

Introduction

1. The Second Meeting of Technical Experts on the Application of the Ecosystem Approach by MAP was held on 6 and 7 July 2010 at the invitation of the Government of Spain at the Department of Environment and Housing of the Government of Catalonia (*Departament de Medi Ambient i Habitatge de la Generalitat de Catalunya*), Avda Diagonal 523-525, Barcelona. The meeting was held pursuant to the decision by the First Meeting of Technical Experts on the Application of the Ecosystem Approach by MAP, held in Rome on 8 and 9 April 2010, which decided that the objectives of the second meeting would be: to advance on the finalization of the Assessment Report; and to agree on follow up actions with regard to the implementation of other steps of the road map for implementing the Ecosystem Approach by MAP and other issues, such as monitoring and assessment of effectiveness.

Participation

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

3. The Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Branch of UNEP, the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), MED POL, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), the Blue Plan Regional Activity Centre (BP/RAC), the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC), the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), the Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC) and INFO/RAC were also represented at the meeting.

4. The following institutions and organizations were represented by observers: European Commission Joint Research Centre, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM FAO), Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPAN) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

5. The list of participants is attached as **Annex I** to this report.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

6. The meeting was opened at 9.00 a.m. on Tuesday 6 July 2010 by Ms Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, Officer-in-Charge/Deputy Coordinator of MAP. Ms Silva welcomed the participants and thanked the Department of Environment and Housing of the Government of Catalonia for hosting the meeting.

7. Ms Genoveva Catala, Director, Catalan Waste Company, welcomed the participants and explained that the Catalan Waste Company reported to the Department of Environment and Housing of the Government of Catalonia, which also hosted the Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC). She observed that the achievement of the goals of the Barcelona Convention required an integrated approach based on local commitment. In this context, her agency was responsible for the life-cycle analysis of products and for reporting on environmental conservation measures. Pursuant to the Spanish Act respecting natural heritage and biodiversity, in accordance with the devolved powers exercised by the Autonomous Regions, the Parliament of Catalonia was currently in the process of adopting its own legislation on the subject which, among other provisions, would emphasize the importance of specially protected areas. She added that the Catalan Water Agency was

responsible for supervising the quality of water in coastal areas, including bathing waters. Based on the specific characteristics of Catalonia, such as its river basins, the Agency was responsible for monitoring and planning the use of water resources so that the needs of human activities were met in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner. She wished the participants a successful meeting.

8. The Officer-in-Charge recalled that at their 15th Meeting held in January 2008 in Almeria, Spain, the Contracting Parties had agreed to begin the process of the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach with a view to moving towards the goal of “a healthy Mediterranean with marine and coastal ecosystems that are productive and biologically diverse for the benefit of present and future generations” (Decision IG 17/6). For that purpose, the Contracting Parties had enumerated three strategic goals for Mediterranean marine and coastal areas, namely: (1) to protect, allow recovery, and where practicable, restore the structure and function of marine and coastal ecosystems – thus also protecting marine biodiversity – in order to achieve and maintain good ecological status allowing for sustainable use; (2) to reduce pollution in the marine and coastal environment so as to ensure that there are no significant impacts or risks to human and/or ecosystem health and/or on the uses of the sea and the coasts; and (3) to preserve, enhance and restore a balance between human activities and natural resources in the sea and the coasts and reduce their vulnerability to risks. She added that the application of the Ecosystem Approach was a process that was being developed, but which would take time to become fully effective. The Ecosystem Approach was not an end in itself, but was intended to achieve a better management of human activities, particularly through the integration of the various sectoral approaches.

9. The Officer-in-Charge added that the Contracting Parties had adopted a road map for the achievement of the strategic goals set out under the Ecosystem Approach. The process of the application of the Ecosystem Approach was currently at stage three of the road map, namely the derivation of operational objectives with indicators and target levels; the goal was for the ecological objectives to be finalized and submitted for adoption by the next meeting of the Contracting Parties. In accordance with the first two stages of the road map, assessments identifying important ecosystem properties and assessing ecological status and pressures in four subregions had been compiled, based on the information provided by the Contracting Parties (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG 350/Inf. 4). On the basis of the subregional reports, a draft regional Assessment Report had been prepared (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG 350/3) in accordance with the table of contents agreed upon by the First Meeting of Technical Experts. The present meeting was accordingly invited to discuss the Assessment Report and to provide written comments with a view to its finalization following the meeting. The Officer-in-Charge observed that this was the first occasion on which a baseline had been developed for the region as a whole within the context of the Ecosystem Approach and it was clear that there were as yet many gaps. However, it was not necessary for the assessment to be perfect before moving on to the next stages of the road map. The participants were also invited to provide guidance on the determination of ecological objectives for the Mediterranean so that the process could continue and be reviewed by a third meeting of experts, which could be held in October 2010.

