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Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025

Agenda Item 7: Status of implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Roadmap

Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and Flow of Interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP Governing Bodies

Note:

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Note by the Secretariat

1. At COP22 (Antalya, Turkey, December 2021), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agreed to, “Renew their commitment to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and endorse the Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach policy in the Mediterranean, as set out in the Annex I to this Decision” (Decision IG.25/03).
2. Based on Annex I of Decision IG.25/03, the present document was prepared with aim to, (a) upgrade the ToRs for Correspondence Groups CORMONS and COR ESA and online Working Groups (OWGs) to align with COP22 Decision; and (b) to clarify the flow of work between Correspondence Groups and other decision-making bodies of the MAP system as well as providing clarity on the relationship between MAP Components and the Coordinating Unit for EcAp related products.
3. At COP 23 (Portoroz, Slovenia, December 2023), The Contracting Parties took note of the Terms of Reference for the CORMONS, CORESA and Online Working Groups and the flow of interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP governing bodies (Annex IV of Decision IG.26/3).
4. The Terms of Reference was also submitted to the 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (Videoconference, 2 October 2024) as working document (UNEP/MED WG.596/6). The present document is submitted to the 17th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points for information



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

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11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group

Videoconference, 2 October 2024

Agenda Item 4: Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean: Main Directions, Elements and Timeline

Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and Flow of Interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP Governing Bodies

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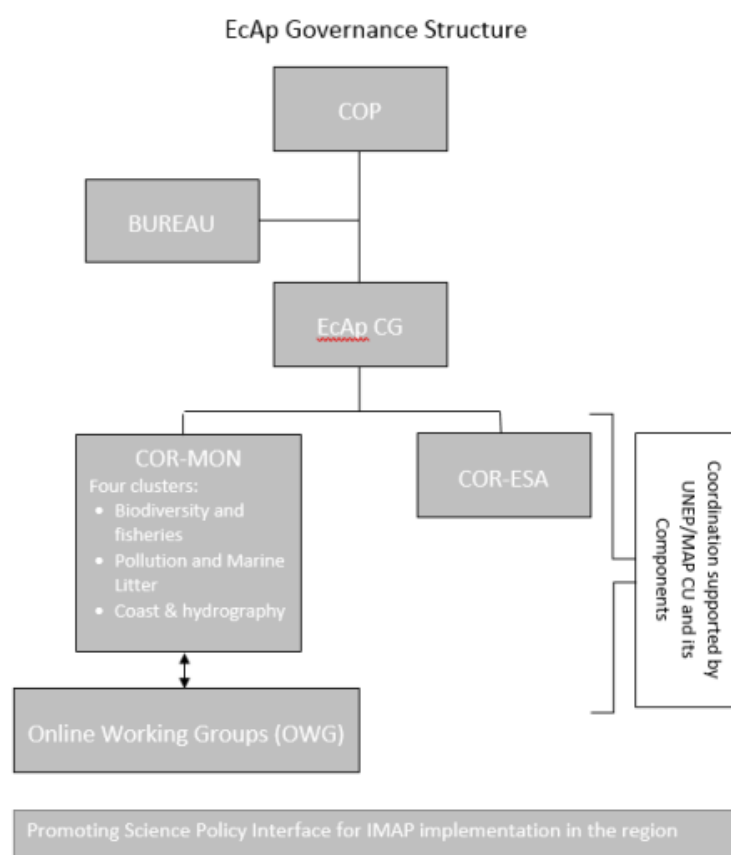
Note by the Secretariat

At COP22 held in Antalya, Turkey, in December 2021, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agreed to, “Renew their commitment to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and endorse the Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach policy in the Mediterranean, set out in Annex I to this Decision” (Decision IG.25/03) – as follows.

Decision IG.25/03 Annex I:

Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean

EcAp Governance Structure



The EcAp Coordination Group (EcAp CG) consisting of MAP Focal Points integrates and gives guidance to the work under the Barcelona Convention:

- a) On the delivery of the ecosystem approach, making sure that all elements for its implementation are taken into account, weighting of priorities and resource implications; and*
- b) Coordinating Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP’s facilitation role, in support of Contracting Parties in their implementation of EcAp.*

Two Correspondence Groups are formed in the process of application of EcAp in the Mediterranean and to support EcAp Coordination Group:

1. The Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties and coordinated by Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP Coordinating Unit and MED POL, working to ensure efficient coverage and in-depth discussions and analysis regarding integrated monitoring and assessment.

