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Agenda Item 3: Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean 2026-2035

Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035)

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Note by the Secretariat

The Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) was agreed in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System by COP 15 in 2008 ([Decision IG.17/6](#)), including an ecological vision and strategic goals for the Mediterranean, and since then a number of important Decisions have been adopted by the Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Barcelona Convention as a roadmap for its implementation:

- COP 17 in 2012 adopted the initial integrated assessment for the Mediterranean sea and coast, including the ecological and operational objectives, indicators and timetable (2010-2019) for implementing EcAp roadmap ([Decision IG.20/4](#));
- COP 18 in 2013 adopted the Good Environmental Status (GES) definitions and proposed targets, the process and principles of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria, the first EcAp timeline (2014-2017), data sharing principles, EcAp governance structure, and socio-economic work programme ([Decision IG.21/3](#));
- COP 22 in 2021 adopted an updated EcAp governance mechanism for the implementation of EcAp in the Mediterranean ([Decision IG.25/3](#)).

During COP 23 (Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), the Contracting Parties called, through [Decision IG.26/3](#), for a renewed Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) policy for the Mediterranean, taking into account, but not limited to, the outcomes of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR); the findings of the independent evaluation of the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap and other related work of the Secretariat as per the CORMONs and Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group meeting conclusions, and giving due consideration to the most recent relevant developments at global and regional level, including the expected MFSD evaluation and revision.

The Secretariat prepared and presented during the 11th Meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group (EcAp CG) (Videoconference, 2 October 2024), a first proposal for updating EcAp Roadmap and its timeline (Working and Information Documents UNEP/MED WG.595/4 and UNEP/MED WG.595/Inf.3), including specific proposals to: (a) move from a 7-step implementation approach to a 6-step implementation approach; (b) revise EcAp vision, in alignment and coherence with the vision of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy for 2022-2027; (c) revise the strategic goals to encompass the concept of Good Environmental Status (GES), climate change, and ecosystem restoration actions; as well as (b) revise accordingly the operational objectives, indicators, GES definition and targets.

In line with the Conclusions and Recommendations of the 11th Meeting of EcAp CG, the Secretariat initiated an e-mail communication with its Contracting Parties on 17 October 2024, including a questionnaire, detailing information on all elements stated in paragraph 4 of the Conclusions and Recommendations, along with additional information on the process, with the aim to receive feedback with regards to the process and the way forward. Feedback was received from 5 Contracting Parties (i.e., Egypt, France, Israel, Malta, and Türkiye), which is incorporated in the present document.

Further to the above feedback, the respective CORMONs (i.e. CORMONs on Biodiversity and Fisheries, Pollution, Marine Litter, Coast and Hydrography) and Thematic Focal Points (i.e., SPA/RAC, MED POL, and PAP/RAC) Meetings organized in 2024 and 2025, reviewed the respective components' content and information, in line with their respective mandate, the outcome of which is also reflected in the present document, in particular in its Annex I.

The present document presents all updated elements coming from previous decisions highlighted in yellow, whereas the text highlighted in green reflects new elements proposed by the Secretariat.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BAT	Best Available Techniques
BEP	Best Environmental Practices
BMP	Best Management Practices
BOD	Biological Oxygen Demand
BWM	Ballast Water Management
CG	Coordination Group
Chl-a	Chlorophyll a
COP	Conference of the Parties
COR ESA	Correspondence Group on Economic and Social Analysis
CORMONs	Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring
CPs	Contracting Parties
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
CU	Coordinating Unit
DD	Data Dictionaries
DS	Data Standards
EcAp	Ecosystem Approach
EIA/SEA	Environmental Impact Assessment / Strategic Environmental Assessment
EOs	Ecological Objectives
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EU	European Union
EUNIS	European University Information Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMSY	Fishing Mortality at Maximum Sustainable Yield
FP	Focal Points
GES	Good Environmental Status
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
HNS	Harmful and Noxious Substances
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMAP	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing
LBS Protocol	Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol
LC	Least Concerned
MAMIAS	Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MCPAs	Marine and Coastal Protected Areas
MED POL	Mediterranean Pollution Assessment and Control Programme
MED QSR	Mediterranean Quality Status Report
MEDITS	International bottom trawl survey in the Mediterranean
MFSD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
MTS	Mid-Term Strategy
NAPs	National Action Plans
NIS	Non-Indigenous Species
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
OECMs	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
OWGs	Online Working Groups
PAP/RAC	Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre
PlanBleu/RAC	Plan Bleu / Regional Activity Centre
PoMs	Programmes of Measures
POW	Programme of Work

QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
SAPBIO	Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean region
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPA/BD	Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity
SPA/RAC	Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre
SPAMIs	Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance
SPI	Science-Policy Interface
TORs	Terms of reference
UNEP/MAP	United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan
VGSSF	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small Scale Fisheries
WEFE Nexus	Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus
WG	Working Group
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

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1. Introduction

1. The Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) was agreed in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System in 2008 and since then a number of important Decisions have been adopted by the Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Barcelona Convention to support the roadmap for its implementation:

- 2008 – COP15 | [Decision IG.17/6](#): “Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to the management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment”.
- 2012 – COP17 | [Decision IG.20/4](#): “*Implementing MAP ecosystem approach roadmap (Mediterranean Ecological and Operational Objectives, Indicators and Timetable for Implementing the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap)*”.
- 2013 – COP18 | [Decision IG.21/3](#): “*Ecosystem Approach including adopting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and Targets)*”.
- 2017 – COP20 | [Decision IG.23/6](#): “*2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR)*”.
- 2019 – COP21 | [Decision IG.24/4](#): “*Assessment Studies*” (Annex V: Roadmap and Needs Assessment for the 2023 MED QSR)
- 2021 – COP22 | [Decision IG.25/3](#): “*Governance*” (Annex I: Governance Mechanism for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean).
- 2021 – COP22 | [Decision IG.25/10](#): “*MAP Data Policy*”.
- 2023 – COP23 | [Decision IG.26/3](#): “*The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean)*”.

2. Ecosystem Approach Vision for Achieving Good Environmental Status in the Mediterranean Sea (2025–2035)

2. The Mediterranean Sea is one of the most iconic marine environments. It is home to approximately 17,000 marine species, some of which are found nowhere else, and supports the livelihoods of over 480 million people living in its coastal states. However, this vital resource stands at a crossroads with pressures from climate change, pollution, overfishing, invasive species, unsustainable tourism, and habitat degradation are mounting, placing the ecological and socio-economic future of the region at serious risk.

3. Drawing from the main findings deriving from UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) policy implementation, the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) and its Summary for Policy Makers, as well as inputs from the 2025 Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Evaluation and its assessment of Programmes of Measures (PoMs) in the Mediterranean Sea, this roadmap outlines strategic vision for achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) across the Mediterranean basin by 2035.

4. Building on the significant achievements in implementing the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) since its launch in 2008, there is a growing need to place greater emphasis on the use of innovative approaches and tools - such as the Source-to-Sea Management, Marine Spatial Planning, Nature-Based Solutions, Ocean Ecosystem Accounting, Mapping of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems, and the Compendium for Coast and Sea – to enhance the protection, conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems; integrated coastal zone and ocean management; climate mitigation and adaptation; disaster risk reduction. This highlights the urgent need to build the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems and to better inform policy - making, development planning, and conservation efforts, thereby accelerating progress towards achieving GES and contributing to implementation of the ocean related SDGs by 2030. It is also essential to strengthen scientific knowledge on deep sea ecosystems.

5. These efforts contribute to strengthening synergies with the implementation of UNEA and its ocean-related resolutions, relevant IMO conventions, the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Regional Sea Conventions, and relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). By advancing the integrated and ecosystem-based approach, the Mediterranean region has the potential to become a model for sustainable marine management - supporting climate resilience and the restoration of ocean health.

2.1 Current Status and Challenges

Achievements to Date:

6. Over the past decade, significant progress has been made under regional and national initiatives aimed at restoring marine ecosystems and improving the health of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast. The Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) has strengthened surveillance across biodiversity, pollution – marine litter, and ecosystem health indicators. Regional and national programmes of measures, and several actions on the ground, have been adopted and implemented aiming at achieving Good Environmental Status. It should also be noted that the Mediterranean already hosts many inspiring initiatives proving that ecosystem-based management and sustainable marine governance are both feasible and impactful. These experiences offer valuable lessons for scaling up efforts across the region.

Persistent and Emerging Challenges:

7. Despite achievements, challenges persist and are intensifying, and the Mediterranean Sea remains on the way of achieving GES. Some indicators of biodiversity and pollution show positive trends, while others - notably the status of fish stocks, coastal habitats, and non-indigenous species — are deteriorating or showing insufficient progress:

- a) Biodiversity loss continues to be a pressing issue. MPAs currently cover only around 9% of the Mediterranean — well below the 30% target — and many existing MPAs suffer from inadequate management effectiveness. The populations of endangered species such as the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) remain vulnerable. Invasive species like the lionfish (*Pterois miles*) and blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) have expanded their range, disrupted native ecosystems and caused economic damage to fisheries. The 2023 MED QSR indicates that the number of established non-indigenous species has doubled since 2012, highlighting the accelerating pressure of biological invasions.
- b) While a complete 2023 MED QSR GES assessment for eutrophication across all sub-regions was not possible, the impacts of eutrophication—primarily driven by agricultural runoff, untreated urban wastewater, and coastal aquaculture— do not appear to be increasing. Instead, they remain mainly confined to areas historically affected by eutrophication. Harmful algal blooms have been recorded with increasing frequency, disrupting fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism.
- c) Despite progress in pollution prevention at source, pressures on the Mediterranean Sea persist. Using various assessment methodologies - harmonized to the extent possible — several areas were identified as not achieving Good Environmental Status (GES). Nevertheless, the overall condition of the assessed zones across all four sub-regions generally remains moderate to good. The situation is more concerning with regard to acute pollution events (e.g., slicks from oil, oil products, and hazardous substances), which have a significant impact on biota. These events contribute to some sub-divisions showing even poor to bad conditions.
- d) Marine litter remains pervasive. Hundreds of tonnes of plastic daily entering the Mediterranean Sea, primarily from major urban centres, other densely populated areas, river discharges and fishing activities. Hotspots of plastic accumulation exemplify the growing magnitude of this issue, and according to the 2023 MED QSR densities remain high, while progress in reducing marine litter inputs remains slow.
- e) The circulation of the Mediterranean Sea is driven by a combination of external forces—such as wind stress and strong topographic constraints—as well as internal dynamic processes. These forces operate across three predominant and interacting spatial scales: basin scale, sub-basin scale, and mesoscale. Compared to the hydrographic alterations caused by new structures, climate change appears to have a significantly greater impact on habitats and marine ecosystems overall.

