and engage in an exchange of views on the steps that were to follow the assessment process.

7. Mr Oliviero Montanaro, Head of Unit, Land and Coastal Areas Management, Department for Nature Protection, welcomed the meeting on behalf of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy. He emphasized the special relevance of the MAP Meeting of Technical Experts in 2010, when the international community was celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity. The second half of 2010 would also see the holding of the Extraordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly on biodiversity, as well as the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was therefore to be envisaged that at the end of 2010 new directions would be set out at the international level for the protection and conservation of biodiversity for the ten to 20 years to come. The Ecosystem Approach would be one of the pillars of the new framework that was to be determined. It would also be a means of addressing in a more integrated manner the two great threats constituted by the erosion of biodiversity and climate change. In this respect, MAP could serve, on the one hand, to show how agreed plans could be prepared to take up jointly the two great challenges and, secondly, to verify mechanisms of cooperation and partnership. The Ecosystem Approach was therefore of strategic importance for the Mediterranean.

8. Mr Emilio Santori, ISPRA Sub-Commissioner, expressed deep satisfaction at being able to welcome within the premises of the Institute the participants at the Meeting of Technical Experts organized by MAP. ISPRA had expanded in recent years, and now encompassed the former Environmental Protection Office, the Central Marine Research Institute and the Institute for Wild Fauna. It was therefore well equipped to assist the Italian Ministry of the Environment in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention. With its close relations with specialized national, regional and international bodies, ISPRA was also responsible for the Italian environmental information system, which explained why it was about to host INFO/RAC. In conclusion, Mr Santori wished the participants every success in their work.

#### **Agenda item 2: Election of Officers**

9. Following informal consultations held prior to the opening sitting, the Meeting elected its Officers as follows:

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|--------------------|---|
| Chairperson:       | Mr Leonardo Tunesi (Italy)  |
| Vice-Chairpersons: | Mr Almokhtar Saïed (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)<br>Mr Driss Nachite (Morocco) |
| Rapporteur:        | Ms Nada Krstulovic (Croatia)  |

#### **Agenda item 3: Adoption of the Agenda**

10. The Meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.347/1/Corr.1 and the Annotated Agenda contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.347/2. The Agenda, as adopted, is contained in **Annex II** to the present report.

#### **Agenda item 4: Assessment of the ecological status of the Mediterranean**

Progress report on the implementation of the road map adopted by Decision IG 17/6 of the Contracting Parties for the application of the Ecosystem Approach by MAP (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.347/3)

11. The Secretariat briefly presented the Progress report on the implementation of the road map adopted by Decision IG 17/6 of the Contracting Parties for the application of the Ecosystem Approach (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.347/3). Decided upon in 2008, the adoption of the Ecosystem Approach (ECAP) had been substantially reinforced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of

the Contracting Parties (Marrakesh, 2009) with the adoption of a strategic five-year programme of work, of which the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach was a significant pillar. For the past two years, MAP activities had therefore been articulated around three major poles, in accordance with the programmes of work: the preparation of preliminary assessment reports, the analysis of the services provided by ecosystems and follow-up of the work, particularly of a technical nature, carried out in other regions in relation to the ECAP. Finally, the essential priority of the Secretariat, in relation to regional governance, had been to ensure the ownership and implementation of MAP activities for the application of the Ecosystem Approach by the Contracting Parties. It was in that context that it had been decided to organize the First Meeting of Technical Experts.

Stocktaking report: A state-of-the-art analysis of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.347/Inf.3)

12. Ms Tundi Agardy, MAP consultant, briefly recalled the development of thought relating to the management of ecosystems. She placed the ECAP in a historical perspective, referring to the development of the concepts of environmental management that had succeeded one another in recent years.

13. The consultant then specified a number of the issues arising in relation to MAP. In the first place, it was necessary to target assessments. In general, they were focussed on four major categories of threats or pressures: pollution, biodiversity, changes in habitats and fisheries. MAP was beginning to have at its disposal a large amount of data on these parameters, which should make it possible to establish in the near future a type of photograph. The question that would then arise was to orient the assessments so as to be able in future to identify trends and developments.