Agenda item 2: Organization of the Meeting, Adoption of the Agenda

10. Following informal consultations, the meeting elected its officers as follows:
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| Chairperson: | Mr Farid Nezzar (Algeria) |
| Vice-Chairpersons: | Mr Victor Escobar (Spain) |
| | Ms Aleksandra Tomic-Cato (Bosnia and Herzegovina) |
| | Mr Manal Nader (Lebanon) |
| Rapporteur: | Mr Duncan Borg (Malta) |

11. During a brief discussion of the organization of the work of the meeting, it was noted that, as indicated in a footnote to the Annotated Provisional Agenda (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG 350/2), a meeting had been held on Monday 5 July, prior to the present meeting, to facilitate in-depth discussion of the sectoral and sub-regional reports, which were the basis on which the integrated Assessment Report had been prepared. It was observed in that respect that, with a view to the preparation of the Quality Status Report for 2011, it would be beneficial in improving the quality of the final report and strengthening national ownership if a peer review process could be organized at the national level involving scientific institutions. On that understanding, the meeting adopted the agenda set out in UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG 350/1/Corr.1. The Agenda of the meeting is contained in **Annex II** to the present report.

Agenda Item 3: Review of the Assessment Report

12. Ms Tundi Agardy (MAP Consultant) introduced the draft *Assessment Report: Assessment of the Mediterranean Sea: Fulfilling Step 3 of the Ecosystem Approach Process* (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG 350/3). The MAP Consultant observed that the preliminary Assessment Report was unique in the region in bringing together information on the various aspects of biodiversity, pollution and ecosystem services. However, the present version of the report required further refinement and detail. It could be recast from an ecosystem services perspective based on the manner in which the current condition of the region affected the delivery of ecosystem services. The Assessment Report provided an important basis for highlighting information gaps that needed to be filled, elucidating how this and future assessments could be improved and prioritizing management efforts from the perspective of the Ecosystem Approach. With regard to the information gaps identified in the report, it was important to determine whether such gaps indicated that the necessary information did not exist, or whether it was a question of gaining access to information held by other bodies or parties. The report was based on the information available, but was not intended as a comprehensive synopsis of information on all aspects of the Mediterranean environment. It covered four broad areas: pollution levels and impacts, biodiversity changes, habitat losses and changes, and fisheries impacts. The MAP Consultant reviewed the sources of information used in the report and indicated that it followed the table of contents agreed upon by the first Meeting of Experts, although complete consistency had not been achieved in that respect between the four subregions. The added value of the report was that it would help countries in the region to agree on priorities. It created the framework for monitoring the big picture, in terms of drivers, pressures and impacts at the regional level. It assisted countries to meet their obligations at the national level and would help to build capacities across the region.

13. Ms Jacqueline Alder, Coordinator of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Branch (UNEP/DEPI), reviewed recent significant assessments based on the Ecosystem Approach at the global scale. One had been the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment which, by pioneering the Ecosystem Approach, had constituted a radical change from earlier approaches to reporting on the state of the environment. It had not been easy to prepare and had involved many challenges. A second had been the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), which had focussed on natural cycling, with particular reference in the marine environment to fisheries and aquaculture, with emphasis on water quality, biodiversity and habitats. A third assessment had been the Global Environment Outlook: Environment for development (GEO-4), which had included a strong focus on marine and coastal areas based on the Ecosystem Approach, and had examined in particular the manner in which drivers changed and affected ecosystem services. The three assessments had offered many lessons and the General Assembly had called on UNEP and IMO to engage in systematic regional reporting within a very broad framework which included socio-economic and governance aspects. It was therefore clear that the exercise that was being carried out at the Mediterranean level would feed directly into global reporting efforts. For that purpose, considerable emphasis would be

placed on capacity-building over the next five years in the context of a comprehensive review of how regional assessments could be carried out. Emphasis would be placed on the interaction of all water systems, including lakes, rivers and groundwater, and their connection with seas and oceans. An examination would be undertaken of whether current investments were making a difference and indicators would be developed for marine and coastal areas. Finally, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was intended to connect, but not duplicate monitoring functions in the Ecosystem Approach landscape.

14. Mr Michail Papadoyannakis, Policy Officer, Mediterranean and Black Sea at the European Commission indicated that, at the level of the European Union, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) was the legal instrument that applied the Ecosystem Approach to the marine environment, adopting an integrated approach that encompassed environmental pressures and impacts and the integration of the environment and human activities. The MSFD relied heavily on regional cooperation and placed an obligation on European Union Member States to work in a regional context. It was therefore an obligation to work with regional seas initiatives with a view to the achievement of good environmental status (GES). In the case of the Mediterranean, as in other regional seas, the process offered mutual benefits, as the MAP process helped EU Member States (the EU expects MAP to provide the forum for its Member States' coordination for MSFD implementation), which would in turn assist MAP in the application of the Ecosystem Approach. He emphasized that although the process of the application of the Ecosystem Approach had started, more knowledge was needed to develop criteria for the application of the descriptors of GES. The implementation of the Directive would be reviewed after six years. The process needed structures and milestones, including the goal of achieving GES for water by the year 2020. The 11 descriptors listed in Annex I of MSFD must be taken into account together with the environmental characteristics, pressures and impacts (Annex III) in order to determine GES. The achievement of GES will be based on an interactive process involving all the relevant stakeholders, including the regional seas Conventions, NGOs and scientific institutions. Although much remained to be done, the criteria and indicators for the GES descriptors developed in the draft EU Commission Decision could be a useful support and guide for the MAP process. In response to a request for clarification, he added that maritime spatial planning at the national level formed part of integrated maritime policies that either existed or were to be developed by individual Member States; the MSFD constitutes the environmental pillar of EU Integrated Maritime Policy.