- f) Climate change poses a growing existential threat. The Mediterranean Sea is warming at a rate 20% faster than the global average, leading to shifts in species distribution, mass mortality events of benthic organisms, and the degradation of critical habitats like *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass beds. Ocean acidification, sea-level rise, and increasing extreme weather events compound these impacts, undermining the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems. The rise in seawater temperature is accelerating the spread of non-indigenous species. Hydrographic changes cause Mediterranean marine habitats to be increasingly endangered, with some at risk of complete extinction. The central and eastern Mediterranean areas are considered more vulnerable to climate change due to increased pressure from invasive species, higher water temperatures and less ocean circulation, which leads to lower levels of dissolved oxygen.

Risks:

- a) Enhanced governance faces ongoing challenges, including fragmented cooperation, policy incoherence across sectors (e.g., tourism, agriculture, energy), inconsistencies in monitoring and reporting, and challenging enforcement mechanisms, unequal efforts to achieve GES and the ocean related SDGs targets. Inadequate financial and human resources. Political instability, financial constraints, worsening climate and environmental measures that are perceived as unfair, top-down, or economically harmful, local resistance may also undermine implementation.

Opportunities:

Accelerating progress towards achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) by 2035 is an ambitious endeavour also rich in transformative and major opportunities:

- a) Green Transition Funding create financial opportunities to align economic recovery with marine conservation. Technological Innovation - such as a Satellite remote sensing, AI-based marine monitoring, autonomous underwater vehicles, and blockchain-based fisheries certification - offer powerful new complementary tools to enhance conventional monitoring and assessment procedures, while also contributing to improved enforcement and transparency. Youth Engagement and broader public awareness provide a critical social foundation for long-term stewardship and political support. Finally, sustainable aquaculture, renewable marine energy, eco-tourism, and marine biotechnology can drive Blue Economy Growth and sustainable livelihoods if properly managed.
- b) Securing financial resources for marine protection presents both a challenge and an opportunity for innovation and regional cooperation. Public funding — particularly from national budgets — remains essential alongside considerable EU funding instruments applicable across the Mediterranean region, and international environmental financing mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund, and Climate Investment Funds (CIF). Additional support through voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties, bilateral donors` funding arrangements, philanthropic foundations, and private sector investments also plays a crucial role. To be effective, Financing must be predictable, sustainable, and readily accessible, particularly for developing Mediterranean countries.
- c) Innovative solutions are needed, such as expanding regional trust funds like MedFund, establishing national conservation funds (e.g., Tunisia's Blue Fund), and issuing blue bonds to fund restoration and pollution control. Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes should also be promoted, and private sector engagement must be strengthened through investment pipelines, risk mitigation, and performance standards to drive sustainable marine investments.

8. Successfully navigating these risks while leveraging these opportunities requires adaptive, inclusive, evidence-based, and transparent governance frameworks.

2.2 A Vision for 2035

9. The vision for the Mediterranean by 2035 is clear: a clean, healthy, resilient, and biodiverse marine ecosystem that supports sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic development. Under the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035), this vision is further reinforced.

10. This vision ensures alignment with the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (2026-2035), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. Achieving GES will require a fundamental shift: not merely slowing degradation, but actively restoring marine ecosystems and addressing systemic socio-economic drivers of change. The vision must therefore encompass ecological restoration, climate adaptation, considerable pollution reduction, biodiversity protection, and sustainable use of marine resources.

12. Achieving this vision requires a systemic transformation that integrates scientific evidence, traditional knowledge, community engagement, sustainable investment, and bold political leadership. It demands that all sectors – from fisheries and tourism to energy and transport – transition toward sustainability and resilience, with effective enforcement mechanisms, cross-sectoral integration, and transparent reporting frameworks.

3. The Step Approach for the Implementation of EcAp Policy in the Mediterranean

13. The following six (6) steps are proposed to support the implementation of EcAp Policy and Roadmap in the Mediterranean for the upcoming period 2026 to 2035:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Step I: | Definition of an Ecological Vision for the Mediterranean. |
| Step II: | Setting Common Mediterranean Strategic Goals. |
| Step III: | Development of a Set of Ecological Objectives and Common Indicators with GES Definitions and Targets corresponding to the Vision and Strategic Goals. |
| Step IV: | Implementation of National IMAP ¹ -based Monitoring Programmes for ongoing Assessment and regular updating of Targets. |
| Step V: | Preparation and Issuance of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) |
| Step VI: | Development and Review of relevant National Action Plans (NAPs) and/or Programmes of Measures (PoMs) |

Step I: Definition of an Ecological Vision for the Mediterranean

14. The following Ecological Vision is proposed, in line with the vision of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027 ([Decision IG.25/1](#)):

“Progress towards a healthy, clean, [pollution free²] sustainable and climate resilient Mediterranean Sea and Coast with productive and biologically diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, where the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are achieved through the effective implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the benefit of people and nature.”

¹ Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast

² Proposal from Egypt

Step II: Setting Common Mediterranean Strategic Goals

15. The following Strategic Goals are expected to support and enhance the implementation of EcAp Policy and Roadmap in the Mediterranean for the period 2026 to 2035:

- a) To protect, enhance environmental conditions allowing natural recovery and, where practicable [based on national priorities]³, restore the structure and function of marine and coastal ecosystems thus also protecting biodiversity, in order to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status and allow for their sustainable use.
- b) To reduce pollution in the marine and coastal environment so as to minimize impacts on and risks to human and/or ecosystem health and/or uses of the sea and the coasts [and reduce the pollution from different sources]⁴.
- c) To prevent, reduce and manage the vulnerability of the sea and the coasts to risks induced by human activities, including climate change and natural events.

Step III: Development of a Set of Ecological Objectives and Common Indicators with GES Definitions and Targets corresponding to the Vision and Strategic Goals.

16. A set of 11 Ecological Objectives (EOs) and related Common and/or Candidate Indicators, including GES Definitions and Targets are in place in the framework of EcAp Policy Implementation and related Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Step IV: Implementation of National IMAP-based Monitoring Programmes for ongoing Assessment and regular updating of Targets.

17. Since 2016 national IMAP-based monitoring programmes have been developed and are operational in line with the regional IMAP and its respective Ecological Objectives and Common Indicators. They are expected to be updated till 2026 to streamline the updated IMAP to be approved by COP 24 (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025).

Step V: Preparation and Issuance of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR)

18. The Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR) series builds on a robust conceptual foundation and nationally sourced, quality-assured data submitted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention through IMAP InfoSystem or other reliable sources, to provide an evidence-based reliable assessment of Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and coast, based on a GES /non-GES approach, as defined in the framework of the ecosystem approach and related Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme IMAP.

19. The preparation of the MED QSRs has seen coordinated efforts on data acquisition covering a series of Ecological Objectives and related Common Indicators of IMAP. A noteworthy fact about the MED QSRs is the way they embody the scale-shifting endeavors that is required for effective environmental assessment. The reports blend national data with patterns observed at the regional level. By distilling new knowledge, the report also contributes to other relevant assessment exercises at global, regional and national levels, and the implementation of respective policies and regulatory framework.

20. To date, two (2) different iterations of MED QSR have been issued in 2017 ([Decision IG.23/6 of COP 20](#)) and 2023 ([Decision IG.26/3 of COP 23](#)), whereas this series of reports is planned to be issued following a six (6) year data generation and assessment cycle followed by a 2-year period for document preparation and review through the respective UNEP/MAP governing bodies.

³ Proposal from Egypt

⁴ Proposal from Egypt

Step VI: Development and Review of relevant National Action Plans (NAPs) and/or Programmes of Measures (PoMs)

21. National Action Plans (NAPs) and/or Programmes of Measures (PoMs) have been developed since 2016 for all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention ([Decision IG.22/8](#) of COP 19) and were updated in 2025.

22. A number of important and targeted legally-binding measures with timelines have been adopted in the Mediterranean since 2013 in the framework of the six (6) legally-binding Regional Plans and of the Post-2020 SAPBIO were adopted for the Mediterranean since 2013, as detailed in Appendix 3:

- Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol ([Decision IG.25/8](#)) Regional Plan on Stormwater Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (LBS Protocol) ([Decision IG.26/8](#))
- Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol ([Decision IG.25/9](#))
- Regional Plan on Agriculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol ([Decision IG.26/6](#))
- Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol ([Decision IG.26/7](#))
- Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) ([Decision IG.25/11](#))

3.1 Timeline for Implementing Ecosystem Approach Policy and Roadmap

23. A timeline extended from 2026 to 2035, including projected outputs and key milestones of EcAp Policy and Roadmap implementation is presented in Appendix 2.

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

24. A governance mechanism has been set in place since 2021 to support the implementation of the EcAp in the Mediterranean ([Decision IG.25/03](#)).

25. The Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG), consisting of MAP Focal Points, has a key role in providing guidance and supervising EcAp implementation:

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

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

- a) 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 respectively MED POL, SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC (depending on the IMAP cluster), working to ensure efficient coverage and in-depth discussions and analysis regarding integrated monitoring and assessment.
- b) 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 PlanBleu/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)

27. Informal Online Working Groups (OWG) are composed of experts and scientists nominated by the Contracting Parties and experts mobilized by the Secretariat and respective 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.

28. 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 CG may decide on terms of references including potential list/type of documents for the technical bodies also addressing the need for the effective interaction among different bodies.

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

30. The “Terms of Reference for the CORMONs, CORESA and Online Working Groups and Flow of Interaction between Ecosystem Approach and MAP Governing Bodies” are detailed and presented in Appendices 4 and 5 to the present document.