14. Mr Didier Sauzade presented document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.347/4, *Economic value of the sustainable benefits coming from Mediterranean marine ecosystems*, on behalf of the Blue Plan. After referring to the objectives of the study, the most important of which were to raise awareness of the real nature of the benefits deriving from ecosystems, since there was no real awareness of the goods produced, he recalled that, following the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2000-2005), various initiatives had been undertaken at the international level for the economic analysis of ecosystems, including the United Nations System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA) and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB). With regard to the study under discussion, the functions of ecosystems had been classified into four major categories, of which three, the functions of supply, regulation and culture, were oriented towards human beings. Those functions could be categorized into the services provided, whether or not they were used. The study proposed to provide figures for the value in 2005 of a relatively small number of benefits resulting from these services: fishing and aquaculture, amenities (hotels, tourism and property), the protection of coasts against erosion, general regulation of the climate and the treatment of waste.

15. During the ensuing discussion, it was emphasized that the assessment of the services provided by ecosystems could undoubtedly be one of the components of the ECAP, but that it should not be undertaken solely as a function of goods and services. It was important to adopt an approach which, in addition to economic factors, also took into account social factors. Moreover, the assessment of the services provided by ecosystems should also take into consideration the cost of inaction. It would also be necessary to ensure, in a field in which accounting was particularly delicate, that figures were not presented that could turn out to be counter-productive. It would undoubtedly be preferable to confine the exercise at present to targeted assessments. It would also be necessary to demonstrate a pragmatic attitude and take into account the possibilities of using existing data. One participant added that, according to the study, the economic value of the services provided by ecosystems had

their origins in two-thirds of cases in the sectors that were also subject to the greatest pressures.

16. The necessity for targeted assessments to support and supplement the preliminary results obtained was confirmed. It could also be envisaged that with time more data would become available. The cost of degradation would be assessed in future, particularly in the context of the implementation of the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

17. The discussion then turned to the implementation of the ECAP by MAP. Mr Michail Papadoyannakis, representative of the European Union, informed the participants that a decision was due to be adopted in July 2010 by the Commission to assist the Member States of the European Union to comply with the obligations deriving from the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. By 2012, Member States would have to produce their assessment of the marine environment, indicate what they considered a good marine environmental status to be and determine their environmental objectives, targets and indicators. This process was to result in a good environmental status of the marine environment by 2020. The need for as simple as few indicators as possible was acknowledged and this would be reflected in the final Decision. The Member States strongly hoped to develop regional cooperation for implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive for all the seas bordering on Europe, and the Barcelona Convention was an ideal framework in which this cooperation would be developed for the Mediterranean. This is fully in line with the objectives and commitments of UNEP/MAP as reflected in the Almeria decision and the recently adopted work programmes. He explicitly endorsed the alignment of the document prepared by the MAP Secretariat on the preliminary assessments with the decisions (and in particular the GDE report "table of contents") adopted by the last Meeting of the Contracting Parties and by the Second Meeting of the Government-designated Expert Group (GDE). The directions outlined were fully compatible with those of the European Union. Concerning the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the context of the Barcelona Convention in its capacity as a Contracting Party, the European Union would continue to contribute in financial terms and through activities, in accordance with its commitments and also to the extent that UNEP/MAP provides the necessary forum for regional cooperation. It is important that the work must continue in 2010 also on the next steps of the Ecosystem Approach roadmap agreed at Almeria, if necessary, without waiting for the finalisation of the assessment. Further meetings of the government designated experts will be probably necessary for implementing the next two steps of the roadmap (ecological objectives and operational objectives/indicators/target levels) and for ensuring a link with National Focal Points later in 2011, ahead of the next meeting of the Contracting Parties.

18. During the discussion, several speakers emphasized the need for a common conception of the approach to be adopted for the implementation of the ECAP (including objectives, descriptors and indicators) and of what constituted a good ecological status of the Mediterranean. The participants agreed that the situation that would be identified by the preliminary assessment that was being carried out could not in any event be considered merely as an ecological status to be preserved. The marine environment had already suffered damage which needed to be repaired and improvements were required.

19. The participants raised the question of the manner in which the ECAP could, for example, take into account: (i) the issue of desalination plants, which affected the marine environment, but which were indispensable; (ii) the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity; (iii) the management of coastal zones, or large ecosystems; (iv) the management and protection of biodiversity in the high seas; and (v) the links between climate change and biodiversity, as well as between climate change and habitat losses. Attention was drawn to the experience of the Natura 2000 network, which could be taken into account for the identification of fragile habitats.

