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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 10-13 September 2019

Agenda Item 5: Specific Matters for Consideration and Action by the Meeting, including Draft Decisions

Draft Report of the 7th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group: Conclusions and Recommendations (Athens, Greece, 9 September 2019)

Note by the Secretariat:

This document contains only the conclusions and recommendations adopted at the 7th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group, while the Annexes referred to in this document will be included in the final Report of the 7th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group, following submission of inputs by Contracting Parties.

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2019

Conclusions and Recommendations

The 7th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (the Meeting) took place in Athens, Greece, on 9 September 2019.

Following review and discussions of all agenda items, the Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

State of Play of the Implementation of Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP)

1. Following the Secretariat's Update on the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap (document UNEP/MED WG.467/3), the Meeting acknowledged the progress achieved for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap and of related Decisions of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, since the 6th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Coordination Group held in Athens, Greece, on 11 September 2017, and pointed out the need for stronger efforts by all Contracting Parties in advancing the implementation of the national Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programmes (IMAP) and reporting quality-assured data to support the development of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR) as provided for in Decision IG.23/6, while remaining conscious of some implementation challenges and limitations faced by the Contracting Parties.

2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment

2. Following the Secretariat's presentation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment (document UNEP/MED WG.467/4), the Meeting endorsed the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and Needs Assessment as contained in Annex I of these conclusions, as amended, and requested the Secretariat and MAP Components to further define in 2020, together with the Contracting Parties and CORMONs, concrete requirements and deadlines of output delivery at the level of Common Indicators per each Contracting Party in order to ensure effective data collection and to address knowledge gaps to enable the entire MAP system to successfully deliver the 2023 MED QSR.
3. While noting the constraints and challenges relating to the implementation of the 2023 MED QSR Roadmap and the need to further discuss concrete steps and timeframes for implementation of the 2023 MED QSR with the Contracting Parties and CORMONs in 2020, the Meeting called upon the Contracting Parties to fully commit and contribute to this major process; actively participate to CORMON meetings; complete relevant Common Indicators (CI) assessment factsheets at national level; report datasets in the IMAP Info System and take the lead for the preparation of thematic chapters of the 2023 MED QSR with the full support of the Secretariat and MAP components. It requested the Secretariat to develop a proposal of the Table of Content of the 2023 MED QSR in 2020 for review by the CORMONs and by the EcAp Coordination Group members.
4. The Meeting pointed out the importance of re-establishing the Online Working Groups (OWG) for all IMAP clusters, to work to support the process of the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR under the guidance of the CORMONs, including on the scales of monitoring along the scales of assessment, and to identify and apply nested assessment areas in order to support the development of aggregated assessment products as well as assessment criteria and thresholds across Common Indicators.
5. The Meeting took note of the information provided by the Secretariat regarding the streamlining of 2023 MED QSR outputs in the 2020-2021 Programme of Work and pointed out the need to mobilize external resources for its implementation and appreciated the efforts made by the Secretariat in this respect.

The Methodological Approach for Mapping the Interrelations between Sectors, Activities, Pressures, Impacts and State of Marine Environment

6. The Meeting reviewed the methodologies proposed for GES-integrated assessment based on the DPSIR approach (document UNEP/MED WG.467/7), and approved them as contained in Annex II to these conclusions, for their testing by the Contracting Parties with the aim to present related main findings to the next meetings of respective CORMONs in 2020 and 2021.