Appendix 1: List of Ecological Objectives, Common Indicators, GES Definitions and Proposed Targets

Ecological Objective 1 (EO1):		Biological diversity is maintained or enhanced. The quality and occurrence of coastal and marine habitats and the distribution and abundance of coastal and marine species are in line with prevailing physiographic, hydrographic, geographic and climatic conditions	
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
1.1 Key coastal and marine habitats are not being lost (Benthic and Pelagic Habitats ⁵)	1.1.1 Habitat distributional range (Common Indicator 1)	The habitat is present in all its natural distributional range.	State: - The ratio Natural / observed distributional range tends to 1 Pressure - Decrease in the main human causes of the habitat decline
	1.1.2 Condition of the habitat- defining species and communities (Benthic Habitats) (Common Indicator 2)	The population size and density of the habitat-defining species, and species composition of the community, are within reference conditions ensuring the long-term maintenance of the Habitat	State: - No human induced significant deviation of population abundance and density from reference conditions. - The species composition shows a positive trends towards reference condition over an increasing proportion of the habitat (for recovering habitats)
	1.1.3 Condition of the habitat- defining species and communities (Pelagic Habitats ⁶) (Common Indicator 2)	(under development)	(under development)

⁵ The habitat type, including its biotic and abiotic structure and its functions, is not adversely affected due to anthropogenic pressures (e.g. typical species composition and their relative abundance, absence of particularly sensitive or fragile species or species providing a key function, size structure of species). Pelagic broad habitat types (variable salinity, coastal, shelf and oceanic/beyond shelf), if present in the region or subregion: 1. other habitat types could be defined by MS for the MSFD; 2. The typology of pelagic habitats represents a general framework that can be adapted and modified by CPs to integrate local ecosystems features and dynamics

⁶ Phytoplankton and zooplankton abundance, biomass, communities' composition, functional groups provide good means to identify changes in key groups at the plankton community level. On the other hand, GES and Targets will be discussed during the next WG meetings for a proposal for CORMON Biodiversity and Fisheries. Proposal of indicators was reviewed and endorsed during the COMON Biodiversity and Fisheries meeting held in Athens, Greece (7–8 April 2025), as well as at the 17th Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points (Istanbul, Türkiye, 20–22 May 2025).

1.2 Species distribution is maintained (marine mammals, birds, reptiles)	1.2.1 Distributional range (marine mammals) (Common Indicator 3)	<u>Cetaceans</u>: The species are present in all their natural distributional range. <u>Monk Seal</u>: Monk Seal is present along recorded Mediterranean coasts with suitable habitats for the species.	State: • <u>Cetaceans</u>: The distribution of cetaceans remains stable or expanding and the species that experienced reduced distribution in the past are in favorable status of conservation and can recolonize areas with suitable habitats. • <u>Monk Seal</u>: The distribution of Monk Seal remains stable or expanding and the species is recolonizing areas with suitable habitats. Pressure/Response: • Human activities having the potential to exclude marine mammals from their natural habitat within their range area or to damage their habitat are regulated and controlled. • Conservation measures implemented for the zones of importance for cetaceans. • Fisheries management measures that strongly mitigate the risk of incidental taking of monk seals and cetaceans during fishing operations are implemented.
	1.2.2 Distributional range (birds) (Common Indicator 3)	The species continues to occur in all their Mediterranean natural habitat.	State: • No significant reduction in the population distributional range in the Mediterranean in all indicator species which are listed as least-concerned (LC); No significant reduction⁷ in the population distributional range in the Mediterranean in all indicator species which are currently listed with conservation concern. • New colonies are established, and the population is encouraged to spread among several alternative breeding sites, especially for species with conservation concern.
	1.2.3 Distributional range (reptiles) (Common Indicator 3)	The species continues to occur in all its natural range in the Mediterranean, including nesting, mating, feeding and wintering and developmental (where different to those of adults) sites	State: • Turtle distribution is not significantly affected by human activities • Turtles continue to nest in all known nesting sites Pressure/Response: • Protection of known nesting, mating, foraging, wintering and developmental turtle sites. • Human activities having the potential to exclude marine turtles from their range area are regulated and controlled. • The potential impact of climate change is assessed

⁷ Comment received from Malta during the 11th Meeting of Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG): With regards to indicator 1.2.2 – Malta questions the applicability of ‘significant increase’ to all species under consideration, particularly to species which might be characterized by localized distribution associated with available habitat types. We would thus recommend keeping the original text ‘No significant reduction in the population’.

1.3 Population size of selected species is maintained (marine mammals, birds, reptiles)	1.3.1 Population abundance (marine mammals) (Common Indicator 4)	<u>Cetaceans</u>: The species population has abundance levels allowing to qualify to Least Concern Category of IUCN. <u>Monk Seal</u>: Number of individuals by colony allows to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status.⁸	State: - No human-induced mortality is causing a decrease in breeding population size or density. - Populations recover towards natural levels.
	1.3.2 Population abundance (birds) (Common Indicator 4)	The species population has abundance levels allowing qualifying to Least Concern Category of the IUCN Red List or has abundance levels that are improving and moving away from the more critical IUCN category.	State: - No human induced decrease in population abundance. Population recovers towards natural levels where depleted. - The total number of individuals is sparse enough in different spots.
	1.3.3 Population abundance (reptiles) (Common Indicator 4)	The population size allows to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status taking into account all life stages of the population.	State: - No human induced decrease in population abundance - Population recovers towards natural levels where depleted
1.4 Population condition of selected species is maintained (marine mammals, birds, reptiles)	1.4.1 Population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/ mortality rates) (marine mammals) (Common Indicator 5)	<u>Cetaceans</u>: preliminary assessment of incidental catch, prey depletion and other human induced mortality followed by implementation of appropriate measures to mitigate these threats <u>Monk Seal</u>: decreasing trends in human induced mortality (e.g., direct killings, pupping/resting habitat /disturbance/occupation)	State: - Decreasing trends in human induced mortality Pressure/Response: <u>Cetaceans</u>: Appropriate measure implemented to mitigate incidental catch, prey depletion and other human induced mortality <u>Monk Seal</u>: Appropriate measures implemented to mitigate direct killing and incidental catches and to preclude habitat destruction.

	1.4.2 Population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/ mortality rates) (birds) (Common Indicator 5)	Species populations are in good conditions: Natural levels of breeding success & acceptable levels of survival of young and adult birds.	State: - Populations of all taxa, particularly those with IUCN threatened status are maintained in long-term following the indication of population models. Pressure/Response: - Incidental catch mortality and other anthropogenic pressures are at negligible levels, particularly for species of conservation concern
	1.4.3 Population demographic characteristics (e.g. body size or age class structure, sex ratio, fecundity rates, survival/mortality rates) (reptiles) (Common Indicator 5)	Low mortality induced by incidental catch. Favorable sex ratio and no decline in hatching rates.	Response: Measures to mitigate incidental catches in turtles implemented

Ecological Objective 2 (EO2): Non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystem			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
2.1 Invasive non-indigenous species introductions are minimized	2.1.1 Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence, and spatial distribution of non-indigenous species (NIS) particularly invasive, non-indigenous species notably in risk areas (EO2, in relation to the main vectors and pathways of spreading of such species) (Common Indicator 6)	Decreasing abundance of introduced NIS in risk areas	State: Abundance of NIS introduced by human activities reduced to levels giving no detectable impact.

Ecological Objective 3 (EO3) ⁹ : Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
3.1. The Spawning Stock Biomass is at a level at which reproduction capacity is not impaired	3.1. Spawning Stock Biomass (Common Indicator 7)	Achieving or maintaining good environmental status requires that SSB values are equal to or above SSBMSY, the level capable of producing maximum sustainable yield.	State: • $B > B_{thr}$
3.2. Total catch of commercial species does not exceed the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and the bycatch is reduced.	3.2. Total landing (Common Indicator 8) -	Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock.	State: • Long-Term High Yields • $Catch < MSY$ Pressure: • Reduction of IUU catch • Minimization of discarding and incidental catch of vulnerable species
3.3. Fishing mortality in the stock does not exceed the level that allows MSY ($F \leq F_{MSY}$).	3.3 Fishing mortality (Common Indicator 9)	Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock	Pressure: • F_{MSY} • $F_{0.1}$ a proxy of F_{MSY} (more precautionary)
3.4. Fishing effort should be reduced by means of a multi-annual management plan until there is an evidence for stock recovery	3.4 Fishing effort (Common Indicator 10)	Total effort does not exceed the level of effort allowing the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)	(under development)

⁹ Regarding EO3 consultations are ongoing with GFCM and hopefully progress is expected to by the 11th EcAp CG Meeting.

3.5. Stable or positive trend in CPUE Declines in CPUE may mean that the fish population cannot support the level of harvesting. Increases in CPUE may mean that a fish stock is recovering and more fishing effort can be applied.	3.5 Catch per unit effort (CPUE) (Common Indicator 11)	Catch per unit effort (CPUE) is an indirect measure of the abundance of target species. Changes in the catch per unit effort are inferred to signify changes to the target species abundance	(under development)
3.6 Populations of selected commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within biologically safe limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock	3.6 Bycatch of vulnerable and non-target species (EO1 and EO3) (Common Indicator 12)	The abundance / trends of populations of seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles and sharks key species (selected according to their actual and total dependence on the marine environment, and to their ecological representativeness) is stable or not reducing in a statistically significant way taking into account the natural variability compared to the current situation.	(Work in progress within GFCM) State: <u>Cetaceans</u>: No unsustainable impact at population level. Decreasing trends in human induced mortality. Pressure: <u>Cetaceans</u>: Appropriate measure implemented to mitigate incidental catch, prey depletion and other human induced mortality. Monk seal: Appropriate measures implemented to mitigate direct killing and incidental catches and to preclude habitat destruction.

Ecological Objective 4 (EO4): Alterations to components of marine food webs caused by resource extraction or human- induced environmental changes do not have long- term adverse effects on food web dynamics and related viability			
Operational Objective	Indicator ¹⁰	GES Definition ¹¹	GES Targets
4.1 Diversity of ecosystem and dynamics across all trophic groups can ensure long-term biomass-abundance of the species	4.1.1-Biomass or abundance of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups ¹² (Common Indicator 29)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.1.2 Average of Mean Trophic Level of species/genera/taxa or trophic groups from biomass and/or catches (Common Indicator 30)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.1.3 Biodiversity indices (Common Indicator 31)	(under development)	(under development)
4.2 Proportion of selected group of species is balanced as in healthy food webs	4.2.1 Pelagic/Demersal ratio (Common Indicator 32)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.2.2 NIS/Demersal ratio (Common Indicator 33)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.2.3 Zooplankton/ phytoplankton ratio (Common Indicator 34)	(under development)	(under development)

¹⁰ Biomass (i.e. Kg/km²), abundance (i.e. Number of individuals/km²) and size (i.e. total length of body) of species can be obtained for example for many demersal species from MEDITS data and GFCM stock assessment reporting datasets. B) commercial catches of target species and production of fisheries can be obtained for example by using FAO data (FishstatJ). C) Trophic level of species can be obtained from large dataset such as Fishbase and Lifebase. Indicators belonging to objective 4.1 are useful for a first evaluation of potential anthropogenic impact on the structure of food webs as a whole system by specifically looking at simple data such as biomass or abundance of species groups (indicator 4.1.1), trophodynamics (indicator 4.1.2) and diversity such as alpha and beta indices (indicator 4.1.3). Indicators belonging to operational objective 4.2 focus on some food web compartments to have more specific evidence of potential anthropogenic impacts such as detrimental effect of bottom fisheries and/or eutrophication (indicator 4.2.1), increase of non-indigenous species (indicator 4.2.2), changes in net primary production affecting the base of food webs (indicator 4.2.3 and 4.2.4), depletion of large megafaunal organisms (indicator 4.2.5)

¹¹ GES and targets will be discussed at the next meetings of the Biodiversity Online Working Group / CORMONs as soon as other progress from EU experience (MSFD, OSPAR, HELCOM) or other pilot assessments allow a proposal to be made.