20. The initial assessment should make it possible to identify a number of shortcomings. One of these perhaps related to sea beds and hydrological data, or in other words the abiotic component of the Mediterranean. It was also recalled that the interactions that needed to be taken into account should not be overlooked (for example, between fishing and biodiversity). In any case, the process of the implementation of the ECAP was evolutionary, and over time MAP would make up for the shortcomings and would, if necessary, review the indicators. What was particularly important at the present stage was to ensure the comparability and coherence of the data.

21. Emphasis was placed on the need to define the geographical area that would be taken into consideration for the purposes of the assessments, in view of the very strong interactions between coastal areas and the marine environment. In this respect, as in others, the ECAP would have to be based on everything that already existed, and the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention, one of which specifically addressed land-based sources and activities, constituted significant progress that needed to be maintained.

22. It was recalled that it was now time to begin reflection on the definition of the good ecological status of the Mediterranean, bearing in mind the ultimate objective of effective management. Step 4 should therefore be prepared, or in other words, work should begin on the development of ecological objectives, without awaiting the completion of Step 3. With regard to the continuation of Step 3, MAP already had the Table of Contents established by the Athens meeting (July 2008), and excellent suggestions, such as visualization through the application of GIS, were also contained in the documents prepared by the Secretariat.

23. Reference was also made to issues related to temporal and spatial scope or scale. It was emphasized that the subdivision of the Mediterranean into four subregions should be considered as a means to an end and should give rise to a global vision, which could be formulated on the basis of the subregions only if there was agreement on the targets for the Mediterranean as a whole and on the criteria to be adopted. On the one hand, it was recalled that this subdivision had been intended to facilitate assessment, rather than to guide plans of action, and that it was therefore necessary to avoid double standards. It was also noted that the subregions each had their own specific characteristics, particularly in relation to their different levels of sensitivity to the various pressures, which would undoubtedly affect their management. Reference was also made to the case of countries called upon to prepare a national strategy when their coasts lay in more than one subregion.

24. With a view to being effective, it would also be necessary to take into account not only economic imperatives, but also political constraints, related in particular to the difference in scale between political and environmental timescales. In any case, MAP needed a commonly agreed time schedule.

25. The attention of the participants was also drawn to the issue of the ownership of the ECAP. Assessment was a scientific process, but constituted a prelude to decisions that would be taken in a broader institutional framework and which would have implications for society as a whole. It was therefore important to ensure that the ECAP process was participatory in its nature and, for this purpose, to envisage ensuring that the research teams were pluridisciplinary in composition. This was related to the issue of the extent to which the management tools and plans of action which would follow the assessments were of a binding nature. The fact could not be overlooked that in the longer term it would be necessary to assess the effectiveness of the management systems, and this needed to be born in mind when designing monitoring systems.

26. Finally, it was recalled that at their 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the Contracting Parties had called upon MAP to prepare a strategy for the mobilization of financial resources. One component of the strategy could be devoted to the financing of the ECAP process.

27. In reply to a question on this subject, the MED POL Coordinator indicated that desalination was considered to be an industrial activity covered by the LBS Protocol to the Barcelona Convention and that, accordingly, the establishment of desalination plants was subject to authorization by the authorities of the country concerned.

Presentation by MED POL and SPA/RAC of the underlying principles of the current assessments of pollutants and biodiversity in the four subregions (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.347/5)

28. Mr Francesco Saverio Civili, MED POL Coordinator, reported on the progress of the assessment required by the road map for Step 3 of the ECAP concerning the quality of the environment in the Mediterranean in relation to pollution. As MED POL had data on the subject at its disposal, it had been decided to call directly upon four consultants to assemble the information for each subregional group, ensure its coherence and prepare a harmonized document for each group. Mr Angelidis presented the subregional assessments, which were based on the two major MED POL databases (national diagnostic assessments, or NDAs, and the results of national monitoring programmes provided by the countries themselves), and the reports prepared in recent years. The NDA database contained around 7600 entries relating to 80 different substances and parameters: substances of concern, other substances and indicators of nutrients. However, there was a significant distortion in the information gathered, as only 32 per cent of the entries related to substances of concern, which however accounted for 68 per cent of the substances covered by the database. While MAP was consequently going in the right direction, there was still room for improvement and it was to be hoped that the countries would provide more of the information in their possession on pollution emissions. Matrices had been established for the values of substances that were hazardous because they were toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulate. As measurements taken in sediments and biota, the data reported should be considered preliminary. They needed to be interpreted carefully and would be examined with the countries in each subregion. With regard to nutrients, in the context of its monitoring programme, MED POL had collected 3600 observations from 255 stations. However, once again, there were gaps in the data in both geographical and chronological terms and it would be necessary to strengthen cooperation with a view to remedying those gaps.