Subregional assessment reports

15. The meeting then examined the assessment reports for each of the four subregions.

Western Mediterranean

16. The MAP Consultant briefly reviewed the main features of the subregional assessment report for the Western Mediterranean (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.350/Inf.4), including its physical and biological characteristics, ecological pressures and impacts, pollution levels and the problem of overfishing. She recalled that the Western Mediterranean was characterized by high species diversity, with 87 per cent of Mediterranean species being present, as well as high habitat level diversity, and that it contained the Pelagos Sanctuary for Mediterranean Marine Mammals, a trilaterally declared SPAMI. The main environmental pressures and impacts consisted of urbanization and tourism-related coastal development, shipping and port-related impacts, and over-fishing, including high discard rates and incidental by-catch rates of protected species.

17. The representative of Spain observed that, despite the very large amount of work carried out over the past three months, there were still information gaps in the report. In his

own country, the information gathering process had involved, and been slowed down by, the need to collect data from a number of scientific institutions. Clearly, particularly in view of the relative lack of human resources, greater efforts would be needed to ensure interinstitutional coordination and consistency. With reference to pollution levels, it had been necessary to obtain information on emissions from the enterprises concerned and the data required for the 2008 report had now been collected and would be forwarded to MED POL in the very near future. Similarly, measures to monitor discharges from rivers were now becoming operational and the relevant data would be available next year. The process of mapping biodiversity was at an initial stage in Spain and the relevant information had not therefore been available for the current assessment exercise. His country was also making progress in complying with the obligations of the MSFD and the Barcelona Convention in terms of oceanographic monitoring, for which some historic data were available, for example on nutrients and heavy metals. Nor had it been easy to collect and analyse socio-economic data, as information was lacking on the value of ecological goods and services, and particularly on the cost of not taking action to preserve the environment. A joint exercise was required in this area by Mediterranean and the European Union countries. The assessment exercise within the context of the Ecosystem Approach would therefore provide an extremely valuable basis for further work, bringing together all the information from the various areas and identifying information gaps so that the analysis could be deepened.

18. The representative of Tunisia recalled that the North coast of her country had been included in the Western Mediterranean subregion, while its East coast was in the Central Mediterranean subregion for the purposes of the application of the Ecosystem Approach. There was a justified basis for the distinction, as the pressures, threats and pollution characteristics differed for the two coastlines. However, while the information provided by her country had been included in the subregional assessment report for the Ionian and Central Mediterranean, the report for the Western Mediterranean had not been received and she asked whether the information provided by her country had been taken into account in that assessment. She added that further comments on the assessment reports would be submitted in writing.

19. The representative of Morocco indicated that further information would be submitted shortly in addition to that already supplied and integrated in the subregional report. The representative of France added that the report for his country was currently being reviewed by national experts and would be sent soon.

20. MED POL Programme representative indicated that the subregional assessment on pollutant loads for the Western Mediterranean had been based on the information available, particularly from the National Baseline Budgets, for which the initial data had been provided in 2003, although not all the information had yet been supplied for the 2008 update. Any further information provided would be used when the report was finalized. He also added that an attempt was made to use all available information, not just the data obtained through the MED POL programme. However, additional information from countries would be welcome, particularly on river discharges and pollutant loads. Where gaps had been identified, information was being requested from the countries concerned. With regard to the comment by the representative of Tunisia, he noted that the information for her country had been included in the assessment report for the Central Mediterranean.

Ionian and Central Mediterranean

21. The MAP Consultant, in her review of the physical and biological characteristics, pressures and threats in the subregion, noted that although it only accounted for 12.4 per cent of the Mediterranean coastline, it included a significant proportion of its biosphere as its waters were very deep. Urbanization and the related pollution impacts, especially from untreated wastewater, as well as shipping, were major threats. Once again, over-fishing was

a major issue, with discard rates exceeding half of the catch in certain fisheries. Aquaculture and the related fishing for feed were also a growing concern.

22. The discussion of the subregional assessment report focussed on coverage of the issues of invasive species and socio-economic characteristics. Several speakers indicated that the question of invasive species had not been covered adequately in the assessment. Moreover, the question was raised of consistency in the subregional assessments, as different issues were covered in different ways in the various subregional assessments, which made it difficult to develop a coherent picture for the region as a whole and also to identify information gaps effectively. For example, certain subregional assessments probably did not cover the issue of invasive species in depth because of the lack of data. The question was also raised as to whether monitoring should continue to focus on substances that had been banned, such as DDT, or perhaps focus on other threats, such as anti-foulants. In that respect, several speakers warned that, although DDT had been prohibited, there were still stocks in existence and that continued monitoring was therefore necessary, although it would also be useful to monitor the effects of anti-foulants.