	4.2.4 Size distribution of trophic groups (Common Indicator 35)	(under development)	(under development)
	4.2.5 Production of Megafauna (*Megafauna variables from EO5) (Common Indicator 36)	(under development)	(under development)

Ecological Objective 5 (EO5): Human-induced eutrophication is prevented, especially adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
5.1 Human introduction of nutrients in the marine environment is not conducive to eutrophication	5.1.1 Concentration of key nutrients in the water column (Common Indicator 13)	Concentrations of nutrients in the euphotic layer are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climate conditions	State: - Reference nutrients concentrations according to the local hydrological, chemical, and morphological characteristics of the un- impacted marine region. - Decreasing trend of nutrients concentrations in water column of human impacted areas statistically defined, considering the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales. Pressure: - Reduction of BOD emissions from land-based sources. - Reduction of nutrients emissions from land-based sources.
5.2 Direct and indirect effects of nutrient over-enrichment are prevented	5.2.1 Chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column (Common Indicator 14)	Natural levels of algal biomass, water transparency and oxygen concentrations in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic, and weather conditions	State: - Chlorophyll a concentration in high-risk areas below the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales. - Decreasing trend in Chl-a concentrations in high-risk areas affected by human activities. - Index of turbidity below the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales to be set upon defining the turbidity assessment criteria¹³. - Increasing trend of transparency in areas impacted by human activities¹⁴. - Dissolved oxygen concentrations in high-risk areas below the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales to be set upon defining the oxygen concentrations assessment criteria¹⁵. - Increasing trend in dissolved oxygen concentrations in areas impacted by human activities¹⁶.

¹³ Transferred from Indicator 5.2.2, Decision IG. 21/3, Annex I

¹⁴ ibidem

¹⁵ Transferred from Indicator 5.3.1, Decision IG. 21/3, Annex I. The current revision includes the reinstatement of targets for turbidity, water transparency and dissolved oxygen concentrations, in order to align with the established GES definition for Common Indicator 14 on Chlorophyll-a, as agreed upon in the 2017 MED QSR: "Natural levels of algal biomass, water transparency, and oxygen concentrations in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic, and weather conditions. As originally defined in Decision IG.21/3, the present document reconsiders the original GES definitions which identified turbidity, water transparency and dissolved oxygen as supporting parameters in the assessment of GES based on chlorophyll-a concentrations.

¹⁶ ibidem

Ecological Objective 6 (EO6): Sea-floor integrity is maintained, especially in priority benthic habitats			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
6.1 All benthic broad habitat types maintain their natural extent, with limited loss due to anthropogenic pressures	6.1.1 Extent of physical loss of natural habitat (Common Indicator 37)	The extent of loss of each habitat type, resulting from anthropogenic pressures, does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of the habitat type in the assessment area.	Extent of physical loss per habitat type does not exceed [X%] of each habitat's natural extent.
6.2 All benthic broad habitat types maintain their natural structure, functions and biodiversity	6.2.1 Extent of adverse effects on benthic habitat ¹⁷ (Common Indicator 38)	The extent of adverse effects from anthropogenic pressures on the condition of each habitat type, including alteration to its biotic and abiotic structure and its functions (e.g., its typical species composition, absence of particularly sensitive or fragile species or species providing a key function, size structure of species; carbon sequestration capacity), does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of the habitat type in the assessment area.	Extent of adverse effects from anthropogenic pressures ¹⁸ per habitat type does not exceed [Y%] of each habitat's natural extent.

¹⁷ This may comprise several indicators which address specific pressures

¹⁸ Value Y% for adverse effects includes value X% for physical habitat loss. Value Y% encompasses any loss of biogenic habitat and changes to habitats at EUNIS level 2 that are defined as habitat loss under MSFD ([MSFD GD19, 2022, version 12-12-2023](#)) because such losses can be more much extensive than losses due to physical structures.

Ecological Objective 7 (EO7): Alteration of hydrographic conditions does not adversely affect coastal and marine ecosystems.			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
7.1 Impacts to the marine and coastal ecosystem induced by climate variability and/or climate change are minimized	7.1.1 Large scale changes in circulation patterns, temperature, pH, and salinity distribution (not activated)	Ecosystems are resilient enough to adapt to climate change.	Anthropogenic impacts which may alter ecosystems' adaptive capacity are reduced.
	7.1.2 Long term changes in sea level (not activated)		
7.2 Alterations due to permanent constructions on the coast and watersheds, marine installations and seafloor anchored structures are minimized	7.2.1 Impact on the circulation caused by the presence of structures (not activated)	With new structures in place, near shore wave- and current patterns maintain as natural as possible.	Marine and shore based new structures planned, constructed and operated in a way to maintain the natural wave and current pattern as much as possible
	7.2.2 Location and extent of the habitats potentially impacted by hydrographic alterations ¹⁹ (Common Indicator 15)	Negative impacts due to new structure are minimal with no influence on the larger scale coastal and marine system	Planning of new structures takes into account all possible mitigation measures in order to minimize the impact on coastal and marine ecosystem and its services integrity and cultural/historic assets. Where possible, promote ecosystem health.
7.3 Impacts of alterations due to changes in freshwater flow from watersheds, seawater inundation and coastal freatic intrusion, brine input from desalination plants and seawater intake and outlet are minimized	7.3.3 Changes in key species distribution due to the effects of seawater intake and outlet (not activated)	Water circulation in coastal and marine habitats, and changes in the levels of salinity and temperature are within thresholds, to maintain natural/ecological processes	Site specific tolerable limits of key species in immediate proximity of seawater intake and outlet structures are considered while planning, constructing and operating such infrastructure

¹⁹ Current Common Indicator 15 of IMAP.

Ecological Objective 8 (EO8): The natural dynamics of coastal areas are maintained and coastal ecosystems and landscapes are preserved			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
8.1 The natural dynamics nature of coastal areas are maintained, and coastal ecosystems and landscapes are preserved	8.1.1 Areal extent of coastal erosion and coastline instability <i>(not activated)</i>	Coastal resilience maintained and improved; and coastal uses made adaptable to coastal erosion.	Impacts of coastal erosion caused by man-made factors anticipated and prevented through coastal erosion management allowing for natural fluctuation of the coast and minimizing coastal erosion risk.
	8.1.2 Changes in sediment dynamics along the coastline <i>(not activated)</i>	Long term sediment dynamics is within natural patterns.	Disturbance in sediment inflows reduced through improved integrated river basin management and coastal sand management practices.
	8.1.4 Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of humanmade structures. ²⁰ (Common Indicator 16)	Physical disturbance to coastal areas induced by human activities should be minimized.	Negative impacts of human activities on coastal areas are minimized through appropriate management measures
8.2 Integrity and diversity of coastal ecosystems, landscapes and their geomorphology are preserved	8.2.1 Land cover change ²¹ (Common Indicator 25)	Linear coastal development and low-lying terrain coastal development minimized, with perpendicular development being in balance with integrity and diversity of coastal ecosystems and landscapes. Mixed land-use structure achieved in predominantly man- made coastal landscapes.	Proposed targets should be considered as general recommendations to be adapted to regional/local specificities and knowledge: - No further construction within the setback zone and avoid further construction in low-lying coastal terrain - Change of coastal land use structure, dominance of urban land use reversed - Keep, and increase landscape diversity

²⁰ Current Common Indicator 16 of IMAP.

²¹ Current Candidate Common Indicator 25 of IMAP, which is recommended to become a common indicator in the Revised Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (UNEP/MED WG. 595/Inf.4)

Ecological Objective 9 (EO9): Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
9.1 Concentration of priority contaminants is kept within acceptable limits and does not increase	9.1.1 Concentration of key harmful contaminants measured in the relevant matrix (Common Indicator 17)	Level of pollution is below a determined threshold defined for the area and species.	State: - Concentrations of specific contaminants below either the boundary limit between GES and non-GES classes of the assessment scales or below reference concentrations (from other sources). - No increasing trends in contaminants concentrations in sediment and biota from human impacted areas, statistically defined. Pressure: - Reduction of contaminants emissions from land-based sources.
9.2 Effects of released contaminants are minimized	9.2.1 Level of pollution effects of key contaminants where a cause-and-effect relationship has been established (Common Indicator 18)	Concentrations of contaminants are not giving rise to negative effects on health status of marine biota	State: - Contaminants effects below thresholds. Pressure: - Decreasing trend in the operational releases of oil and other contaminants from coastal, maritime and offshore activities
9.3 Acute pollution events are prevented, and their impacts are minimized	9.3.1 Occurrence, origin (where possible), and extent of acute pollution events (e.g. slicks from oil, oil products and hazardous substances) and their impact on biota affected by this pollution (Common Indicator 19)	Occurrence of acute pollution events are reduced to the minimum.	Pressure: Decreasing trend in the occurrences of acute pollution events. Achieve the elimination of intentional pollution of the marine environment by oil and other harmful and noxious substances (HNS) and the minimization of accidental discharge of such substances.
9.4 Levels of known harmful contaminants in major types of seafood do not exceed established standards.	9.4.1 Actual levels of contaminants that have been detected and number of contaminants which have exceeded maximum regulatory levels in commonly consumed seafood (Common Indicator 20)	Concentrations of contaminants are within the regulatory limits for consumption by humans.	State: - Concentrations of contaminants in foodstuffs are below the UNEP/MAP Environmental Assessment Criteria approved for the protection of human health, . - Decreasing trend in the frequency of cases of seafood samples above the approved UNEP/MAP Environmental Assessment Criteria