29. Mr Abderrahmen Gannoun, Director of SPA/RAC, recalled that SPA/RAC had contributed to the preparation by the Blue Plan of the economic assessment of the services provided by the Mediterranean ecosystem through the provision of data and participation in the Steering Committee. Moreover, SPA/RAC had undertaken an assessment of the ecological status of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean and the pressures affecting it. For this purpose, it had secured the assistance of the countries, calling upon national consultants selected through the Focal Points, whose work was coordinated at the subregional level by four international experts under the supervision of SPA/RAC. The Centre was currently benefiting from the cooperation of 17 countries, with studies remaining to be undertaken in four countries.

30. Mr Daniel Cebrian, SPA/RAC Programme Officer, reported on the preliminary results of the assessment of the status of biodiversity in the Mediterranean. He emphasized the very preliminary nature of the conclusions, which had been drawn from only ten reports out of an expected total of 24. The work undertaken had made it possible to identify gaps in knowledge relating to the distribution, populations and conservation status of a large number of species. Similarly, it had emerged that the data relating to marine resources in general were inadequate and lacked geographical balance. It was nevertheless possible to indicate that the trends for fish resources appeared negative, despite the efforts made at the national level to reduce fishing capacity. It also appeared relatively clear that much remained to be done to minimize the adverse effects of human activities and to protect and conserve



threatened species. A latitudinal displacement of the areas of distribution of fish populations, apparently due to warming, had been observed.

31. During the ensuing discussion, the participants observed, with regard to the MED POL report, that in addition to the information available in the databases of the MAP technical components, there were many other possible sources of information. For example, the States Parties to various international and regional instruments provided a large volume of data to the corresponding Convention bodies. This was particularly the case of the European Union Member States, which provided data to the bodies of the European Union in relation, for example, to the various framework directives. While it was the responsibility of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to provide information to MAP, it was also for the Secretariat, duly mandated, to make the best possible use of all the databanks to which it had access.

32. It was also noted that the MED POL assessment should establish the link between the concentrations of pollutants observed in the Mediterranean and the land-based sources of discharges through water courses. It was easy using satellite images to identify the industrial establishments present in a particular area, the management of which needed to be improved to reduce pollution.

33. One participant observed that the MED POL report indicated a gap relating to one area for which his country had provided data which, it appeared, had not been taken into account.

34. With regard to the SPA/RAC report, the participants considered that, in addition to the preliminary recommendations that had been outlined, the initial assessment should give rise to firmer recommendations (even if, one added, such recommendations were really part of a subsequent step in the road map). For example, scientifically based assessments would be required on the technologies that ran counter to environmental sustainability which were used in fields such as fishing and aquaculture, combined with indications on the measures to be taken to render those technologies ecologically viable.

35. The speakers noted with satisfaction that the reports envisaged by MED POL and SPA/RAC were based on the Table of Contents established two years previously. However, the relationship with the Table of Contents was clearer in the case of the MED POL assessment project than in that of SPA/RAC. Moreover, the Table of Contents referred to further information on various points. If, accordingly, information on a particular aspect was lacking, it would be necessary to so indicate so that a decision could be taken in future to gather the necessary information.

36. Emphasis was also placed on issues of coherence and, more particularly, on the need, on the one hand, to ensure the comparability of the various subregional reports and, on the other, to establish links between the two types of assessments and to identify how they could be mutually reinforcing so as to demonstrate the relations between cause and effect. The time had come to go beyond the structure of regional centres to develop a global vision of the situation in the Mediterranean and the issues that arose in that respect.

37. The MED POL representative indicated that a draft protocol had been approved at the technical level. Aggregate data were generally available. However, for gross data, authorization had to be requested from the Focal Point of the respective country. Moreover, MED POL followed the principle of only entering data into its databases which offered guarantees of quality.

**Agenda item 5: Finalization of the assessment process and beyond: Other matters**

Discussion on the continuation of the preliminary assessment (April-July 2010)

38. The Officer-in-Charge and Deputy Coordinator of MAP recapitulated the various points on which consensus had been reached. With regard to the matters that were still pending, she proposed, and the Meeting agreed, to focus its work on a group of themes outlined by the Secretariat to facilitate reflection.