23. The MAP Consultant noted that the assessments had been prepared on the basis of the best available information. Subregional differences in the availability of data made it difficult to achieve overall consistency. However, the data available would help to identify the combination of threats affecting specific subregions. It would be necessary to improve the information available and to use it more effectively, for example in the form of a matrix or some form of graphic mapping of the various threats and combinations of threats.

24. The representative of the European Commission agreed that greater consistency needed to be achieved in the subregional assessments, which should all follow the same table of contents. He therefore agreed that information gaps needed to be identified and filled, although there were some parts of the assessments that could perhaps be removed, such as general information that was provided in all of the subregional assessments. In the interests of concision, the more general comments which are relevant for the Mediterranean should only be contained in the overall regional assessment.

Adriatic

25. The MAP Consultant observed that the Adriatic was the most clearly defined subregion which, although it only represented 5 per cent of the Mediterranean area, had half of the recorded marine species. The pressures in the subregion included a high concentration of oil spills, over-fertilization caused by agricultural nutrients in some areas and a major impact of eutrophication and mucilages in certain locations.

26. During the discussion, the representatives of Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia indicated that updated information would be provided soon. The representative of Croatia said that new data would show that the ecological situation in the subregion was improving in certain respects. In particular, certain areas described as hotspots were no longer so critical, while there had also been an improvement in the situation respecting algal blooms since 2004. The multiplicity of monitoring programmes made it difficult for a single Focal Point to collate all the available data. One representative called for the subregional assessment to be better structured and another raised the question of the involvement of scientists in the identification of pressures and impacts, which would offer the opportunity for broader ownership of the outcomes of the assessment.

27. The MAP Consultant agreed that the structure of the subregional assessment could be improved. She indicated that the assessments had been drafted in a very short period of time and would be transformed over the coming months, as well as shortened where possible. The current conclusions were fairly subjective, based on the inputs received. The

process of refining the assessments should include a more objective analysis of the available data, for example in the form of a matrix based on real data. The Officer-in-Charge welcomed the idea of the peer review of the various assessments and wondered at what stage it could be undertaken.

Eastern Mediterranean

28. The MAP Consultant indicated that the Eastern Mediterranean was a complex subregion in terms of its physical characteristics, with a complex bottom topography with deep trenches and sea mounts. The water was generally very warm, except for the northern Aegean. The habitat diversity was high, as was that of the fauna. However, it was the least well studied of the four subregions, with real information gaps, although good information was available on certain flagship species, including the loggerhead turtle and the monk seal. The pressures and impacts included over-fishing and tourism-related habitat loss in the northern part of the subregion, litter and plastic debris, which seemed to be increasing, but needed tracking, and alien and invasive species, which were having a substantial impact.

29. During the ensuing discussion, one representative indicated that a good deal of data was available from various sources on Lessepsian species, although it would need to be collected. With regard to over-fishing, it was noted that it was difficult to obtain precise data, as much of the fishing was artisanal. One particular problem was the increase in industrial fishing by ships from other regions, including Asia. The use of such industrial methods had a major impact on fish stocks, and the by-catch rates were often very high. Several representatives also referred to the increase in the number of desalination plants in the subregion. In view of the scarcity of fresh water resources, this increase was likely to continue. It would therefore be necessary to examine their impacts, particularly on the food chain. Although MAP had undertaken some work a few years ago on desalination plants, it had focussed on their chemical and coastal impacts, and further work was therefore required on their biological effects. The representative of Lebanon added that other fresh water management measures, such as the diversion of water from streams and rivers, also needed to be monitored. He further noted that the treatment of urban wastewater was a major challenge, but that within three years all the major cities in his country would have treatment plants. Several representatives indicated that they would be providing additional data and submitting written comments on the draft assessment report. In conclusion, it was emphasized that further work was required to identify pressures and impacts, not only in terms of pollution and biodiversity, but also on ecosystem services as a whole. It was also noted that the division of the Mediterranean into four subregions, although useful for assessment purposes, remained rather artificial. Moreover, there was great variation between the subregions, as well as within subregions.

Commonalities across the subregions

30. The MAP Consultant introduced Chapter VI of the preliminary Assessment Report on commonalities and priorities in the region as a whole. She recalled that, although there were common threats and similar trends in all subregions, the key threats, pressures and drivers differed in each subregion, as well as within subregions. It was clear that the ecosystem services provided by the Mediterranean were of a high value, which needed to be further studied and determined. Moreover, there were a number of emerging issues that would require further examination, such as the effects of aquaculture and desalination plants. She believed that the assessment served to draw attention to the wealth of good information that already existed on the ecological status of the Mediterranean, as well as to identify information gaps, including incompatibilities and inadequacies of existing data. Emphasis should be placed on the need to map information and to make greater use of geo-referencing. The possibility of modelling and simulation should be explored where monitoring was not feasible. Moreover, the assessment underlined the rationale for an optimal

monitoring and assessment system with a view to making spatial and temporal comparisons. She then outlined the common threats emerging from the assessment, which included: habitat loss and indirect effects caused by urbanization and coastal development; overfishing and its effects on community structure, ecological processes and the delivery of ecosystem services; destructive fishing, including bottom trawling and fishing methods causing significant by-catch; the contamination of sediments and biota caused by pollution, primarily from urbanization and industry, but also from anti-foulants; nutrient over-enrichment, particularly in the Adriatic, sometimes leading to eutrophication and hypoxia, and ecological imbalances, including reduced water quality and growth of algae and mucilages; the disturbance and pollution caused by maritime industries, including shipping and energy exploration and recovery; and the spread of invasive species and pathogens, in many cases mediated by climate change. She added that a number of habitats played a key role in supporting Mediterranean ecosystems, namely: sea grass meadows, coralligenous communities, coastal lagoons and coastal soft-bottom communities, bioconstructing communities, sea mounts and unique benthic features, as well as frontal systems and other features of the water column.