9.5 Water quality in bathing waters and other recreational areas does not undermine human health	9.5.1 Percentage of intestinal enterococci concentration measurements within established standards (Common Indicator 21)	Concentrations of intestinal enterococci are within established standards	Increasing trend in the percentage of intestinal enterococci concentration measurements that fall in the approved GES categories as established in Decision IG.20/9 and the EU 2006/7 Directive.
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Ecological Objective 10 (EO10): Marine and coastal litter do not adversely affect coastal and marine environment			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
10.1 The impacts related to properties and quantities of marine litter in the marine and coastal environment are minimized	10.1.1 Trends in the amount of litter washed ashore and/or deposited on coastlines (including analysis of its composition, spatial distribution and, where possible, source) (Common Indicator 22)	Number/amount of marine litter items on the coastline do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life and ecosystem services	Decreasing trend in the number of/amount of marine litter (items) deposited on the coast
	10.1.2 Trends in amounts of litter in the water column, including micro-plastics, and on the seafloor (Common Indicator 23)	Number/amount of marine litter items in the water surface and the seafloor do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life, ecosystem services and do not create risk to navigation	Decreasing trend in the number/amount of marine litter items in the water surface and the seafloor
	10.1.3 Trends in the amount of litter coming from riverine sources (Common Indicator 28)	Number/amount of litter items on riverbanks and water surface in estuaries do not have negative impacts on human health, marine life, ecosystem services and do not create risk to navigation	Decreasing trend in the number/amount of litter items deposited on riverbanks and in water surface in estuaries
10.2 Impacts of litter on marine life are controlled to the maximum extent practicable	10.2.1 Trends in the amount of litter ingested by marine organisms and in the number of individuals entangled in marine litter (Common Indicator 24)	- Amount (g) of marine litter ingested by marine organisms do not alter populations of sentinel organisms - Number of individuals entangled in marine litter do not alter populations of sentinel organisms	- Decreasing trend in the stomach content of the sentinel species. - Decreasing frequency of occurrence of sea turtles entangled in marine litter.

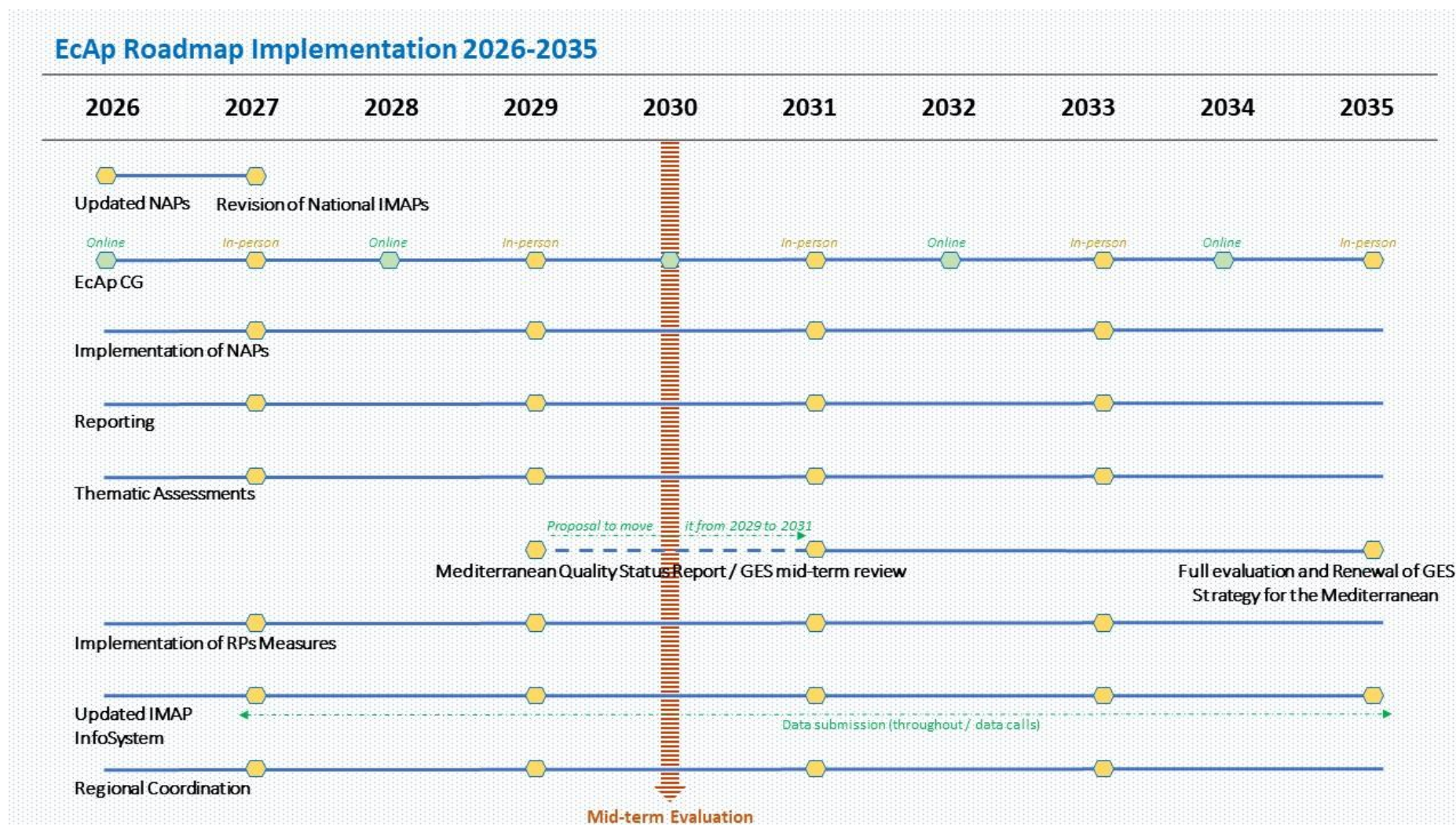
Ecological Objective 11 (EO 11): Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets
11.1 Energy inputs into the marine, environment, especially noise from, human activities, are minimized ²²	11.1.1. Proportion of days and geographical distribution where loud, low, and mid-frequency impulsive sounds exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animal (Candidate Common Indicator 26) ²³	Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems	State: The extent (%) of habitat of noise-sensitive species within the assessment area that is impacted by impulsive noise events, for a limited amount of time, is below thresholds.
11.2. Energy inputs into the marine, environment, especially noise from, human activities, are minimized	11.2.1. Levels of continuous low frequency sounds with the use of models as appropriate (Candidate Common Indicator 27) ²⁴	Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems	State: The extent (%) of the assessment area which is above levels causing disturbance to sensitive marine animal is below limits, or such limits are exceeded for a limited amount of time.

²² Decision IG.20/4, Annex II

²³ Decision IG.20/4, Annex II; IG.22/7

²⁴ ibidem

Appendix 2: Timeline for EcAp Roadmap and Policy Implementation (2026 – 2035)



Appendix 3: Main Scope of Actions Referring to the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy (2026-2035)

1. **Protect and Restore Marine Biodiversity:** Expanding Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as well as establishing Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) with the aim to protect at least 30% of the Mediterranean Sea by 2030 is a cornerstone goal, as reinforced by the 2023 MED QSR. However, beyond spatial targets, effective management must be prioritized. Management plans, surveillance, and enforcement capacity for MPAs requires significant improvement, including their integration into national policies. Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) should receive targeted conservation attention. Restoration of degraded habitats, especially seagrass meadows, in particular the *Posidonia* seagrass meadows *inter alia*, coralligenous reefs, and coastal lagoons, will enhance biodiversity and bolster climate resilience. The dissemination of best practices should be ensured to effectively prevent, control, and manage non-indigenous species. Priority must be given to reversing habitat degradation trends identified by the 2023 MED QSR, particularly in coastal and estuarine environments. These efforts will contribute to Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework through the implementation of the Post-2020 SAP BIO for the marine and coastal environment, adopted at the COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention. Decisive and coordinated actions are also needed to promote sustainable fisheries and intensify efforts against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which continues to undermine the sustainable use of marine resources in the Mediterranean.

2. **Prevent and Reduce Pollution:** Emphasis must be placed on addressing pollution at its sources, particular through the implementation of the 2026–2035 National Action Plans (NAPs) and Programmes of Measures (PoMs), serving as key operational policy tools for the effective enforcement on the LBS Protocol-based suite of Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management, Marine Litter Management, Agriculture Management, Aquaculture Management, and Urban Stormwater Management. Their implementation is essential for achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea. It is also crucial to ensure coherence between the NAPs and other relevant national policies and strategies. Continued emphasis must be placed on identifying and addressing the environmental impacts stemming from key sectors—agriculture, industry, aquaculture, tourism, infrastructure, energy production, ports, maritime works and structures, and maritime activities—alongside the growing impacts of climate change. These combined pressures continue to hinder progress toward achieving GES of the Mediterranean marine environment.

3. Priority should be given to assessing the impacts of pollution pressures, by ensuring regular monitoring of the IMAP list of mandatory organic and inorganic contaminants, biological effects, microplastics, pharmaceutical residues, and contaminants of emerging concern. This should be complemented by identifying legacy pollutants and encouraging pollution prevention rather relying solely on environmental remediation. Upgrading and further developing assessment criteria for contaminants and biomarkers, including through the integration of toxicity consideration into future Good Environmental Status (GES) assessments, and combining chemical and biological effects monitoring and evaluation—alongside improving data availability and quality—remain key priorities to accelerate the achievement of GES, as highlighted by the 2023 MED QSR and the revised IMAP.

4. Nutrient pollution reduction must be addressed by promoting sustainable agricultural, aquaculture, industry, tourism, upgrading wastewater treatment facilities, limiting fertilizers use, and enforcing stricter pollution controls. Establishing assessment criteria for GES regarding nutrients across all Mediterranean sub-regions, defining water typologies, and ensuring the application of statistical tools for data validation and calculation of assessment criteria are essential. Additionally, incorporating satellite-derived chlorophyll-a data as a supplementary parameter alongside in situ measurements remains a priority to support accelerated progress toward GES related to nutrients, as identified in the 2023 MED QSR and the revised IMAP.