*1. What work has to be carried out to finalize the reports? What needs to be done and within what time limits? What are the challenges in relation to participation?*

39. Most speakers emphasized the need to keep to the Table of Contents established by the Second Meeting of Government-designated Experts, without attempting to go beyond them in the three months that remained before the next Meeting of Technical Experts in July 2010, although a schedule could be developed for the following stages. As it existed, the Table of Contents provided a basis for progress since, for example, it provided in Section II ("Pressures and impacts ... cumulative and synergetic effects") for the integration of information relating to pollution and biodiversity, which the Secretariat intended to do. It also called for an impact assessment to be undertaken, the need for which was widely felt and in respect of which MED POL had already envisaged establishing the relationships between sources and concentrations. The Table of Contents also referred (Note 1) to socio-economic analysis, which should not be overlooked,

40. Certain participants referred to the need to strengthen intra-regional cooperation with a view to improving the comparability of data within each of the subregions. Examples of cooperation programmes of this nature were mentioned, such as the Adriatic/Ionian Initiative. In any case, it was important to ensure the harmonization of data, not only between subregions, but also within each subregion.

*2. New sources of data/information: Which are they? How can they be integrated?*

41. Emphasis was placed on the need for MAP to take advantage of all the information that was accessible in the framework of regional bodies, such as the European Union, or international instruments, such as the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change, and the Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam Conventions. Data from remote sensing and modelling should also be used. Reference was made to the need for the MAP technical components to coordinate the information gathered and ensure the precision of the data by verifying the sources.

42. MED POL and SPA/RAC should make use of these multilateral sources of information and, in relation to national data sources, they should request the Focal Points in the very near future to provide the missing the data so as to be able to complete the assessment.

*3. Integrating biodiversity and pollution (and other dimensions) by seeking correlations whenever possible: How to improve the synthesis of the information and assess interactions between the various types of pressures?*

43. It was agreed that, in view of the nature and ecological situation of each of the subregions, the initial assessments for each of them would be presented separately, but that a synthesis would be made to outline the common elements for the whole of the Mediterranean. Every effort should be made to seek and identify the correlations that existed. The required integration would be facilitated by the use of GIS and the development of maps,

which could in turn facilitate the identification, even on a preliminary basis, of priority areas and subjects.

44. The consultant and the Secretariat of SPA/RAC indicated the difficulties related to the fact that the information available to MAP was much more detailed in the case of coastal zones than for the high seas. In the latter case, the information came essentially from oceanographic campaigns organized in particular by scientific institutions and supported by bodies such as the CIESM.

45. Certain speakers emphasized the need to make use of the specialized documentation that was available for areas located in the high seas and indicated that, in this respect, an integrated approach should also be adopted with a view to taking an overall view of the Mediterranean. MAP should also take into account activities that did not lie within its competence, such as fisheries and maritime traffic, which formed part of the pressures on the marine environment. For this purpose, it should cooperate with fisheries bodies and the IMO.

*4. Information for the assessment has to be georeferenced, mapped and analysed with the assistance of GIS. What data series are available for this purpose? Distribution of threatened species, benthic habitats, oceanographic characteristics, ecosystem services, SPAMIs and potential SPAMIs in the high seas, eutrophication/pollution hot spots, pressures resulting from navigation/oil spills, coastal development/loss of habitats, hot spots of overfishing, hypoxic/anoxic areas.*

46. All of the issues referred to in the wording of the present question were considered pertinent and deserving of being referenced in a GIS system. Reference was also made to the following aspects to be taken into account: dumping sites, including the dumping of conventional or chemical munitions, the transport of sand, off-shore installations, sites for the collection and sequestration of carbon dioxide, artificial reefs (installed for fishing, for the protection of biodiversity or for leisure), fish farms, erosion areas, installations on coastal zones (port and tourist infrastructure), desalination plants, ecological installations (plants for the treatment of water or wastewater), data on fauna (for example, migrations of birds, predators) and climate change, protected areas (and not only existing or potential SPAMIs) and non-indigenous invasive species.