2. The Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA) is composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties and invited experts and coordinated by Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP Coordinating Unit and PB/RAC. It develops a socioeconomic analysis of marine ecosystems uses, focusing on priority sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, recreational activities, and oil industry and offshore and address as appropriate the socioeconomic aspects related to the formulation and implementation of programmes of measures to achieve/maintain good environmental status (GES)

3. Informal Online Working Groups (OWG) composed of experts and scientists nominated by the Contracting Parties and experts mobilised by the Secretariat and MAP Components. The composition should be restricted in number, with well-balanced geographical representation. The agenda of the Informal OWG and the timeline for their operationality is defined by the respective CORMONs. The Informal OWG report to CORMON and do not replace CORMONs.

4. Every effort to be made by the Secretariat to streamline and ensure the technical documents are cleared by the respective CORMON and MAP Component/Thematic Focal Points in line with their mandates, as appropriate, before they are submitted to the decision-making bodies. To this aim, the EcAp Coordination Group may decide on terms of references including potential list/type of documents for the technical bodies addressing also the need for the effective interaction among different bodies.

5. Science-Policy Interface (SPI). Every effort should be made to promote SPI for IMAP implementation in the Mediterranean.

Based on Annex I of Decision IG.25/03, the present document was prepared with aim to, (a) upgrade the ToRs for Correspondence Groups CORMONS and COR ESA and online Working Groups (OWGs) to align with COP22 Decision; and (b) to clarify the flow of work between Correspondence Groups and other decision-making bodies of the MAP system as well as providing clarity on the relationship between MAP Components and the Coordinating Unit for EcAp related products.

COP 23 held in Portoroz, Slovenia, in December 2023, took note of the Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and the flow of interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP governing bodies (Annex IV of Decision IG.26/3), and the present document is submitted to the 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group for further review and consideration.

Table of Contents

1.	Background and rationale	1
2.	Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs)	1
2.1	Composition	1
2.2	Operation	1
2.3	CORMON Mandates	2
3.	Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA)	3
3.1	Composition	3
3.2	Operation	3
3.3	Mandate	3
4.	Effective interaction among different MAP bodies	3

Terms of reference (TORs) for Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs), Economic and social analysis (COR ESA) and Online Working Groups (OWGs)

1. Background and rationale

1. Since COP15 (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008, Decision IG.17/6), Contracting Parties decided to progressively apply the Ecosystem Approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment for the promotion of sustainable development, with the overall objective of achieving the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and Coasts. COP15 also set out the governance of the Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention system, its goals and principles, and the mandates for the CU and the MAP Components (Decision IG.17/5).

2. COP17 (Paris, France, 8-10 February 2012) established the EcAp Coordination Group and adopted 11 Ecological Objectives (EOs) with a suite of associated Operational Objectives and indicators (Decision IG.20/4). The EcAp Coordination Group consists of MAP Focal Points, as per Decision IG.21/3, and its Terms of Reference were agreed by the Bureau (BUR/75/5, July 2012).

3. At their COP19 (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme and related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), (Decision IG.22/7).

4. COP22 Antalya, Turkey, December 2021 endorsed an updated governance mechanism for the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention (Decision IG.25/03). Contracting Parties agreed to “Renew their commitment to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and endorse the Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach policy in the Mediterranean, set out in Annex I to this Decision”. The Decision, in its Annex I, states, “every effort to be made by the Secretariat to streamline and ensure the technical documents are cleared by the respective CORMON and MAP Component/Thematic Focal Points in line with their mandates, as appropriate, before they are submitted to the decision-making bodies”.

5. Moreover, COP 23 (Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), took note of the Terms of Reference for the COMRONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and the flow of interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP governing bodies (Annex IV of Decision IG.26/3)

2. Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs)

2.1 Composition

6. The Correspondence Groups on monitoring (CORMONs) are established for each thematic cluster – Biodiversity and Fisheries; Pollution and Marine Litter; and Coast and Hydrography.

7. CORMONs are composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties possessing the necessary expertise and experience in line with the mandates of respective CORMON for IMAP implementation. They can be designated by the MAP Focal Points/EcAp CG members or by the thematic/MAP Components’ Focal Points, preferably in consultation with each other.

2.2 Operation

8. The CORMONs’ work is supported by the respective MAP Component: MED POL for Pollution and Marine Litter; PAP/RAC for Coast and Hydrography; and SPA/RAC for Biodiversity and Fisheries. Technical and scientifically related tasks may be supported by external experts, during preparation of the documents for consideration of respective CORMONs. The overall coordination of the work of CORMONs remains with the Coordinating Unit and is carried out in accordance with MAP Programme of Work (POW) priorities and implementation of the EcAp Roadmap and Policy.

