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Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMON), Biodiversity and Fisheries

Videoconference, 10-11 June 2021

**Report of the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMON), Biodiversity and Fisheries**

## Table of Contents

	Pages
Report of the Meeting	1-7
Annex I      List of Participants	
Annex II     Agenda of the Meeting	
Annex III    Conclusions and Recommendations	

## Introduction

1. In the framework of the UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC Programme of Work 2020-2021 adopted by the 21<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019, the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) for Biodiversity and Fisheries was organized on 10 and 11 June 2021 via videoconference, by the Specially Protected Area Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC).

## Participation

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

3. The following convention secretariats and intergovernmental organizations were represented as observers: the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The following non-governmental organization was also represented as observer: the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN).

4. The Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention Secretariat (UNEP/MAP), the Information and Communication Regional Activity Centre (INFO/RAC), the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL), the Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (Plan Bleu) and the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) were represented at the Meeting.

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

## Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

<b>Information Document</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/Inf.1
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6. The Meeting was opened on 10 June 2021 at 08.30 (UTC+1) by Mr. Khalil ATTIA, SPA/RAC Director, on behalf of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Coordinating Unit and on behalf of SPA/RAC.

7. The SPA/RAC Director welcomed the broad participation irrespective of the constraints attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic and recalled the main objective of the Meeting to guide the Ecosystem Approach process from a technical point of view, to ensure a coherent collection and reporting of quality assured data on Biodiversity cluster, towards an efficient 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR). While highlighting the relevance of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) implementation in the framework of the MAP/Barcelona Convention system, he commended the full engagement of the Contracting Parties to reach the EcAp objectives through the regional and sub-regional cooperation. He also recalled the Secretariat's commitment to guide and harmonize the efforts towards the delivery of the scales of monitoring, assessment and reporting for all Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) common indicators clustered per Ecological Objectives. Mr. Attia closed his welcome remarks by inviting all participants to discuss as openly as possible about the technical documents while seeking their feedback and advice on the way forward.

## Agenda Item 2: Organizational Matters

<b>Working Documents</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/1 UNEP/MED WG.500/2
<b>Information Document</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/Inf.2

*a) Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMON) for Biodiversity and Fisheries*

8. The Meeting agreed that the rules of procedure for Meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) would apply mutatis mutandis to their deliberations.

*b) Election of Officers*

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

Chairperson: Mr Laurent GUERIN (France),

Vice chairpersons: Mr. Mostafa FOUDA (Egypt),  
Mr. Leonardo TUNESI (Italy),  
Ms. Ivana STOJANOVIC (Montenegro),

Rapporteur: Mr. Ali BADREDDINE (Lebanon).

*c) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda*

10. The Meeting adopted its agenda based on the Provisional Agenda and Provisional Annotated Agenda, including the proposed timetable, circulated in documents UNEP/MED WG.500/1 and UNEP/MED WG.500/2, respectively.

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

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

**Agenda Item 3: Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for IMAP common indicators 1 and 2 on Benthic Habitats**

<b>Working Documents</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/3
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13. Mr. Mehdi AISSI, SPA/RAC Secretariat presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/3 “*Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for IMAP Common Indicator 1 and 2 related to benthic habitats*”, which provides a detailed review about monitoring protocols that can be used during the monitoring of the IMAP common indicators 1 and 2.

14. Following the discussion, several participants commended the effort made to consider the gathered relevant references and comments highlighted during previous integrated CORMON meeting (1-3 December 2020). A discussion took place regarding the promotion of standardized methodology by all Contracting Parties for field survey. Several participants raised attention to the importance to ensure homogeneity of data collected in a format enabling to inform on the IMAP indicators for the 2023 MED QSR.

15. A participant stated that this extensive document should be considered more as the state of the art of the monitoring methods and techniques for acquiring data on the benthic habitats in the Mediterranean than a monitoring protocol. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to develop a simplified operational document on the monitoring protocols and to publish them in the most appropriate formats to national stakeholders in charge of the IMAP implementation.