31. The MAP Consultant therefore concluded that good information existed, including meta-databases, but that the data were not always compatible or easily accessible. It was important to ensure that databases were structured to make information on trends easily accessible. Geo-referenced data existed on habitats and species, but had not been mapped. She added that monitoring data should be geo-referenced wherever possible. The assessment pointed to a number of areas in which additional information was required. These included the expansion or amendment of pollution monitoring to determine ecosystem effects, as well as the gathering of ecosystem-related information on fisheries impacts. It would be necessary to track habitat changes, including the spread of invasive species, and to monitor the growth of aquaculture and other emerging industries. The main knowledge gaps related to: the geographical discontinuity of data, with some areas being understudied; biodiversity, especially in offshore areas; and the ecological effects of contaminants, noise and other pollutants. There was also a knowledge gap relating to the synergies between impacts and information needed to be articulated on the drivers behind the various impacts. Nevertheless, a basis was being developed for the establishment of priorities, although it would be necessary to agree upon the methodology for their determination. This might consist, for example, of areas that were most ecologically important, those with the highest biodiversity, areas with a high overlap of critical areas for certain species, areas with many processes or services, or those that were most vulnerable, sensitive or threatened. The application of the Ecosystem Approach involved putting together all the available elements through the ecosystem service lens, for example by focussing on impacts that could be mitigated through management measures that most affected ecosystem service delivery. The Blue Plan report provided a basis for understanding the values of ecosystem services, which could be mapped and monitored. The assessment could therefore be used to determine trends in environmental status and to help predict changes in ecosystem service delivery and values. Scenarios could be developed to describe the outcomes of the various management measures, thereby allowing decision-makers to evaluate trade-offs and determine the types of management measures to be adopted. While recognizing that the assessment needed to have an end point, it would help to direct resources to the areas most in need of research, monitoring and assessment. It could also serve to catalyse the MSFD and to build capacity outside the European Union. In particular, it offered a foundation to begin the process of determining ecological objectives, selecting indicators and targets and agreeing on the measures required for the application of the Ecosystem Approach.

32. Representatives of INFO/RAC referred to the call made by the first meeting of experts for the Centre to use the data that already existed and for the various MAP components to share available meta data. They thanked MED POL and the Regional Activity Centres for the data provided, which gave an indication of the data coverage of the Mediterranean. Although

much of the necessary data existed, it would need to be provided in a different format to allow GIS analysis of the region. In that respect, progress still needed to be made. Moreover, fuller information was needed on the sources and quality of the data provided. For the first time, an attempt could now be made to bring all the available data together. They therefore called for continued support from the MAP components to grant access by other components to their databases with a view to advancing towards the goal of the global geo-referenced assessment of the region as a whole through a system that was open to all concerned. INFO/RAC was currently in the process of implementing the two-year programme of work approved by the Contracting Parties for the development of a common information system based on the Ecosystem Approach, for which purpose it needed the support of Focal Points who were technical experts. The development of a common information system would involve the adoption of common standards for data entry and sharing.

33. During the discussion, it was pointed out that the global report for the region as a whole should be different from the subregional reports, and therefore not simply an amalgamation of those reports, but a merger of all the information available into a regional picture, in accordance with the table of contents. If the table of contents was followed closely, the information gaps would be revealed almost automatically. Inspiration could be sought in the processes that were being followed in other regional seas, which might also help to identify gaps. It was observed that other data sources, such as Birdlife International, should also be used. Emphasis was placed on the need for all countries and all MAP components to share and pool the available data, with emphasis on the identification of trends over time. It was recalled that the European Union Member States were currently in the process of an initial assessment of marine quality status and that further data would therefore be collected in an iterative process and could be made available subsequently. The proposal was made of establishing a special committee to lead the process and ensure harmonization, although it was also pointed out that the INFO/RAC Focal Points might also fulfil that role. It was emphasized that the assessment approach that was being developed constituted a tool, rather than a result, which should serve and be directed by the countries in the region, with a view to the development of a real quality assessment process.

34. The observer representing the IUCN noted that data were missing in the assessment report in a number of areas. With regard to fishing and aquaculture, a synthesis of the available information was needed, based on GFCM data, which should include recreational fishing and illegal fishing and their respective impacts. In relation to invasive species, it would be necessary to monitor sea intrusion, its relationship with climate change and its potential effects. The assessment should also cover coastal erosion, accretion and alteration, including sea filling and sand extraction, and their impact on ecosystem services. Another issue that needed to be covered was changes in watershed uses and their impact on marine ecosystem services. A final area to be addressed consisted of the institutional and political differences between the countries in the North and South of the region, and particularly between those that were Member States of the European Union and those that were not.