9. CORMONs may meet physically or by teleconference, depending on the agenda, the volume of work and documents to be considered. Provisions for CORMON meetings numbers, main deliverables and modality are made in the MAP POW.

2.3 CORMON Mandates

10. CORMONs have the primary role to guide and deliver the implementation of technical and scientific aspects of IMAP and delivery of QSR with support from the Secretariat and MAP Components and foster regional and sub-regional collaboration and exchange of best practices and know-how with regards to monitoring and assessment of marine and coastal environment.

11. The operation of the CORMONs should recognize that the implementation of the ecosystem approach is comprehensive in terms of the multidisciplinary and scientific context of the documents that need to be discussed, and therefore iterative in terms of coordination of the results of work within the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system and at Contracting Party level.

12. Generally, CORMONs are assigned with the preparation and negotiation of the following main types of IMAP products:

- Monitoring guidelines and protocols on, sampling; sample processing analysis/determination; quality assurance (QA); and reporting
- IMAP indicator guidance factsheets
- Areas/scales of assessment, assessment criteria, and guidance for their application
- Assessment methodologies, assessment products and QSR (structure/contents, conclusions)
- Data standards (DS) and data dictionaries (DD)
- Data management QA and QC
- Updates of IMAP & progress reporting on IMAP implementation
- Implementation of national IMAPs
- Proficiency testing
- Capacity building activities
- IMAP related Project outcomes

13. CORMON IMAP products are of a technical and scientific nature, they may impose policy and financial impacts on IMAP implementation. A detailed elaboration of the different levels of responsibilities for consideration and approval of different types of IMAP products is provided in Annex I.

14. Informal Online Working Groups (OWG) may be established by CORMONs in order to provide specific scientific inputs: OWGs are composed of a restricted number of experts and scientists nominated by the Contracting Parties. In their delivery OWGs may be supported by experts mobilised by the Secretariat and MAP Components in accordance with provisions of the approved MAP POW and budget or related projects as appropriate. The tasks and outcome of the work of OWG are defined by the CORMONs. OWGs report to CORMONs. To this aim the chair of the OWG in consultation with the Secretariat/MAP Components presents the outcome of the OWG to CORMON.

15. The informal OWG do not replace the formal Correspondence Groups.

16. Every effort should be made to maintain geographical balance in the composition of the OWG and mobilize high level expertise.

17. No language interpretation is provided by the Secretariat at the OWG, nor are official meeting documents formally disseminated. Members of the OWG are strongly encouraged to provide scientific and technical inputs and support to the Secretariat/MAP Component work with regards to IMAP implementation and delivery of its products.

3. Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA)

3.1 Composition

18. The Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis (COR ESA) is composed of national experts designated by the Contracting Parties and invited experts and coordinated by Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP Coordinating Unit and Plan Bleu/RAC. The Group also includes representatives of the other UNEP/MAP Components as well as international experts selected by the Contracting Parties through Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points and/or by the Secretariat for their experience in similar initiatives or for their scientific expertise.

3.2 Operation

19. The work of COR ESA is supported by Plan Bleu RAC under the overall coordination of the Coordinating Unit.

3.3 Mandate

20. The COR ESA is responsible for the following:

- Preparing and guiding the socio-economic assessments
- Preparing the socio-economic chapter of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (QSR)
- Undertaking analyses of the socio-economic aspects of national programmes of measures
- Supporting Contracting Parties to undertake socio-economic analyses at the national level
- Developing methodological tools with regard to socio-economic assessments

4. Effective interaction among different MAP bodies

21. The level of interaction between the bodies of the EcAp governance structure and MAP decision making bodies i.e., MAP Components/Thematic Focal Points, MAP Focal Points and COP depends on the nature of the products as detailed in Annex 1, in line with their respective mandates. Annex also provides information on the type of documents to be reviewed by each body.

Annex I

Possible products and interaction between EcAp governance bodies

Annex I: Possible products and interaction between EcAp governance bodies

CORMONs	Component/ Thematic Focal Points (FP)	EcAp Coordination Group (CG)	MAP Focal Points (FP) / COP
1. Monitoring guidelines/ protocols			
Products of a complex scientific and technical nature that may have financial implications for implementation of IMAP.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in the programme of Work (POW).	Coordinating Unit (CU) reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget.
2. IMAP indicator guidance factsheets			
Products of a complex scientific and technical nature that may have policy and financial implications.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Recommended by CORMONs for no objection procedure.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Based on current practice, endorsement by EcAp CG.	Approval of the respective provisions in the POW & budget, as appropriate.
3. Data dictionaries and data standards (DDs and DSs)			
Products of a technical nature.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Recommended by CORMONs for no objection for their submission to EcAp CG meeting and approval of the related provisions in the POW.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Based on current practice, endorsement by EcAp CG, for MAP FP.	Approval of the respective provisions in the POW & budget, as appropriate.
4. Assessment criteria			
Products of a complex scientific and technical nature that may have policy implications, including allocation of financial resources for implementation of IMAP.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and endorsement for submission to EcAp CG meeting.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and endorsement for submission to MAP FP.	Review and approval for submission to COP. COP Decision