16. The participants agreed to submit written amendments to be integrated into the final version of the document to be submitted for consideration and possible approval to the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (23-25 June 2021).

17. The Meeting conclusions and recommendations regarding this agenda item are presented in **Annex III** to this Report.

**Agenda item 4: Monitoring and Assessment Elements for the IMAP Common Indicators related to Species**

<b>Working Documents</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/4 UNEP/MED WG.500/5
<b>Information Document</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/Inf.3

**4.1. Monitoring and Assessment Elements for the IMAP Common Indicators related to Marine Mammals**

18. The Secretariat introduced the document UNEP/MED WG.500/4 “*Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to marine mammals*”, which proposes refinement to the monitoring scales and proposes assessment scales, reference and thresholds values for the IMAP Common Indicator (CI) 3 (Species distributional range), CI 4 (Population abundance of selected species abundance) and CI 5 (Population demographic characteristics) for marine mammal species. He brought to the attention of the Meeting that the document also considers CI 12 (Bycatch of vulnerable and non-target species) because of its strong connection with CI 3, CI 4 and CI5. The Secretariat explained that the document summarizes background information on these CIs, and GES definitions contained in the Barcelona Convention Decisions, and the necessary explanatory material. It includes relevant material discussed and/or approved in the context of the EU Habitats Directive (HD), Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), relevant Regional Sea Conventions and in some EU Mediterranean National context.

19. Recognizing the work done by the Secretariat, the support provided by the informal Online working Group (OWG) on Biodiversity (EO1) as well as the scientific contribution of the different experts), the Meeting stressed that the work of OWG should continue to provide scientific and technical support to the IMAP implementation at regional/sub-regional level, in particular, on the aspects related to development of methodologies, protocols and guidelines, assessment scales, integration and the 2023 MED QSR elaboration, as approved by the 2020-2021 Programme of Work. The composition of the OWG should ensure a balanced representation of the Contracting Parties.

20. The Secretariat called the Contracting Parties to further commit their participation and contribution to the relevant OWGs during the next biennium of 2022-2023.

21. The Meeting endorsed the document and agreed on its submission for consideration and possible approval to the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points (23-25 June 2021).

22. When taking the floor, Ms. Célia Le Ravallec, the ACCOBAMS representative, congratulated the SPA/RAC for the organization of this meeting and, referring to document UNEP/MED WG.500/Inf.3 “*Main Results of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI) Project*”, she recalled the success of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI) and provided an overview of the main results included in the report released in April 2021 (<https://accobams.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ASI-Med-Report.pdf>). She indicated that the ASI aerial-based and vessels-based surveys, carried out in 2018-2019, allowed to provide the first Mediterranean-scale baseline of distribution and abundance of cetaceans’ species, other marine megafauna species and floating marine litter. In this respect, ACCOBAMS reminded the meeting about their availability to share with UNEP/MAP all relevant data

and outcomes of the ASI, in particular in view of the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR to cover important gaps related to Common Indicators 3 and 4 on Species distribution and Population abundance.

#### **4.2. Monitoring and Assessment Elements for the IMAP Common Indicators related to Marine Turtles**

23. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/5 “*Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to marine turtles*”, which provides a refinement to the existing monitoring scales and proposes suitable scales of assessment and assessment criteria including reference and thresholds values for the IMAP CI 3 (Species distributional range), CI 4 (Population abundance of selected species abundance) and CI 5 (Population demographic characteristics) for marine turtles species. Aspects related to the complexity of this process were highlighted, explaining that this requires detailed understanding of historic or past reference values and their interplay with current pressures.

24. The Meeting welcomed the document, acknowledged the efforts in ensuring synergy with the MSFD and relevant Regional Sea Conventions and highlighted the added value of the reactivation of the informal relevant OWGs on Biodiversity (EO1) following the recommendations of the Integrated CORMON meetings (1-3 December 2020) and encouraged to continue the work of these groups during the biennium 2022-2023.

