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## MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Integrated Correspondence Groups of GES and Targets Meeting  
Athens (Greece), 17-19 February 2014

### Secretariat's Analysis on Ecological Objective 8



**Secretariat's Analysis on Ecological Objective 8 (Operational objective 8.2 Integrity and diversity of coastal ecosystems, landscapes and their geomorphology are preserved)**

**Indicator 8.2.1 Change of land-use\***

Indicator 8.2.1 is one of the indicators which were found not mature enough to be part of the list of the agreed Integrated List of GES, Targets and Indicators.

Its key importance for the region, in addition to recent updates in scientific data availability, make it an interesting indicator to be discussed as a possible common indicator.

In light of the above, please see under the Secretariat's analysis, for discussion:

Following the ICZM Protocol requirements, in particular the ecosystem approach and balanced allocation of uses with the aim to avoid urban sprawl (Article 5 and 6) and limitation of linear extension of urban development including transport infrastructure along the coast (Article 8) are one of the major objectives and principles of this legal instruments. Regular reporting on the state and evolution of coastal zones (Article 16) on the basis of appropriate indicators (Article 18) is required. Changes of land use have a direct implications for the ecosystems, habitats and species in coastal zones with its terrestrial and marine part. By changing the land uses, mainly from more natural to more manmade the integrity and diversity of coastal ecosystems and landscapes is effected or lost.

To comply with these requirements, allow for the assessment and consequently propose policies to better manage coastal areas it is crucial to start with at least one common indicator, i.e. change of land use which embraces many concepts that can be derived from this indicator such as the percentage of built up areas, the trends in the evolution of urban areas and detection of urban sprawl areas, continuation of linear development of urban areas along the coast, as well as fragmentation of coastal habitats or change of landscape types, and so on. It is evident that this indicator has a relatively higher weight in comparison to any other indicators which are 'one issue' oriented and should therefore deserve to be considered for the re-introduction to the list of common indicators. Due to data availability and coverage of the whole Mediterranean with the required data was the major obstacle not to insert this indicator to the latest decision of the Contracting parties in Istanbul (December 2013). On the contrary, some major scientific projects (such as Pegaso, Medina- EU FP7 funded projects) have made a great progress along this specific indicator as the availability of data has improved, and have produced valuable results that could encourage the CORGEST integrated meeting to reconsider the importance of this indicator and bringing it back to the common list.

Data are available from the Corine Land Cover datasets for 2000 and 2011. Landcover products are created from GlobCorine or other e.g. MODIS multispectral data, following discrete CORINE land cover categories.

\* **Definition:** The extent, and type of land use directly affects wildlife habitat and thereby impacts local and global biodiversity. Human alteration of landscapes from natural vegetation to any other use typically results in habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, all of which can have devastating effects on biodiversity. Land conversion is the single greatest cause of ecosystem and habitat fragmentation, loss or even extinction of species. Of particular concern is urban sprawl in coastal areas, where the natural areas, habitats, agricultural or forestry areas are converted to built-up areas. The process is known as littoralistaion. It means the change the way land is used (e.g. clearing of forests for agricultural use, change from agricultural land to urban areas).