47. It was indicated that the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research had produced data on the distribution of invasive species updated until 2010. One participant recalled that national ministries, such as ministries of transport and health, had much relevant data in GIS databases. It was also considered that a distinction should be made between basic data, such as physical data (bathymetric and topographical data), climate data and data on hydrodynamism (currents, swells, sediments), without overlooking the Posidonia meadows, as well as thematic data, essentially on pollution and biodiversity. There were doubtless pre-established data series in other systems which could be used. It was essential in any case to use GIS not only for mapping purposes, but also for analysis.

48. In the view of Mr Claudio Maricchiolo, INFO/RAC Coordinator, it was important to start with a preliminary vision of the phenomena to be illustrated with a view to subsequently using the data available, in the first place among the stakeholders in MAP activities and collaborating bodies, and then in the scientific community as a whole. Where data were lacking, it would be possible to find proxies. A financial analysis was also required to determine the cost of improving the knowledge base.

49. Mr Alain Jeudy de Grissac, representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, referred to the activities carried out by the IUCN, with particular reference to the Red List of Threatened Species and the work on invasive species. There were numerous GIS initiatives, although the information was often difficult to collect. SPA/RAC should also

seek information from the GFCM for fishing, and from the bodies of ACCOBAMS for cetaceans. It was impossible to establish full data coverage for migrant species, although it could be done for reproduction areas, for example. The IUCN, which cooperated with all the bodies present, was prepared to provide its data to the MAP technical components.

50. The Chairperson recalled the existence of the Delivering Alien Invasive Inventories for Europe (DAISIE) project, undertaken in the context of the European Union. He added that ISPRA was participating in an international project for the mapping of benthic populations covering the eastern Mediterranean. By the end of the year, the scientific community would have at its disposal a small-scale map (1/1,000,000<sup>e</sup>) of all the habitats from 0 to -5600 metres for the areas covered by the project.

51. The representative of MED POL indicated that it had data relating to dumping, which would be taken into account in the preliminary assessment. It was recalled that MED POL had prepared, with a view to the Marrakesh Conference, a very detailed report accompanied by maps on the dumping of munitions. The report had been updated and would be used for the present assessment.

52. The representative of SPA/RAC indicated that the Centre had begun to make use of GIS with a view to utilizing the data on sensitive areas and fishing, on the basis of FAO and GCFM databases. With regard to sensitive species and habitats, a pilot project had been undertaken to prepare a map of Posidonia meadows in certain countries. The work was to be continued for the mapping of coral, and it was planned to proceed with the same operation for invasive species.

53. The MAP consultant confirmed that data from ACCOBAMS would be integrated into the version of the assessment planned for July 2010. The issue of GIS applications would be addressed by a working meeting to be held in May, and a data set would be established for major taxonomic groups, identifying important areas for predators (and particularly cetaceans, marine birds, sea turtles and sharks). She also confirmed that GIS would be used for the purposes not only of visualization, but also analysis. The assessment document and the preliminary assessment reports would be revised to take into account in a more detailed manner the relevant analysis tools and the contribution that could be made by GIS to decision-making.

*5. The preliminary assessment is important, but information on trends is essential. For which aspects/parameters do we have reliable information on trends?*

54. Several speakers indicated that trends analysis, which was of crucial importance, required the careful selection of parameters. It was necessary to select trends that were indicative of an impact. The direct links were also emphasized between trends analysis, on the one hand, and monitoring, as well as management, on the other. For that reason, in the view of one participant, the determination of the trends to be analysed should go hand-in-hand with the establishment of the targets to be achieved. She indicated that this involved the establishment of a monitoring system that was reasonable, adapted to needs, stable over time and not costly, or in other words, a system of targeted monitoring, which would identify the relevant trends and to which consideration should now be given in view of the time required for the implementation of such mechanisms.

55. The representative of MED POL recalled that MED POL had been following trends since the design of Phase 3 of the Programme, which was now in its fourth Phase. In its responsibility for monitoring the application of the LBS Protocol to the Barcelona Convention, MED POL used and would continue to use trends to assess the effectiveness of the measures adopted. It had begun to analyse trends in the levels of pollutants in certain biota and sediments, but had only as yet been able to do so for a few countries. The methodology

used was extremely rigorous and time series for at least five years were required. MED POL would now undertake analysis of trends relating to sources of pollution, that is national diagnostic analyses (NDAs). Following a first inventory in 2003, a second was being completed. MED POL also had good time series from various stations on microbial pollution. In general, it was clear that all the data required for the basic assessment would not yet be available for the month of July, but that the implementation of the ECAP was a process that would be continued.