25. Following the discussion, one participant highlighted that in terms of sub-areas/management units already identified by other relevant organizations (i. e. organizations dealing with pressures that might affect marine turtle species), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Geographical Subareas (GSAs) exist and are relevant for the EcAp/IMAP assessment when considering Common Indicator 12 on bycatch mortality and its impact on species and their populations. Therefore, the GFCM GSAs can be taken into due consideration when designing surveys, so that species abundance estimates can be provided in relation to these GSAs to assess bycatch mortality of marine turtles and other species of conservation concern.

26. The Meeting endorsed the document and agreed on its submission to the 15th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (23-25 June 2021) for consideration and approval.

#### **Agenda item 5: Monitoring and Assessment Elements of the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species**

<b>Working Documents</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/6 UNEP/MED WG.500/7 UNEP/MED WG.500/8
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#### **5.1. Revised Guidance Fact Sheets**

27. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat (REMPEC and SPA/RAC) presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/6 “*Revised Guidance Fact Sheets for the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species*”, that provide a common reference to support the implementation and improvement of national monitoring programmes of Contracting Parties in line with the Decision IG.22/7 on the IMAP, adopted by COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February 2016). The Secretariat explained that this update resulted from the “Study on trends and outlook of marine pollution from ships and activities and of maritime traffic and offshore activities in the Mediterranean” and in line with the conclusions and recommendations of the 2017 MED QSR and the ongoing work on baseline and Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria and Thresholds Values.

28. The Meeting appreciated the work done during developing the present working document through the informal OWG on non-indigenous species (NIS) (EO2) and encouraged the Secretariat to

continue the work of this informal OWG during the biennium 2022-2023, with identification of key steps toward developing the 2023 MED QSR.

29. The Meeting endorsed the document and agreed on its submission to the 15th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (23-25 June 2021) for consideration and possible approval.

### **5.2. Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria and Thresholds Values**

30. The Secretariat (SPA/RAC) presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/7 “*Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria and Thresholds Values for the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species*”, which aims to develop monitoring and assessment scales as well as assessment criteria and to make recommendations for establishing threshold values for CI6, based on the available data for NIS in the Mediterranean. The Secretariat highlighted the effort deployed by national experts to fulfil the questionnaire shared with countries with the necessary national up-to-date data.

31. The participants agreed to submit written proposals for amendments mainly related to thresholds values. Their comments and amendments will be integrated into the final version of the document to be submitted for endorsement during the next CORMON meeting (2022).

32. Several participants welcomed the work and encouraged strengthening existing synergies between SPA/RAC and the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC) and relevant Regional Sea Conventions as well.

33. The Meeting agreed to review the document within the informal OWG on NIS (EO2) and submit it to the next CORMON meeting planned for 2022.

### **5.3. Progress in the Development of the Baseline Values**

34. The Secretariat presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/8 “*Progress in the Development of the Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species*” and recalled that the aim is to collect the available data on the presence of marine NIS in the Mediterranean countries through existing national inventories, combine it with new and up-to-date information on new species records, the taxonomy and biogeography of the registered species and agreed methodological standards, to reach refined NIS baselines at the national and regional level.

35. The Secretariat updated the participants about the last progress in the revision of national lists of NIS and presented the way forward to validate them toward the publication of the regional assessment and recalled that Synergy with the EU JRC and relevant Regional Sea Conventions will be ensured.

36. A participant stated that this document should be considered as a living document that must be regularly updated and to continue the synergy with the EU JRC through the high-level group of NIS and regular flow of information. He highlighted that continuous contact with relevant national experts will ensure regular update on the new findings and set priorities.

37. Participants encouraged the progress made at this level and asked the Secretariat to discuss the national lists within the informal OWG on NIS (EO2).

**Agenda Item 6: Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for the Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Marine Mammals, Marine Turtles and Sea Birds**

<b>Working Documents</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/9
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38. Mr. Arthur Pasquale, representative of INFO/RAC presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/9 “*Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for the Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Marine Mammals, Marine Turtles and Sea Birds*”, for the completion of the IMAP CIs in the IMAP Info System.