5. The 2023 MED QSR also recommends integrating nature-based solutions, such as restoring wetlands, into pollution control strategies. Following the anticipated adoption of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution—which adopts a comprehensive approach addressing the entire lifecycle of plastics—a zero-tolerance approach toward marine litter must be enforced. To achieve this, the implementation of circular economy principles, extended producer responsibility schemes, and robust wastewater and waste management infrastructures is essential. This includes recycling and material recovery facilities, as well as best practices for plastic waste management.

6. Effective implementation of the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) in the North Western Mediterranean Sea—a vital measure for protecting marine mammals from collision risks—requires collective effort. Equally important is the strict enforcement of the Sulfur Emission Control Area (SECA) regulations, alongside exploring the feasibility of establishing a Nitrogen Oxide Emission Control Area (NECA). Together, these actions are essential to minimizing the impacts of maritime transport on human health and the marine environment.

7. ***Prevent and Reduce Adverse Effects on the Coastline and Habitats:*** All countries should continue to invest substantial efforts in monitoring and assessing changes in hydrographical conditions, as well as the adverse impacts of man-made structures on coastal ecosystems and landscapes. Priority should be given to the restoration of threatened coastal ecosystems and habitats, the definition of country-specific, sub-regional, and regional GES conditions, and the development of climate change-related indicators, as well as those measuring coastline changes. Efforts should also include the creation of a Digital Spatial Database and the standardization and harmonization of mapping methods across countries.

8. ***Develop and implement new indicators:*** Achieving GES for Hydrography and Noise Pollution will need comprehensive digital spatial database, simplified reporting methods, consistent monitoring, data quality, management measures, and apply noise reduction technologies for maritime traffic and seismic surveys.

9. ***Enhance Climate Resilience:*** Climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures need to be mainstreamed into all policies, including maritime and coastal planning policies, compatible with a trajectory to limit the temperature increase to 1,5°C above pre-industrial level. The 2023 MED QSR stresses the need to protect blue carbon ecosystems, such as seagrass meadows, salt marshes, and mangroves, as key climate mitigation assets. Their protection not only sequesters carbon but also strengthens coastal resilience against erosion and storm surges. Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) must integrate climate vulnerability assessments to future-proof infrastructure and socio-economic activities. Adaptation strategies must be community-led, ecosystem-based, and inclusive of vulnerable groups such as small-scale fishers and coastal communities.

10. ***Strengthen Governance and Regional Cooperation under the Mediterranean Action Plan – Barcelona Convention:*** Institutional capacities must be enhanced at both national and regional levels. The 2023 MED QSR highlights the need for improved cross-sectoral coordination, integration of marine and coastal policies. It emphasizes the importance of strengthening synergies between the Mediterranean Action Plan – Barcelona Convention, EU MSFD implementation, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, Regional Seas Conventions, RAMOGE, PELAGOS, and other frameworks. Effective implementation of concrete initiatives and actions—such as those within the “A Mediterranean: A Model Sea by 2030” Plan of Action (PAMEx), the BlueMed Partnership, the MedFund, and the WestMED initiative—is critical. Compliance and enforcement mechanisms must be improved to ensure that marine conservation commitments are translated into real-world outcomes. Special attention should be given to youth engagement in environmental issues, including through the modernization of education programs focused on sustainable development and global citizenship, in both formal and informal settings. Transparency, public access to information, public participation - including that of civil society, -and stakeholder co-management approaches need to

be mainstreamed into governance systems. All actors—local authorities, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector, including industry—should embody a spirit of solidarity and strengthened regional collaboration to secure a clean, healthy, and sustainable marine environment.

11. ***Strengthening the Science-Policy Interface:*** Efforts will continue to focus on advancing integrated monitoring and assessment of the coastal and marine environment in a cost-effective manner, aligned with the EcAp Ecological Objectives and IMAP Common Indicators. These efforts aim to further enhance a comprehensive and integrated understanding of ecosystem conditions and the impacts of various pressures, including physical loss and disturbance, non-indigenous species, nutrient enrichment, species removal, and others.

12. It is therefore essential to continue embedding the science-policy interface as a cornerstone of EcAp policy implementation. To this end, the continued development and application of science-based management practices remain crucial. In particular, this should be achieved through the promotion and implementation of tools such as Source-to-Sea Management, Marine Spatial Planning, Nature-Based Solutions, Ocean Ecosystem Accounting, Mapping of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems, and the Compendium for Coast and Sea. These tools have considerable potential to enhance the protection, conservation, and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems; support integrated coastal and ocean management; contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and strengthen disaster risk reduction.

13. ***Enable a Sustainable Blue Economy:*** Economic growth in the Mediterranean must be decoupled from environmental degradation, including through streamlining EcAp into the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), coast resilience and source-to-sea approach. Sustainable, low-carbon maritime transport, responsible coastal tourism, offshore renewable energy, and marine biotechnology sectors must be scaled up with clear environmental safeguards. A stronger sustainability criteria for emerging blue economy sectors, such as offshore aquaculture and renewable energy, ensuring that new economic activities do not undermine GES objectives.

14. The above scope of actions is currently addressed through the measures defined in the framework of the legally-binding Regional Plans and Post-2020 SAPBIO, adopted in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System (Table 1).

Table 1: Specific measures and timeline for their implementation in the framework of the legally-binding Regional Plans and Post-2020 SAPBIO, adopted in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention System.

Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Decision IG.25/3)	
Urban Wastewater Treatment	
Art. V (6): All agglomerations are provided with collecting systems for urban wastewater for those with a population equivalent (p.e.) of more than 15,000	2025
Art. V (6): All agglomerations are provided with collecting systems for urban wastewater for those with a population equivalent (p.e.) between 2000 and 15,000	2030
Art. V (7): Adopt emission limit values as provided for in Appendix I of the Regional Plan for: (i) discharge of effluents from urban wastewater treatment plants to the environment; (ii) reuse of reclaimed wastewater for agriculture irrigation; and (iii) discharge of industrial wastewater into collecting systems and urban wastewater treatment plants	2025
Art. V (9): All discharges from agglomerations over than 15,000 p.e. are subject to the extent possible to tertiary treatment provided that the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the recipient environment is maintained	2030
Art. V (9): All discharges from agglomerations of size of between 2000 and 15,000 p.e. are subject to the extent possible to secondary treatment provided that the Good Environmental Status (GES) of the recipient environment is maintained	2030
Art. V (15): Competent authority or appropriate body adopt emission limit values appropriate to the nature of industry discharging industrial effluents to collecting systems connected to urban WWTPs	2025
Art. V (16): Industrial wastewater discharged into collecting systems and urban WWTPs shall meet, as a minimum, the emission limit values	2035
Other Measures²⁵:	
Art. V (10): Promote nature-based solutions to the extent possible for small agglomerations of less than 2000 p.e.	n/a
Art. V (11): Ensure that urban wastewater treatment plants, built to comply with the requirements of Articles 7 and 8, are designed, constructed, operated and maintained to ensure sufficient performance under normal local climatic conditions	n/a
Art. V (12): Ensure that WWTPs are designed to account for seasonal variations of loads; volume and characteristics of the local municipal wastewater; and limitation of pollution of receiving water.	n/a
Art. V (13.i): Implement measures for segregating collecting systems for storm water and municipal wastewater, if technically and economically feasible;	n/a
Art. V (13.ii): Prevent or if not possible minimize sewage and wastewater treatment plants' overflow due to rainwater penetration and flooding;	n/a
Art. V (13.iii): Address impacts of points of discharge of treated wastewater;	n/a
Art. V (13.iv): Adopt tools for conservation of surface water runoff in built environment;	n/a
Art. V (13.v): Reduce pollutant loads and litter in storm water runoff from municipal and industrial sources.	n/a
Art. V (14.i): Promote the reuse of reclaimed wastewater.	n/a
Art. V (14.ii): Implement wastewater reuse systems	n/a
Art. V (17): Take measures to ensure regular monitoring of discharged effluent wastewater, receiving water, reclaimed wastewater and industrial effluents	n/a
Art. VI (18): Collaborate to implement, exchange and share best practices directly or with the support of the Secretariat	n/a
Art. VIII (18): Report on implementation of measures stipulated in this Regional Plan in line with the reporting requirement and timelines provided in Article 26 of the Convention and Article 13, paragraph 2(d) of the LBS Protocol	n/a
Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management	
Art. V (7): Contracting Parties shall adopt Class A biosolids suitable for use as fertilizer for agricultural crops having met the pathogen reduction requirements set in Table 1 by treatment processes	2025
Art. V (8): Contracting Parties shall adopt limit values for heavy metals to ensure that use would not affect human health and the environment as provided for in Table 2 (heavy metals in biosolids) and Table 3 (heavy metals in soil)	2025
Art. V (12): Contracting Parties shall establish the required infrastructure for the implementation of the requirements of the applicable measures of this Regional Plan with regards to the use for agricultural land applications and/or for energy/nutrient recovery	2025

²⁵ Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally commit to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines

Other Measures²⁶:	
Art. V (7): Set classes for sludge with limit values for pathogen contents for biosolids to ensure that use would not affect human health and the environment	n/a
Art. V (7): Consider adopting Class B biosolids suitable for use as fertilizer for non-food crops having met the pathogen reduction requirements set in Table 1 by treatment processes	n/a
Art. V (9): Specify the conditions for use of sludge in its different states (stabilized, treated, untreated) taking into consideration the proximity of sludge application to various types of human activities and civil structure facilities/natural features	n/a
Art. V (10): In the event that limit values set in Tables 1 to 3 (pathogens and heavy metals in biosolids and soil) cannot be met, the Contracting Parties shall apply alternative means to agricultural use including incineration and regulated landfilling	n/a
Art. V (11): Apply adequate treatment processes to reduce volatile organic compounds and diminish possible odor emissions in the different stages of sludge treatment, transport and application in agriculture and other suitable uses	n/a
Art. V (13): Reduce energy costs and increase water savings during treatment by using BAT and applying BEP	n/a
Art. V (14): Implement technologies targeting energy efficient treatment of sludge such as pretreatment of sludge, solar drying, bio-drying, composting, etc.	n/a
Art. V (15): Promote implementation of adaptation measures for climate change protection	n/a
Art. V (16): Take measures to ensure monitoring of the quality of sewage sludge in the WWTP or after treatment outside the WWTP	n/a
Art. VI (17): Exchange and share best practices directly or with the support of the Secretariat including BAT, BEP, sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, resource efficiency, WEF Nexus in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the urban wastewater treatment plants	n/a
Art. VIII (19): Report on implementation of measures stipulated in this Regional Plan in line with the reporting requirement and timelines provided in Article 26 of the Convention and Article 13, paragraph 2(d) of the LBS Protocol	n/a