IMAP Pilot Info System and Related Quality Assurance Issues; Data Standards and Data Dictionaries; MAP Data Management Policy

7. Following the review of the progress achieved with regards to the IMAP Pilot Info System and Related Quality Assurance Issues, Data Standards and Data Dictionaries and MAP Data Management Policy (documents UNEP/MED WG.467/8, UNEP/MED WG.467/9, UNEP/MED WG.467/10, UNEP/MED WG.467/11, UNEP/MED WG.467/12, UNEP/MED WG.467/13), the Meeting endorsed them as state of the art, taking into account their evolving nature and the need to adjust them in line with the further development of IMAP.
8. With regards to Data Standards and Data Dictionaries documents (documents UNEP/MED WG.467/8, UNEP/MED WG.467/9, UNEP/MED WG.467/10), the Meeting, taking into account their evolving nature, endorsed them as slightly revised and presented in Annexes III, IV and V to these conclusions, as amended, and requested INFO/RAC to adjust them as need be in 2020 in consultation with MAP components and CORMONs following the outcome of the testing process and other relevant IMAP developments. The meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to fully participate in the testing process.
9. The Meeting requested INFO/RAC, MED POL, SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC to further work to guide the Contracting Parties to deliver satisfactory quality data in the IMAP Info System in a harmonized way; as well as to build Quality Assurance/Quality Control within Database Quality Management of the IMAP Info System to estimate the validity of datasets submission for preparation of the 2023 MED QSR.

Updated IMAP Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicators 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 and 21; New proposal for Candidate Indicators 25, 26 and 27

10. Following the review of Working Documents UNEP/MED WG.467/5 and UNEP/MED WG.467/6, the Meeting reviewed and approved the updated IMAP Common Indicator Guidance Factsheets 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 and 21 as slightly revised and contained in Annexes VI and VII of these conclusions, as amended, as well as the recommendations arising from relevant CORMON meetings, pointing out the need for their update as necessary, and noting the importance of testing exercises in order to support Contracting Parties to move forward.
11. The Meeting expressed its appreciation for the work undertaken by ACCOBAMS and the Secretariat to prepare the Guidance Factsheets for Candidate Indicators 26 and 27 (document UNEP/MED WG.467/5) related to EO11 (Energy including underwater noise), and approved these Guidance Factsheets, included in Annex VI to these conclusions, pointing out the need for further work to gather relevant knowledge, including through the testing of the Guidance Factsheets for Candidate Indicators 26 and 27 on an indicative basis as appropriate, prior to incorporating them into IMAP upon completion of its initial phase.
12. The Meeting endorsed the Guidance Factsheet for IMAP Candidate Indicator 25 “Land Cover Change” (document UNEP/MED WG.467/6) and invited the Contracting Parties to test it during the next biennium, at appropriate spatial assessment scales, with the view to be included in the list of Common Indicators at COP 22 for its consideration.

Monitoring Protocols for IMAP Common Indicators Related to Pollution and Guidance on monitoring concerning IMAP Common Indicators related to Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species

13. The Meeting reviewed Working Documents UNEP/MED WG.467/14, UNEP/MED WG.467/15 and UNEP/MED WG.467/16, and endorsed them, as contained in Annexes VIII, IX and X to these conclusions, as amended. The Meeting also took note of the comments made by several Contracting Parties related to the inclusion of new indicator species for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24, as well as minor adjustments of monitoring parameters, and requested the Secretariat and MAP Components to bring them to the attention of respective CORMONs in 2020.

Science-Policy Interface: achievements and challenges for the implementation of IMAP

14. The Meeting reviewed recommendations to strengthen the structure and sustain a Science-Policy Interface (SPI) for IMAP implementation in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MED WG.467/17) and appreciated the work done. The Meeting provided a number of comments noting the importance of avoiding duplication and of the necessity to use existing structures, as well as to take into account existing regional and transnational practices that could serve as a model. The Meeting asked the Contracting Parties to further review this document and provide feedback regarding the recommendations provided in order to feed the discussion for further IMAP implementation and preparation of the 2023 MED QSR and the next cycle of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy.

Any Other Business

15. The Meeting welcomed the efforts made towards greater cooperation between GFCM and UNEP/MAP with the view to support data, and requested the Secretariat to conclude this Agreement related to collaboration with GFCM as early as possible.
16. The Meeting appreciated the efforts of the EU-funded MEDREGION Project partners to coordinate their work with IMAP and the EcAp Roadmap implementation, and encouraged their further collaboration with the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention System.

Annexes

(to be included at a later stage)