39. Participants welcomed the document on marine mammals, marine turtles and sea birds and stressed the importance of collaboration among the three informal OWG on Biodiversity (EO1) and relevant regional partners.

40. The Meeting reviewed the document and agreed to provide the INFO/RAC with written comments, to be considered as appropriate, before the closure of the CORMON Meeting, i.e., 11 June 2021. These comments concerned the various sections of the documents, with specific highlight to further strengthen synergy with relevant Regional Sea Conventions.

41. Several participants pointed out the importance of the data standards and data dictionaries for the delivery of the 2023 MED QSR based on quality assured data of the IMAP. They welcomed the progress made by INFO/RAC and provided few comments on monk seals that can be discussed with the experts.

42. The Meeting agreed to discuss the document within the relevant informal OWG before its submission for adoption to the next CORMON Meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries (2022).

**Agenda Item 7: Addressing Interrelation of Pressures-Impacts for Biodiversity cluster**

<b>Working Document</b>	UNEP/MED WG.500/10
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43. The Secretariat (SPA/RAC) presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/10 “*Methodological Approach for mapping the interrelations between Pressures-Impacts and the Status of Marine Ecosystem Components for Biodiversity Cluster*”, addressing the methodologies proposed for a GES-integrated assessment based on the Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) approach to support the integrated assessment, under IMAP, of the predominant pressures and their impacts on the marine biodiversity. The proposed methodologies aim to assess the interrelations of predominant pressures and impacts on the biodiversity, which reflect on the health/state of the environment, and to support the integrated assessment under IMAP. Indeed, the document explained the interrelation between three concrete approaches, providing detailed elaboration of GRID/Table, Scoreboard semi-quantitative approach, and the NEAT approach, and proposed several recommendations regarding the use of each suggested method.

44. Several participants expressed their appreciation of the efforts made by the Secretariat to take into account the written comments received after the integrated CORMON meeting (1-3 December 2020) and made request for amendments to be submitted in writing for further discussion within the relevant informal OWG on Biodiversity.

45. The Meeting recommended to consider this work as a dynamic and living document that should be therefore updated continuously as appropriate and agreed to discuss the amended version during the next CORMON meeting (2022).



**Agenda Item 8: Comparative Analysis undertaken with regard to IMAP and the European Commission GES Decision 2017/848/EU for Biodiversity**

**Working Document** UNEP/MED WG.500/11

46. The Secretariat presented the document UNEP/MED WG.500/11 “*Comparative Analysis undertaken with regard to IMAP and the European Commission GES Decision 2017/848/EU for Biodiversity*” which is focusing on how monitoring and assessment frameworks are addressing biodiversity and non-indigenous monitoring elements at the level of criteria/common indicator with the overall scope to further enhance and maximize synergies. The document presented a comparative analysis of the IMAP and the revised GES decision of the EU MSFD, addressed the gaps raised from the 2017 MED QSR and provided a series of recommendations for a possible alignment between the two processes.

47. Several participants commended the document and appreciated the continued efforts made by the Secretariat to align the two processes, wherever possible. They recommended to include, when relevant, the conclusions and recommendations of this work in the 2023MED QSR Roadmap and update this comparative analysis regularly. They agreed to provide the Secretariat with written detailed technical comments to be considered as appropriate in the final version of the document.

48. Several representatives made some suggestions regarding the discussion of this document within the informal OWG on Biodiversity before its submission to the next CORMON meeting to be organised in early 2022.

**Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business**

49. No other matters were raised for discussion.

**Agenda Item 10: Conclusions and Recommendations**

50. Under this Agenda Item, the participants were invited to review the draft Conclusions and Recommendations. The Meeting approved the Conclusions and Recommendations as slightly amended by the Meeting and contained in **Annex III** to the present report.