Regional Plan on Stormwater Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (LBS Protocol) (Decision IG.26/8)	
Art. V (6a): Establish a regulatory framework to develop stormwater management plans that include nonstructural and structural stormwater control measures	2028
Art. V (6b): Establish a regulatory framework to ensure that stormwater and other wastewater discharge plans, (in case of combined stormwater and sewage collection systems), are based on drainage boundaries instead of administrative boundaries	2028
Art. V (6c): Establish a regulatory framework to regulate future land use development aiming to maintain as much of its natural hydrology in order to minimize stormwater runoff, increase its infiltration, and harvest where possible rainwater for domestic or industrial or any other uses	2028
Art. V (6d): Establish a regulatory framework to identify the sources that contribute pollutants through stormwater and select the measures for pollution reduction	2028
Art. V (6e): Establish a regulatory framework to establish monitoring programmes for recipient water (e.g. lakes, water streams, groundwater, etc.), as appropriate in order to undertake the proper mitigation measures	2028
Art. V (7a): Implement the approved stormwater management plans by considering the implementation of Green Infrastructure (GI) that complements the piped networks in existing urban areas serviced with separate collection systems and Best Management Practices (BMP) in newly developed areas	2030
Art. V (7b): Implement the approved stormwater management plans by considering the construction of separate systems for municipal wastewaters (blackwater from toilets, greywater and industrial wastewater) and urban runoff in newly developed residential, commercial and industrial areas	2030
Art. V (7c): Implement the approved stormwater management plans by reducing the adverse impacts of untreated wastewater overflows discharging from existing combined collection systems of rainwater or snow melt, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe	2030
Art. V (8a): Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by maintaining an updated inventory list on storm water infrastructure and sources of pollution as well as sewage storage capacity structures	2028
Art. V (8b): Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by planning and implementing regular road maintenance, street sweeping, storm-drain maintenance, stormwater hotline response, and landscape and park maintenance	2028
Art. V (8c): Implement adequate seasonal maintenance of stormwater collection systems by performing regular monitoring of quantity and quality stormwater at key urban stormwater structures	2028

²⁶ Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally commit to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines

Amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land Based Sources Protocol (Decision IG.25/9)	
Art. 8 (12): Take adequate regulatory measures to integrate the informal sector into regulated waste collection and recycling schemes	2028
Art. 8 (13): Establish, as appropriate, a regulatory framework for compostable plastics to be integrated into national waste management policies	2025
Art. 9 (15.2): Apply prevention measures aiming to achieve, to the extent possible, a circular economy for plastics (Regulate the use of primary microplastics, Implement Sustainable Procurement Policies, Establish voluntary agreements, Establish procedures and manufacturing methodologies, Identify single-use plastic products, Set targets to phase out production and use, increase the reuse and recycling, Phase-out chemical additives used in plastic products, Promote the use of recycled plastics, substitute plastics, Implement standards for product labelling, Establish dedicated collection and recycling schemes, minimize the amount of marine litter associated with fishing/aquaculture, Scale-up and replicate sustainable models)	2025
Art. 9 (15.3.a): Base urban solid waste management on reduction at source, applying the following waste hierarchy as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation and policy: prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, other recovery, e.g. energy recovery and environmentally sound disposal	2025
Art. 9 (15.3.b): Implement adequate waste reducing/reusing/recycling measures in order to reduce the fraction of plastic packaging waste that goes to landfill or incineration without energy recovery	2019
Art. 9 (15.3.c): Take the necessary measures to close to the extent possible the existing illegal dump sites on land in the area of the application of this Regional Plan	2020
Art. 9 (15.3.d): Identify and, to the extent possible, restore and contain, the coastal landfills that are a source of marine litter	2027
Art. 9 (15.3.f): Identify and assess impacts of marine litter accumulations in upstream regions of rivers and their tributaries, and apply measures to prevent or reduce their leakage into the Mediterranean	2025
Art. 9 (15.4.h): Explore and implement, to the extent possible, ways and means to charge reasonable cost for the use of port reception facilities or when applicable, apply No-Special-Fee system	2017
Art. 9 (15.4.i): Implement targeted measures aiming at preventing and reducing marine litter impact in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)	2025
Art. 9 (15.4.j): Explore and implement to the extent possible “Gear marking to indicate ownership” concept and “reduced fishing catches through the use of environmental neutral upon degradation of nets, pots and traps concept	2017
Art. 9 (15.4.k): Apply cost-effective measures to prevent any marine littering from dredging activities	2020
Art. 10 (16.a): Explore and implement to the extent possible the identification in collaboration with relevant stakeholders’ accumulations / hotspots of marine litter and implementation of national programmes on their regular removal and sound disposal	2019
Art. 10 (16.b): Implement National Marine Litter Cleanup Campaigns on a regular basis and evaluate their effectiveness	2030
Art. 10 (16.c): Implement Marine Litter Cleanup Campaigns on a regular basis driven by beach; concessionaries/ managers/ local authorities, including outside the touristic season	2030
Art. 10 (16.d): Participate in International Coastal Cleanup Campaigns and Programmes	2019
Art. 10 (16.e): Apply as appropriate ‘Adopt-a-Beach’ or similar practices and enhance public participation role with regard to marine litter management	2019
Art. 10 (16.f): Apply Fishing for Litter in an environmentally sound manner, based on agreed guidelines and best practice, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations and in partnership with fishermen and ensure adequate collection, sorting, recycling and/or environmentally sound disposal of the fished litter	2019
Art. 10 (16.g): Charge reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable apply No-Special-Fee system, in consultation with competent international and regional organizations, when using port reception facilities for implementing the measures	2019
Art. 10 (17): Explore and implement to the extent possible the “Fishing for Litter” environmentally sound practices, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations, to facilitate cleanup of the floating litter and the seabed from marine litter caught incidentally and/or generated by fishing vessels in their regular activities including derelict fishing gears	2017
Art. 10 (18): Explore and implement targeted activities for the localization and retrieval, and where possible, reuse or recycling of derelict fishing gear including through new environmentally sustainable technologies	2025
Art. 11 (19 to 21): Assessment of marine litter in the Mediterranean	2029
Art. 12 (22.b): Establish the Regional Data Base on Marine Litter which should be compatible with other regional or overarching databases	2016
Art. 12 (22.c): Establish Expert Group on Regional Marine Litter Monitoring Programme	2014

Art. 12 (23) : Design National Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter	2017
Art. 12 (25): Prepare the Guidelines for the preparation of the National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes	2014
Art. 19 (35) : Prepare regional report on the implementation of the Regional Plan	2029
Other Measures²⁷:	
Art. 7 (9): Consider updating periodically the LBS NAPs to integrate marine litter in accordance with the provisions of this Regional Plan and other means to perform their obligations	n/a
Art. 8 (11.a): Ensure institutional coordination, where necessary, among the relevant national policy bodies and relevant regional organizations and programmes, in order to promote integration	n/a
Art. 8 (11.b): Ensure close coordination and collaboration between national, regional and local authorities in the field of marine litter management	n/a
Art. 9 (15.1) Apply to the extent possible instruments needed to regulate and prevent marine litter pollution including plastic waste from land-based and sea-based sources, in particular the implementation of economic instruments, bans and design requirements, EPR, safe/formal markets for recycled plastics, fiscal and economic incentives, innovative business practices, best practices to create incentives)	n/a
Art. 9 (15.3.e): Apply enforcement measures to combat dumping, littering on the beach, illegal sewage disposal from land sources in the sea, the coastal zone and rivers	n/a
Art. 9 (15.3.g): Apply enforcement measures to prevent, reduce and sanction illegal dumping and illegal littering in accordance with national and regional legislation, in particular on coastal zones and rivers	n/a
Art. 9 (15.4.l): Take the necessary measures to ensure that cruise ships flying their flag or entering their ports implement the procedures for minimizing, collecting, storing, processing and disposing of garbage	n/a
Art. 9 (15.4.m): Take the necessary measures to promote best practices to prevent plastic waste and particularly single use plastic products in tourism and leisure activities including cruise shipping, including through regional cooperation	n/a
Art. 9 (15.4.n): Implement measures on prevention, response and remediation regarding litter from maritime accidents, including containers lost at sea	n/a
Art. 12 (24): Design National Monitoring Programme on Marine Litter to include: (a) harmonization and consistency with the integrated regional monitoring programme based on EcAp; (b) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs); and (c) the need for litter monitoring in high sensitivity areas (endangered species, key habitats, etc.), and in Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (SPAMIs)	n/a
Art. 14 (27): Prepare specific guidelines, taking into account where appropriate existing guidelines, to support and facilitate the implementation of measures provided for in articles 9 and 10 of the Regional Plan	n/a
Art. 16 (29): Enhance public awareness and education	n/a
Art. 17 (31): Encourage appropriate involvement of, and partnerships with, various stakeholders	n/a
Art. 18 (33): Cooperate directly or with the assistance of the Secretariat or the competent international and regional organizations to address transboundary marine litter cases	n/a

Regional Plan on Agriculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (Decision IG.26/6)	
Art. V (6a): Establish a regulatory framework with the objective to reduce and further prevent pollution caused or induced by nutrients discharged from agricultural activities	2028
Art. V (6b): Establish a regulatory framework with the objective to reduce and further prevent pollution caused or induced by irrigation water runoff and percolation	2028
Art. V (6c): Establish a regulatory framework for Integrated Pest Management as one of the tools that contribute to low-pesticide-input which keeps the use of pesticides only to levels that are economically and ecologically justified	2028
Art. V (6d): Establish a regulatory framework for Good management practices that contribute to reducing plastic waste generation from agricultural activities in the context of sustainable consumption and production and circular economy	2028
Art. V (7): Establish extension/advisory services, training programmes and awareness raising campaigns for farmers in order to promote implementation of the appropriate measures on the basis of the regulatory framework established as per Paragraph (6)	2030
Art. V (8): Enact support mechanisms to enable farmers to implement, as applicable, the appropriate measures for reducing inputs of pollutants and other wastes from agricultural activities on the basis of the regulatory framework established as per Paragraph (6)	2030
Art. V (9): Designate “vulnerable zones” as all known areas of agricultural land which drain into, and contribute to eutrophication of, coastal waters	2030

²⁷ Other measures that the Contracting Parties legally commit to undertake as per the Regional Plan with no specific deadlines