35. In a discussion of the next stages of the process, the view was expressed that it was not yet necessarily the time to prioritize the action to be taken. It was clear that where information was missing, the priority should be to obtain the necessary information. There were so many threats that it would be very difficult to say that one was more important than another. Moreover, a very broad view was required to set priorities, based on the gathering of as much information as possible to link threats and pressures to status. It was also agreed that more work needed to be carried out to identify the synergies between threats and pressures and the manner in which they gave rise to impacts. In particular, it was necessary to ensure that the identification of priorities was based on sound scientific analysis.

Economic value of sustainable benefits from Mediterranean marine ecosystems

36. Mr Henri-Luc Thibault (Director, BP/RAC), presented the report prepared by the Blue Plan on the economic value of sustainable benefits from Mediterranean marine ecosystems. He indicated that the report had been prepared primarily because, although there was widespread appreciation of the aesthetic and cultural value of the Mediterranean, it was rare for consideration to be given to its economic value, and tools were lacking to evaluate the economic value of the services that it provided. For the importance of ecosystem services to be fully appreciated, it would be helpful to indicate the proportion of GDP that they represented. Reflection on this issue had been guided by a steering committee, chaired by the former MAP Coordinator, Mr Chabason, and composed of representatives of countries from the North and South of the region, scientists, NGOs and international organizations. The exercise had been supported by existing work, with particular reference to the United Nations System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA), and focussed on the flow of benefits that could result from regulation of the natural heritage, rather than a stocktaking of its overall economic value. An attempt had therefore been made to consider such benefits at market values, even though there was no payment involved in many of the services provided, such as fishing. The basis taken for evaluating the economic value of benefits was therefore through the various services provided, which included, for example, the treatment of waste and the provision of food and of cultural services related to tourism. At the end of this exercise, an attempt had then been made to suggest an overall figure for the economic value of the services provided. Although the figure was undoubtedly very undervalued, it had the merit of demonstrating that sustainable benefits from ecosystems offered considerable economic value and that they played an important role in national economies and in the region as a whole. He added that the exercise had already given rise to considerable interest within and outside the region.

37. During the discussion of the report, widespread appreciation was expressed of the innovative and significant contribution that it made to the application of the Ecosystem Approach. It was acknowledged that the attribution of economic value to the services provided by marine ecosystems could be a major factor in persuading decision-makers of the need to take action, such as measures to prevent coastal erosion. The great difficulties inherent in the exercise were recognized and a series of questions were raised, including whether the habitats used were the same as those referred to in the report prepared by SPA/RAC, why the cost of degradation was not addressed, how the report would contribute to the determination of socio-economic objectives and whether an assessment of socio-economic impacts could be carried out at the subregional level. It was noted in that regard that, based on experience in other regions, a full assessment of socio-economic factors would require a very high level of resources.

38. Mr Thibault observed that different tools had been used to assess various aspects of the economic value of ecological services. Despite all the methodological difficulties, including the revision of the SEEA approach, and the clearly imperfect nature of the final outcome, he hoped that the report constituted a real contribution to the application of the Ecosystem Approach.

Agenda Item 4: Methodologies for defining ecological objectives

39. The meeting held a discussion of the methodology that should be adopted for the determination of ecological objectives within the context of the application of the Ecosystem Approach. The MAP Consultant proposed that three approaches might be adopted for the determination of ecological objectives, namely focussing on key issues, key areas or on a combination of issues and areas. In support of the discussion, the Secretariat had prepared an informal list of issues arising out of the draft Assessment Report, which closely reflected the 11 descriptors of the MSFD.

40. During the discussion of the methodologies for defining ecological objectives, several representatives pointed out that, as the Assessment Report had not been finalized, and in view of the recognized data gaps in the report, any list of issues and/or threats arising out of the report would by definition be of a preliminary nature and that much work and many resources would be required for its finalization. There was also a risk of duplicating the work carried out by many of the countries involved, in collaboration with other stakeholders, in the development of the EU descriptors. The process of the development of the 11 descriptors was much more advanced than the current MAP process and the descriptors benefited from a broad scientific basis. It was further noted that many of the issues identified by the Secretariat overlapped those outlined in the ICZM Protocol, which was in the process of being ratified by many countries and which was also therefore much more advanced than the present process of the application of the Ecosystem Approach. It was recalled that many of the issues emerging from the Assessment Report were also covered by other MAP legal instruments. It was therefore agreed that the 11 European Union descriptors should be taken as a basis for starting work on the determination of ecological objectives within the framework of the Ecosystem Approach and that they should be further developed taking into account other aspects specific to the Mediterranean, with particular reference to the ICZM Protocol, socio-economic considerations and cumulative impacts.

41. Some French-speaking representatives regretted that the French translations of official documents had been distributed only a very short time before the meeting. The Secretariat undertook to ensure that the French version of meeting documents were distributed earlier.