**Agenda Item 11: Closure of the Meeting**

51. Ms. Tatjana Hema, the acting UNEP/MAP Coordinator welcomed the progress achieved by Contracting Parties in the implementation of the roadmap for the 2023 MED QSR and recalled the importance of the preparation of this regional assessment as a significant milestone in the implementation of IMAP. After the expression of usual courtesies, the Chair declared the Meeting closed on Friday, 11 June 2021, at 11.30.



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



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**REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTANTS  
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<p><b>ACCOBAMS</b> <b>Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area</b> <i>Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la Zone Atlantique Adjacente</i></p>	<p><b>Ms. Célia LERAVALLEC</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:cleravallec@accobams.net">cleravallec@accobams.net</a></p> <p><b>Mr Simone PANIGADA</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:panigada69@gmail.com">panigada69@gmail.com</a></p>
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**REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS**  
**REPRESENTANTS D'ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES ET AUTRES INSTITUTIONS**

<p><b>Medpan</b>  <b>Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean</b>  <i>Réseau des Gestionnaires d'Aires Marines Protégées en Méditerranée</i></p>	<p><b>Mr Frédéric Ducarme</b>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:frederic.ducarme@medpan.org">frederic.ducarme@medpan.org</a></p>
<p><b>IUCN</b>  <b>International Union for Conservation of Nature</b>  <i>Union internationale pour la conservation de la Nature</i></p>	<p><b>Ms. Maria del Mar OTTERO</b>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:mariadelmar.otero@iucn.org">mariadelmar.otero@iucn.org</a></p>

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

<p><b>UNEP/MAP - PNUE/PAM</b>  <b>United Nations Environment Programme /Mediterranean Action Plan</b>  <i>Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement/Plan d'Action pour la Méditerranée</i></p>	<p><b>Ms. Tatjana HEMA</b>  Coordinator  E-mail: <a href="mailto:tatjana.hema@un.org">tatjana.hema@un.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr Emanuele BIGAGLI</b>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:emanuele.bigagli@un.org">emanuele.bigagli@un.org</a></p>
<p><b>MED POL-The Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean</b>  <i>Programme d'évaluation et de contrôle de la pollution marine en Méditerranée</i></p>	<p><b>Ms. Jelena KNEZEVIC</b>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:jelena.knezevic@un.org">jelena.knezevic@un.org</a></p>
<p><b>INFO/RAC-Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication</b>  <i>Centre d'Activités Régionales pour l'Information et la Communication</i></p>	<p><b>Ms. Lorenza Babbini</b>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:lorenza.babbini@info-rac.org">lorenza.babbini@info-rac.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr Arthur PASQUALE</b>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:arthur.pasquale@info-rac.org">arthur.pasquale@info-rac.org</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Francesca CATINI</b>  E-mail: <a href="mailto:francesca.catini@info-rac.org">francesca.catini@info-rac.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr Alessandro Lotti</b>  E-mail : <a href="mailto:alessandro.lotti@info-rac.org">alessandro.lotti@info-rac.org</a></p>
<p><b>PLAN BLEU/RAC- Regional Activity Centre Plan Bleu</b>  <i>Centre d'activité régional Plan Bleu</i></p>	<p><b>Ms Gloria Sara LAZARO CLIMENT</b>  Email : <a href="mailto:glazaro@planbleu.org">glazaro@planbleu.org</a></p> <p><b>Mr. Antoine Lafitte</b>  Email : <a href="mailto:alafitte@planbleu.org">alafitte@planbleu.org</a></p>



<p><b>REMPEC- Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea Centre Régional Méditerranéen pour l'Intervention d'Urgence contre la Pollution Marine Accidentelle</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Phyllis Therdros</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:ptherdros@rempec.org">ptherdros@rempec.org</a></p>
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**SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT**