Joint discussion on the stages following the preliminary assessment (July 2010-November 2011)

56. The Officer-in-Charge and Deputy Coordinator of MAP recapitulated the indications and guidance emerging from the discussion in relation to the series of activities that the Secretariat and the MAP technical components should undertake with a view to the holding of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties in November 2011, as well as the meetings of experts and of Focal Points that would be held in the meantime. The indications were those contained in the conclusions approved by the participants (**Annex III**). In particular, it was agreed that the Meeting of Technical Experts to be held in July 2010 would engage in reflection on the methodologies applicable for the determination of ecological objectives, monitoring and the assessment of effectiveness, and that it would have before it a draft timeframe for activities prepared by the Secretariat going up to the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties. In reply to two questions, she indicated that the issue of whether monitoring would consist of multiple and coordinated systems (national or subregional), or of a centralized mechanism, and of the possible adoption of an iterative approach to the implementation of the ECAP, could be discussed at the meeting to be held in July.

**Agenda item 6: Adoption of the recommendations**

57. The Meeting considered draft conclusions, on which certain comments were made and modifications requested. The draft report of the Meeting will be sent to the participants for consideration and adoption. The final version of the conclusions, as adopted by the participants, is contained in **Annex III** to this report.

**Agenda item 7: Closure of the meeting**

58. Following the usual exchange of courtesies, the Chairperson closed the meeting on Friday 9 April at 6.30 pm.



**ANNEX I**  
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## ANNEX II

### AGENDA

#### **DAY 1: THURSDAY, 8 APRIL 2010**

- 09:00 – 09:30 1. **Registration of the participants**
- 09:30 – 09:50 2. **Opening of the Meeting**
- 09:50 – 10:00 3. **Election of officers and adoption of the agenda**
- 10:00 – 18:00 4. **Assessment of the ecological status of the Mediterranean**
- a) *Progress on the implementation of the roadmap adopted by Decision IG 17/6 of the Contracting Parties for the application of ecosystem approach by MAP*
  - b) *Stocktaking*
  - c) *Economic value of sustainable benefits coming from Mediterranean marine ecosystems*
  - d) *Facilitated group discussion on assessment and the use of the assessment reports in furthering the road map*

#### **DAY 2: FRIDAY, 9 APRIL 2010**

- 09:00 – 16:00 4. **Assessment of the ecological status of the Mediterranean (continued)**
- e) *Recap of Day 1 by the Secretariat with any emergent recommendations*
  - f) *Presentations by MED POL and SPA/RAC on the rationale for what has been assessed regarding pollutants and biodiversity in four areas*
  - g) *In depth analysis of each area and identification of data gaps, with feedback from participants*
- 16:00 – 17:00 5. **Next steps: Finalization of the assessment process and beyond; Other matters**
- 17:00 – 18:30 6. **Adoption of recommendations**
- 18:30 7. **Closure of the meeting**

**Note:**

*Coffee breaks: 10.30-10.50 and 16.30-16.50 hrs*

*Lunch breaks: 13.00-14.30 hrs*



## ANNEX III

### CONCLUSIONS

The First Meeting of Technical Experts on the Ecosystem Approach (ECAP), held on 8-9 April 2010 at ISPRA premises in Rome, Italy, reaffirmed the wish to engage in a process to apply the ecosystems approach within the BC/MAP which is owned and driven by the Contracting Parties.

After consideration of all agenda items, the meeting agreed on a number of necessary actions, with a view to completing step 3 of the ECAP Roadmap<sup>1</sup> agreed in Almeria by the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties, January 2008 and beginning the process of implementing step 4, as follows:

#### **Assessment Process (April-July 2010)**

1. With the view to finalizing the assessment by July 2010:
  - a) MEDPOL and SPA/RAC to:
    - immediately use all available and appropriate sources of information at national and regional levels
    - contact, only when it is indispensable for the purpose of the assessment, the concerned countries by 20 April 2010 at the latest, through their focal points and in cooperation with the Coordinating Unit,
    - distribute a comprehensive list of the needed data, as well as the final reports prepared by the regional and national consultants
    - copy to the respective country representatives participating in the present meeting all correspondence on this subject.
  - b) Concerned countries should be requested to provide data or appropriate sources of information by end of April 2010.
2. The meeting requested all the components of MAP to provide all information available regarding their respective fields of competence, in accordance with the Table of Contents of the assessment, in particular on pressures and information arising from the high seas SPAMI project currently being implemented by SPA/RAC.
3. The first initial assessment will be based on the approved Table of Contents for the synthesis assessment document, highlighting common features among the four sub-regions and in particular interactions between status, pressures and impacts. Given the different ecological nature and condition of the four sub-regions, the assessments for each of them will be presented individually. Additionally, the assessment should

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<sup>1</sup> The ECAP Roadmap adopted by Decision IG 19/6 of the 15<sup>th</sup> Contracting parties meeting, 2008, is made of 7 steps.