5. Assessment methods & products, QSR structure, contents & conclusions			
Scientific products with recommendations for COP consideration.	<p>MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points.</p> <p>Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW.</p> <p>No objection from the scientific point of view; endorsement of recommendations.</p> <p>Recommendation for transmission to EcAp CG meeting.</p>	<p>CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.</p> <p>Endorsement of key findings and recommendations for submission to MAP Focal Points.</p>	<p>General review of main findings and recommendations and approval for submission to COP.</p> <p>In depth review of the related draft Decision body for submission to the COP.</p> <p>COP Decision.</p>
6. Thematic assessments			
Thematic assessments prepared and approved.	<p>MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points.</p> <p>Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW.</p> <p>Overall discussion and feedback on assessment recommendations.</p> <p>Endorsement for publication.</p>	<p>CU report on the progress; review of recommendations as appropriate.</p> <p>Endorsement of key findings and recommendations for submission to MAP Focal Points as appropriate.</p>	<p>Review of potential activities included in the POW.</p> <p>Review and endorse as appropriate of the key findings and recommendations.</p>
7. IMAP development and update			
Scientific and policy products.	<p>MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points.</p> <p>Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW.</p> <p>Review and approval for transmission to EcAp CG meeting.</p>	<p>CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components Review and endorsement for submission to MAP FP</p>	<p>Responsible for approving all updates of IMAP implementation and approving the financial resources to address the needs as proposed by the respective CORMON and Component FPs.</p> <p>Review and approval for submission to COP, COP Decision</p>

8. Implementation of National IMAPs

National IMAPs are of a technical nature with the implications for financial and policy aspects. The respective CORMON should be responsible for providing the recommendations in relation to: (i) the effectiveness of implementation of the National IMAPs related to the relevant IMAP Cluster; (ii) the gaps identified in the process of the National IMAPs implementation; (iii) the needs to be addressed, including technical, human resources, governance and financial aspects; (iv) harmonization of National IMAPs implementation; and (v) mechanisms/sources/means that could provide solutions and be used to improve implementation of National IMAPs.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Report on the progress, POW provisions as appropriate.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget as appropriate.
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9. Proficiency Testing

Proficiency Testing (PT) is of a technical nature, based on the complex scientifically related procedures; however, with certain implications for policy decision-makers.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW Review of the outcome of Proficiency testing and delivery of recommendations to Focal Points; consideration of their outcome in the design of the POW as appropriate.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget as appropriate.
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10. Capacity Building Activities

Products of a technical character.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities by CORMONs for their inclusion in POW.	CU Report on the progress.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget.
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11. Data management/QA/QC

Products of a technical nature.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW as appropriate.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget as appropriate.
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COR ESA	Component/ Thematic Focal Points	EcAp Coordination Group	MAP Focal Points / COP
Review of relevant assessments/studies			
COR ESA is responsible for reviewing analyses and assessments carried out for EcAp that are of relevance for social and economic considerations. In particular:	Report on the progress	Report on the progress	Report on the progress
Socio-economic assessments.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Endorsement of assessment by the EcAp CG. Possible recommendations to MAP FP meeting.	CU reports on progress and related activities of POW and Budget. Approval of assessment.
Socio-economic chapter of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (QSR).	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. No objection from the scientific point of view.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and Endorsement of the chapter.	Overall endorsement of the chapter as part of the relevant 2023 MED QSR endorsement COP Decision.
Analyses of the socio-economic aspects of national programmes of measures.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Endorsement of analyses, possible recommendations to MAP FP.	Report on the progress. Submission of COR ESA recommendations by the EcAp CG to MAP Focal Points/COP as relevant.
Provide guidelines to support Contracting Parties to undertake socio-economic analyses at the national level.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and Endorsement and recommend submission to EcAp CG.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and endorsement.	Report on the progress.
Methodological tools with regard to socio-economic assessments	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and Endorsement and recommend submission to EcAp CG	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Review and endorsement.	Report on the progress