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



## Agenda

- Agenda Item 1:** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda Item 2:** Organizational Matters
- Agenda Item 3:** Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for IMAP common indicators 1 and 2 on Benthic Habitats
- Agenda item 4:** Monitoring and Assessment Elements for the IMAP Common Indicators related to Species
- 4.1. Elements on Common indicators 3, 4 and 5 on Marine Mammals
  - 4.2. Elements on Common indicators 3, 4 and 5 on Marine Turtles
- Agenda item 5:** Monitoring and Assessment Elements of the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species
- 5.1. Revised Guidance Fact Sheets
  - 5.2. Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria and Thresholds Values
  - 5.3. Progress in the Development of the Baseline Values
- Agenda Item 6:** Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for the Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Marine Mammals, Marine Turtles and Sea Birds
- Agenda Item 7:** Addressing Interrelation of Pressures-Impacts for Biodiversity cluster
- Agenda Item 8:** Comparative Analysis undertaken with regard to IMAP and the European Commission GES Decision 2017/848/EU for Biodiversity
- Agenda Item 9:** Any Other Business
- Agenda Item 10:** Conclusions and Recommendations
- Agenda Item 11:** Closure of the Meeting



**Annex III**  
**Conclusions and Recommendations**





**Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON),  
Biodiversity and Fisheries  
Videoconference, 10-11 June 2021**

## **Introduction**

1. The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) of the United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP) organized the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) for Biodiversity and Fisheries (hereinafter referred to as “the Meeting”), on 10 and 11 June 2021, via videoconference.

## **Participation**

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

3. The following convention secretariats and intergovernmental organizations were represented as observers: the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The following non-governmental organization was also represented as observer: the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN).

4. The Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention Secretariat (UNEP/MAP), the Information and Communication Regional Activity Centre (INFO/RAC), the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL), the Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (Plan Bleu) and the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) were represented at the Meeting.

5. SPA/RAC acted as the secretariat of the Meeting.

## **Organizational matters**

6. The Meeting agreed that the rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) would apply *mutatis mutandis* to their deliberations.

7. The Meeting unanimously elected the following officers:

Chairperson:	Mr. Laurent GUERIN (France),
Vice-chairpersons:	Mr. Mostafa FOUDA (Egypt), Mr. Leonardo TUNESI (Italy), Ms. Ivana STOJANOVIC (Montenegro),
Rapporteur:	Mr. Ali BADREDDINE (Lebanon).

8. Following the presentation by the Secretariat, review and discussion of the relevant working documents, the Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/3 “Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols on Benthic Habitats”**  
*(presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC):*

9. The Meeting commended the document and underlined that it should be considered as a state of the art of the monitoring protocols and encouraged the ongoing work undertaken by the Secretariat, to prioritize and harmonize the monitoring protocols to be used by the Contracting Parties to ensure homogeneity of data collected in a format enabling to inform on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) indicators for the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR).

10. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to develop simplified operational documents on the monitoring protocols and to publish them in the most appropriate formats to national stakeholders in charge of the IMAP implementation.

11. The Meeting reviewed the document and agreed on its submission, considering as appropriate the minor written comments received, to the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (23-25 June 2021) for consideration and possible approval.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/4 “Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to marine mammals”** *(presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC):*

12. The Meeting acknowledged the efforts leading to the elaboration of the document, including the mobilization of national expertise through the informal Online Working Group, and endorsed it for submission to the 15<sup>th</sup> SPA/BD Focal Point Meeting to consider the use of this document for the purpose of the 2023 MED QSR preparation.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/Inf.3 “Main Results of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative (ASI) Project”** *(presented for information by ACCOBAMS):*

13. Considering the relevance of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative experience and results in the context of the IMAP implementation, the Meeting recommended to strengthen existing synergies between SPA/RAC and ACCOBAMS, in particular in view of the activities aimed at supporting the implementation of national monitoring programmes in Southern Mediterranean countries through the EU-funded IMAP-MPA and EcAp-Med III projects, and in view of the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/5 “Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria, Thresholds and Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to marine turtles”** *(presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC):*

14. The Meeting acknowledged the efforts leading to the elaboration of the document, including the mobilization of national expertise through the informal Online Working Group, and endorsed it for submission to the 15<sup>th</sup> SPA/BD Focal Point Meeting to consider the use of this document for the purpose of the 2023 MED QSR preparation, in consultation with the CORMONs and the informal Online Working Group during the next biennium.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/6 “Revised Guidance Fact Sheet for the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species” (presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC on behalf of REMPEC and SPA/RAC):**

15. The Meeting agreed to consider and include other relevant biodiversity surveys as additional opportunities to collect data on non-indigenous species in the guidance fact sheet.