*Step 1. Definition of an ecological vision ( Already agreed in 2008 by the Contracting Parties)*

*Step 2. Setting of common Mediterranean strategic goals (Already agreed in 2008 by the Contracting Parties)*

*Step 3. Identification of important ecosystem properties and assessment of ecological status and pressures*

*Step 4. Development of a set of ecological objectives corresponding to the vision and strategic goals*

*Step 5. Development of operational objectives with indicators and target levels*

*Step 6. Revision of monitoring programmes for ongoing assessment and regular updating of targets*

*Step 7. Development and review of relevant action plans and programmes*

- consider providing information on trends wherever it is available at the regional scale, including information flowing out of impact assessments. As such, the July assessment document will present a general overview of the current environmental condition of the Mediterranean, and additional trend information where available.
4. The analysis of ecosystem services should go beyond economics and include social factors as well as elements of cost of environmental degradation and of action/inaction, building on the current analysis results and taking into account the work carried out by other organizations in this field, like the TEEB project and the Payment for Ecosystem services (PES) approach.
  5. The meeting mandated the MAP Secretariat to approach regional organizations with the aim of obtaining all relevant information, optimizing synergies and avoiding duplication and overlaps for the purpose of the assessment, as well as coordinating monitoring and assessing tools and methods.
  6. The assessment report will include preliminary GIS displays of key features of the Mediterranean ecosystems, major classes of threats, to the extent possible, major impacts as well as ecosystem values for the 4 sub-regions.
  7. The Coordinating Unit will organize in July 2010 the Second Technical Experts Meeting that should set the working plan on the activities and necessary arrangements until the next Contracting Parties Meeting in November 2011 with regard to the implementation of Decision IG.17/6 on the ECAP. The agenda of the meeting should also include the following items:
    - a) Reviewing the assessment report for the four sub-regional areas and commonalities for the whole Mediterranean as well as GIS display of key features.
    - b) Developing a timetable for implementing the ECAP roadmap steps 4-7, for the consideration of the Government Designated Expert (GDE) meeting not later than in spring 2011.
    - c) Facilitating, on the basis of the findings of the assessment report, an exchange of views on,
      - *possible methodologies for defining ecological objectives,*
      - *ways and means to enhancing monitoring programs,*
      - *effectiveness evaluation*
      - *transnational and sub-regional cooperation.*

#### **Next Steps Beyond Initial Assessment (July 2010-November 2011)**

1. MAP will further work to amend as appropriate and complete the assessment report on the basis of feedback provided from the July meeting, as well as from other sources such as information provided to other regional bodies, secretariats of other international conventions, EU, EEA, etc.
2. The meeting agreed that GIS should be utilized to prioritize key areas and key threats, as well as areas with the highest ecosystem service values, in order to provide the foundation for setting ecological objectives.

3. The meeting also agreed that the ecological objectives should be developed through an agreed methodology.
4. The Coordinating Unit will also hold a Government Designated Experts meeting in at the latest March -April 2011 that should consider and transmit to the MAP Focal Points Meeting in September 2011 and the Contracting Parties Meeting in November 2011 for their consideration draft decisions on:
  - the final version of the assessment
  - the timetable for implementing the ECAP roadmap;
  - the ecological objectives for the Mediterranean including proposed operational objectives and as appropriate, indicators and target levels.
5. Following the July meeting outcome, the Coordinating Unit will consider holding other meeting/s at least one in Autumn 2010, subject to available funding, in order to consult with the countries and advance on the application of ECAP in the Mediterranean through a common owned vision, objectives and programmatic approach.
6. In addition, the meeting requested the Secretariat to develop, a MAP policy on information sharing as well as, to mobilize additional resources for the implementation of the ECAP roadmap.