Agenda Item 5: Ways and means of enhancing monitoring programmes and effectiveness evaluation

42. Ms Tatjana Hema (MAP Programme Officer) noted that the second section of document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.350/4 suggested issues that should be taken into consideration for future monitoring activities. These included extending the scope of monitoring in line with ecological objectives, monitoring trends and interactions between threats, enhancing synergies and environmental governance on monitoring and the collection of compatible data.

43. During the discussion, the representatives welcomed the ideas put forward for the development of an integrated monitoring programme covering marine pollution, biodiversity and other priorities, such as socio-economic considerations. It was noted that the development of such a system would need the full commitment of countries, including the allocation of the necessary financing, and that technical assistance should therefore be envisaged. Care would also need to be taken to ensure that any new system maintained and fitted in with the current pollution monitoring programme, which was the basis of the knowledge that was currently available. Data on pollution needed to be made more accessible and the respective monitoring should be continued. It would be important to ensure that monitoring also covered areas beyond national jurisdiction, particularly in the high seas. The decision on the future development of the monitoring programme should be taken by the meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Management effectiveness evaluation

44. The MAP Programme Officer recalled the requirement under Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention for the Contracting Parties to submit reports on the effectiveness of the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention. The Contracting Parties had been reporting on such measures since 2003, and in 2009 a set of 44 effectiveness indicators had been adopted for the first time and for testing purposes with a view to

facilitating reporting on effectiveness. It was proposed that, with a view to achieving greater focus in line with the ecological and operational objectives to be adopted, priorities should be established among the present effectiveness indicators through the selection of those that offered the greatest added value. A number of Contracting Parties would then be invited to test the selected indicators in the preparation of their national implementation reports for 2008-2009.

45. The representatives who took the floor found the proposal attractive and welcomed the test period planned for the effectiveness indicators. The proposal offered a basis to develop a methodology for the evaluation of effectiveness after 2011 within the context of the Ecosystem Approach. The procedures adopted elsewhere, for example in the context of the Stockholm Convention, showed that effectiveness could only be properly evaluated with the involvement of experts.

Agenda Item 6: Criteria for proposing a timetable for the implementation by MAP of the Ecosystem Approach road map

46. The MAP Programme Officer recalled that Decision IG 17/6 of the Contracting Parties set out all the elements for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach, but did not establish a timeline, although the Five-year Programme of Work provided some guidance in that regard. It was the view of the Secretariat that it was necessary to follow a process that ensured strong party ownership based on a close participatory approach. The definition of ecological objectives in time for their adoption by the meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2011 would provide the region with a vision and a basis for the adoption of targets and indicators. The revision of the Five-Year Programme of Work should be based on the ecological targets established in the context of the Ecosystem Approach. Moreover, the necessary synergies needed to be established with other relevant regional and global processes, with particular reference to the implementation of the MSFD. In accordance with the proposed Workplan contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.350/4, the finalized Assessment Report would be submitted to the 2011 meeting of the Contracting Parties for adoption. For that to be possible, it would be necessary for any comments submitted by countries to be incorporated into the report by December 2010, so that it could then undergo a peer review process at the national level. It was understood that the resulting Quality Status Report would be the State of the Environment Report for 2011. At the same time, it would be necessary to start working on the ecological objectives so that clear views could emerge on that subject by March 2011. A number of meetings of technical experts would have to be scheduled to ensure that the process went ahead according to that timeframe. The Officer-in-Charge expressed appreciation for the continued support provided by the European Commission and indicated that the necessary funding was very close to being secured until the end of May 2011.

47. The representative of the European Commission recalled the synergies with the process of implementing the MSFD, under the terms of which Member States were required to produce an initial assessment of the achievement of GES, complete with objectives and targets, by July 2012. The objective was the achievement or maintenance of GES by 2020 in accordance with the 11 descriptors. Although the implementation of the MSFD was an independent process, it was being undertaken in parallel with the present exercise in MAP and it was important to ensure all due synergies. He explicitly agreed with submitting a related draft Decision to the Conference of the Parties and encouraged the Secretariat to arrange all necessary meetings, of technical and government designated experts, to achieve this goal.

48. During the discussion, several representatives noted that the tools for the selection of ecological objectives had already been developed in other fora, particularly in the context of the MSFD. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on the selection of ecological

objectives with a view to determining GES. Moreover, it was noted that there was little need for a gap of one month between the analysis of possible indicators and the selection of indicators.

Agenda Item 7: Adoption of conclusions

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

Agenda item 8: Closure of the meeting

50. Following the usual exchange of courtesies, the Chairperson closed the meeting on Wednesday 7 July 2010 at 5.30 pm.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

DAY 1: TUESDAY, 6 JULY 2010

- 08:30 - 09:00 **Registration of the participants**
- 09:00 - 09:30 1. **Opening of the Meeting**
- 09:30 - 09:45 2. **Organization of the Meeting, Adoption of the agenda**
- 09:45 - 18:00 3. **Review of the Assessment Report**