16. The meeting discussed and endorsed the revised guidance fact sheet and agreed on its submission to the 15<sup>th</sup> SPA/BD Focal Point Meeting and following its approval to the 8<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group Meeting.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/7 “Monitoring and Assessment Scales, Assessment Criteria and Thresholds Values for the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species” (presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC):**

17. The Meeting acknowledged the progress achieved for the work on monitoring and assessment scales, assessment criteria, thresholds and baseline values for the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species.

18. The Meeting complimented the efforts of harmonization of the document with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and encouraged further synergy with its implementation framework and the ongoing work under relevant Regional Sea Conventions.

19. The Meeting discussed and endorsed the document and agreed to submit it to the 15<sup>th</sup> SPA/BD Focal Points Meeting to consider its use for the purpose of the 2023 MED QSR preparation in consultation with the CORMONs and the informal Online Working Group during the next biennium.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/8 “Progress in the Development of the Baseline Values for the IMAP Common Indicator 6 related to Non-Indigenous Species” (presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC):**

20. The Meeting took note of the progress made in the development of the baseline on NIS and emphasized the importance to continue the collaboration with the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC) and requested further work on the national lists in consultation with the informal Online Working Group.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/9 “Data Dictionaries and Data Standards for the Common Indicators 3, 4 and 5 related to Marine Mammals, Marine Turtles and Sea Birds” (presented for discussion and endorsement by INFO/RAC):**

21. The Meeting welcomed the document and agreed to provide the Secretariat (INFO/RAC and SPA/RAC) with written comments to be considered as appropriate, before the closure of the CORMON Meeting, i.e. 11 June 2021.

22. The meeting encouraged the Secretariat (INFO/RAC) to continue the development of Data Dictionaries and Data Standards in a way that would also allow coherence and adequacy with the ones used by the Contracting Parties which are members of the EU for the implementation of the MSFD.

23. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to discuss the amended document with the relevant thematic informal Online Working Groups, before its submission to the next CORMON meeting for discussion and consideration.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/10 “Methodological Approach for mapping the interrelations between Pressures-Impacts and the Status of Marine Ecosystem Components for Biodiversity Cluster” (presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC):**

24. The Meeting welcomed the ongoing work on developing the interrelation between Pressures-Impacts and the Status of Marine Ecosystem Components for Biodiversity Cluster and recommended its regular update also considering the other IMAP clusters.

25. The Meeting agreed to provide the Secretariat with written comments to be considered as appropriate, before the closure of the CORMON Meeting, i.e. 11 June 2021, and in consultation with the relevant informal Online Working Group to submit the document to the next CORMON meeting for discussion and consideration.

**Document UNEP/MED WG.500/11 “Comparative Analysis undertaken with regard to IMAP and the European Commission GES Decision 2017/848/EU for Biodiversity” (presented for discussion and endorsement by SPA/RAC):**

26. The Meeting welcomed the work undertaken and encouraged its discussion within the informal Online Working Group and the establishment of stronger linkages with the ongoing work under other Regional Sea Conventions and the MSFD.

27. The Meeting agreed to provide the Secretariat with written comments to be considered as appropriate, before the closure of the CORMON Meeting, i.e. 11 June 2021, and in consultation with the relevant informal Online Working Group, to submit it to the next CORMON meeting for discussion and consideration.

**Recommendation on the informal Online Working Group on Biodiversity:**

28. Based on its strong support and fruitful outcomes during the current biennium, the Meeting recommended to continue the work of the informal Online Working Group on Biodiversity during the biennium 2022-2023 especially with regard the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

29. The Meeting encouraged all the Contracting Parties to be part of the informal Online Working Groups on Biodiversity and Fisheries.