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, 7 JULY 2010

- 09:00 - 11:00 4. **Methodologies for defining ecological objectives**
- 11:00 - 13:00 5. **Ways and means to enhance monitoring programmes and effectiveness evaluation**
- 15:00 - 17:00 6. **Criteria for proposing a timetable for implementation by MAP of the ecosystem approach roadmap**
- 17:00 - 18:30 7. **Adoption of conclusions**
- 18:30 8. **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 Second Meeting of Technical Experts on the Ecosystem Approach (ECAP), held on 6-7 July 2010, appreciating the work carried out by the Coordinating Unit, MEDPOL, SPA RAC and Blue Plan RAC for submitting on time the consolidated versions of the sectoral and integrated sub-regional reports and agreed on a number of conclusions as follows:

1. Assessment Report

a. Content

1. The integrated Assessment Report should contain four integrated sub-regional assessment chapters and one Mediterranean-wide chapter on commonalities. Each chapter should contain conclusions and identify information gaps.
2. The integrated sub-regional chapters should follow the table of contents agreed by the July 2008 meeting of Government-designated experts. The meeting highlighted the need to include to the extent possible information on pressures on coastal areas, including particularly physical parameters and maritime activities that are not yet addressed in the current version of the assessment report.
3. With a view to ensuring consistency and coherence among the four sub-regional chapters, all elements of the table of contents should be included in each chapter irrespective of the current availability of data/information.
4. Specific information/data gaps should be highlighted with a view to indicating in which areas such gaps exist and how they should be filled.
5. The chapter on the Mediterranean-wide assessment should be drafted in accordance with the elements indicated in Annex I to these conclusions.
6. The sectoral sub-regional reports should be further developed by the respective MAP components with a view to preparing a quality status report which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Contracting Parties as the State of the Environment Report for the Mediterranean.

b. Process

1. The countries concerned undertake to provide comments to the draft assessment report and additional information by 30 September 2010 with a view to enabling the Secretariat to include such information, as need be, in the sectoral sub-regional reports and the sub-regional chapters of the integrated Assessment Report.
2. The revised version of the integrated Assessment Report should be sent by the Coordinating Unit by end-October 2010 for consideration by countries, including internal scientific peer review, as need be, the feedback from which should be submitted to the Secretariat by 15 December 2010, at the latest.
3. Subject to availability of resources, the final version of the report will be scientifically peer reviewed through a process to be determined by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties. The final report should be circulated by April 2011 for the consideration and finalization by the regional expert meeting scheduled in May 2011 for transmission to the meeting of MAP Focal Points, scheduled in 2011.

2. Ecological objectives

The 11 European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive descriptors should be used as the basis for developing Mediterranean ecological objectives, taking also into account the issues emerging from the finalized integrated Assessment Report, socio economic considerations, ICZM and cumulative impacts to be discussed at the next meeting of technical experts on ecosystem approach.

3. Monitoring

MAP should develop an integrated monitoring programme in line with the ecosystem approach.

4. Evaluation of the effectiveness of management measures

The Secretariat should prepare a methodology based on relevant international approaches for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the management measures adopted in the framework of the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach.

5. Timeframe for the implementation of Decision IG 17/5 on the application of the Ecosystem Approach by MAP

The Secretariat should prepare a draft decision on the timeframe for the implementation of Decision IG 17/5 on the application of the Ecosystem Approach by MAP for discussion at the forthcoming regional meeting of experts.

The draft decision should address the remaining steps of the road map including an integrated environmental monitoring programme.

6. Ecosystem Approach Work Plan 2010-2011

The meeting adopted the Ecosystem Approach Work Plan 2010-2011, as presented in Annex II to these conclusions.

Annexes

Annex I. Table of contents of Part III of the integrated Assessment Report

III. Commonalities: Mediterranean Wide Assessment

1. Introduction: The value of a region-wide perspective on ecosystem condition
2. Brief description of the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics
3. Ecosystem services and known ecosystem service values
4. Pressures and impacts
5. Drivers
6. Cumulative and concurrent impacts
7. Conclusions and information gap analysis on pressures and impacts

Annexe II – Ecosystem Approach WorkPlan 2010-2011

OUTPUTS	Jul-Dec 2010						Jan-Mar 2011			Apr-Jul 2011				Sep-Nov 2011		
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov
1. Assessment report																
<i>1.1 Mapping/GIS finalization</i>																
<i>1.2 Comments by Contracting Parties on the sectoral and integrated reports</i>																
<i>1.3 Incorporation in the sectoral and integrated reports of CPs comments and of the available information from regional organizations information</i>																
<i>1.4 Peer Review by the Contracting Parties</i>																
<i>1.5 Incorporation of CPs comments in the sectoral and integrated reports</i>																
<i>1.6 Further development of sub regional sectoral reports into a QSR</i>																
2. Ecological objectives (EO)																
<i>2.1 Selection of EO for good environmental status (GES) determination</i>																
3. Operational objectives																
<i>3.1 Analysis of possible EO indicators and selection for the determination of GES</i>																
<i>3.2 First discussion on target levels for selected EO indicators, as appropriate, for defining GES</i>																
<i>3.3 Determination of GES for selected EO indicators and target levels, as appropriate¹</i>																
4. Draft decision on the timeframe for the implementation of the ecosystem approach roadmap																
5. Regional and intergovernmental																

¹ On the basis of available data

² If need be; nature of meetings (technical or GDE) to be determined depending on work progress and with a view to have the documents ready for the COP