Art. V (10): Implement measures based on Good Agricultural Practices that contribute to the preservation of the health of the natural systems; further to application of smart strategies to enhance the water, energy and food Nexus; while considering the opportunities and synergies of all systems	2030
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Regional Plan on Aquaculture Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol (Decision IG.26/7)	
Art. V (6): Establish a regulatory framework that sets the operational requirements to be met by aquaculture facilities as a precondition to operate	2027
Art. V (7a): Establish institutional structures and take measures to enforce, as appropriate, the adopted operational requirements addressing the pollution control aspects	2028
Art. V (7b): Establish institutional structures and take measures to provide the framework conditions to encourage aquaculture facilities to adapt their operations further to BAT in aquaculture operations	2028
Art. V (8a): Take measures to verify that aquaculture facilities have established operational processes in order to control and reduce the release of potentially detrimental substances to the marine environment	2030
Art. V (8b): Take measures to verify that aquaculture facilities have established operational processes in order to implement measures to minimize pollution originating from aquaculture activities in the water column and sediments	2030
Art. V (9): Adopt regulations for measures that promote the sustainability of aquaculture in terms of fostering responsible, economically viable, environmentally sustainable aquaculture	2027
Art. V (10): Implement measures promoting responsible, economically viable, environmentally sustainable aquaculture as per the regulated aspects	2030
Art. V (11): Regulate key aspects contributing to the generation of plastic waste from aquaculture activities in the context of sustainable production, as well as processing along the value chain and circular economy	2028

Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) (Decision IG.25/11)	
1. SPECIES AND HABITATS PLANS Update Mediterranean action plans for selected species and habitats listed under the SPA/BD Protocol.	2030
2. SPECIES RECOVERY Develop recovery plans and implement emergency actions for endangered and threatened species whose continued survival depends on such actions, including their habitats.	2030
3. MARITIME TRAFFIC Reduce the impact of maritime traffic (noise & collision) on sensitive marine species (Cetaceans, Turtles, others).	2030
4. NIS/IAS COMMITMENT Ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ballast Water and Sediments from Ships (BWM Convention), and adoption of the Regional strategy addressing ship's ballast water management and invasive species (2022-2027).	2030
5. NIS/IAS CAPACITY Strengthen the capacity of the Mediterranean countries to deal with alien marine species.	2030
6. NIS/IAS CONTROL Take the necessary field actions to mitigate the impact from NIS/IAS.	2030
7. LITTER Prevent leakage and remove marine litter to mitigate its impact on the ecosystem.	2030
8. EIA/SEA Implement environmental assessments, considering cumulative impacts on the coastal zones and their carrying capacity.	2030
9. WIND ENERGY Advocate that wind farms, are regulated in MCPAs, and cannot be developed elsewhere before their effects on the marine environment, biodiversity and human activities have been sufficiently researched, the risks are understood and alternatives assessed.	2030
10. MINERALS In line with the precautionary principle, the exploitation of minerals should not be authorized until the effect on the marine environment, biodiversity and related human activities have been sufficiently researched and the risks are understood, and alternatives assessed.	2030
11. SPATIAL PLANNING Support countries for the development of systematic conservation planning taking into account ICZM, land use/ marine use planning and management aspects in the context of MSP.	2030
12. RESTORATION Support restoration of ecosystems providing key services, those degraded and expected to become increasingly critical in a changing climate, such as wetlands and shallow seashore habitats among others.	2030

13. CLIMATE CHANGE Increase climate change impacts monitoring and contributions to mitigation and adaptation, particularly to warming, acidification, and to disaster risk reduction, through nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches.	2030
14. GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS Promote actions, including scientific research, with the view of achieving GES for all biodiversity-related ecological objectives within the Ecosystem Approach EcAp/ IMAP.	2030
15. MCPAs and OECMs Assist countries in the implementation of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs.	2030
16. BIODIVERSITY PLATFORM Establish an open access Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform.	2027
17. INVERTEBRATES Survey distribution and abundance, and assess status and main anthropogenic pressures, over priority invertebrate species with focus on <i>C. rubrum</i> , <i>P. nobilis</i> , and vermetid platforms.	2030
18. VERTEBRATES Establish the distribution, status, and the main anthropogenic pressures of species listed under Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol.	2030
19. HABITATS In coastal and offshore waters, inventory and cartography key Mediterranean habitats, and assess their status and main anthropogenic pressures.	2030
20. NIS/IAS Database Develop the shared georeferenced database (MAMIAS), user-friendly platform, to continuously monitor the status and pathways of non-indigenous species and support early warning.	2030
21. OVERFISHING and IUU Implement science-based management plans to effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including phasing out harmful fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.	2030
22. BY-CATCH Develop a national mechanism and implement agreed and scientifically tested by-catch mitigation measures, to eliminate all intentional or accidental killing of threatened or endangered species and/or in bad conservation status.	2030
23. SMALL SCALE FISHERIES Promote the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small Scale Fisheries (VGSSF) and co-management practices in professional small-scale fisheries, advised by traditional ecological knowledge and the best available science.	2030
24. AQUACULTURE Support developing the Post-2020 GFCM Aquaculture and Fisheries strategy - transforming the aquaculture industry through science-based solutions and marine spatial planning (MSP) tools.	2030
25. TOURISM Develop a framework of specific indicators for assessing the impact of marine and coastal tourism on destinations and for promoting ecotourism.	2030
26. INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY Integrate biodiversity values into national and local development planning processes, into the strategies and planning processes of marine-related economic sectors, into national accounting as appropriate, reporting systems, and into the assessment of environmental impacts.	2030
27. STREAMLINE Post-2020 SAPBIO Streamline the Post- 2020 SAPBIO and Regional strategies and action plans, developed in the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol, into national strategies, action plans and legal frameworks.	2030
28. POLITICAL WILL AND COORDINATION Ensure political will and recognition at the highest levels of Government or State, to develop appropriate governance schemes, in particular cross-sectorial and multi-level institutional coordination.	2030
29. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION Facilitate stakeholder engagement to address conflict between users, build capacity to contribute to the SAPBIO enforcement, particularly in MPA planning and management, through proper participation of all stakeholders in a transparent decision-making process.	2030
30. TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP SCALING OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS Scale down international commitments into national plans and to local level, streamlining the approach, targets and actions of the Post-2020 into national strategies and into local planning processes, while facilitating the bottom-up feeding of local proposals into future planning processes at the national and Mediterranean levels.	2030
31. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT Enable the compliance of the provisions of the SPA/BD and the ICZM Protocols and related Action Plans at national level by strengthening capacities and cooperation between judiciary and administrative bodies.	2030

32. IMAP REFINEMENT Identification of the gaps that hinder the good environmental status evaluation, and in case needed, support countries to fill them out.	2030
33. IMAP IMPLEMENTATION Update national monitoring programmes in light of the new elements of IMAP and achieve regular reporting.	2030
34. Post- 2020 SAPBIO MONITORING Allow the Contracting Parties to periodically review and report, harmonized with IMAP and UNEP/MAP monitoring frameworks, on the status of implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO.	2030
35. SUPPORT TO RUN THE SAPBIO Provide sufficient human and financial resources to the MAP system in order to efficiently run the implementation, follow-up and assessment mechanisms for the Post-2020 SAPBIO.	2030
36. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE Post-2020 SAPBIO AT NATIONAL LEVEL Enhance the national capacities to implement the Post- 2020 SAPBIO, to manage MPAs and vulnerable marine and coastal habitats and species within and across national jurisdictions, with particular attention to less developed countries, and towards reducing the gender and the digital divide.	2030
37. NETWORKING Support existing regional, subregional and/or transboundary networks, or develop new ones as needed, to enhance capacities, knowledge, experience and opportunity sharing, inter alia, on topics as NIS/IAS, migratory species, MPA management, habitat restoration, reduced by-catch, harmonized monitoring, compliance with law and regulations, and other subjects relevant to the Post- 2020 SAPBIO.	2030
38. AWARENESS Increase awareness, understanding and appreciating of the values and threats to the marine environment, stimulating improved behaviour, and of the responses and good practices, by targeting decision-makers and the general public, through reinforced and renewed mechanisms, including mass communications.	2030
39. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION Promote the integration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems conservation concerns into school, higher education, professional training, and citizen science, so that best practices and innovative technologies to protect marine and coastal ecosystems are more accessible and replicable.	2030
40. EMPLOYMENT Adequately increase the employment, notably public employment in direct relation to marine biodiversity conservation (and eventually include redirecting existing one) as basic component for future blue economy wise development.	2030
41. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING Develop sustainable funding strategies with, as appropriate, innovative approaches to mobilize alternative financial sources, covering fiscal incomes that could be redistributed, and relevant actions to fund, including The MedFund and other types of national or local financing mechanisms.	2030
42. COOPERATION Increase cooperation both north/ south, south /south, and between governmental and non-governmental actors at different levels, to support the Post-2020 SAPBIO, particularly in the less developed countries.	2030

Appendix 4: 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.	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; endorsement of recommendations. Recommendation for transmission to EcAp CG meeting.	CU reports to EcAp CG on progress based on reports of MAP Components. Endorsement of key findings and recommendations for submission to MAP Focal Points.	General review of main findings and recommendations and approval for submission to COP. In depth review of the related draft Decision body for submission to the COP. COP Decision.
6. Thematic assessments			
Thematic assessments prepared and approved.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Overall discussion and feedback on assessment recommendations. Endorsement for publication.	CU report on the progress; review of recommendations as appropriate. Endorsement of key findings and recommendations for submission to MAP Focal Points as appropriate.	Review of potential activities included in the POW. Review and endorse as appropriate of the key findings and recommendations.
7. IMAP development and update			
Scientific and policy products.	MAP Components report on progress to their Focal Points. Focal Points review proposed activities for their inclusion in POW. Review and approval for transmission 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	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. Review and approval for submission to COP, COP Decision

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.
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.
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.
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.

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

Appendix 5: Terms of reference (TORs) for Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs), Economic and social analysis (COR ESA) and Online Working Groups (OWGs)

1. Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs)

1.1 Composition

1. The Correspondence Groups on monitoring (CORMONs) are established for each thematic cluster – Biodiversity and Fisheries; Pollution and Marine Litter; and Coast and Hydrography.
2. 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.

1.2 Operation

3. 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.
4. 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.

1.3 CORMON Mandate

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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

8. 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.

9. 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 mobilized 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.

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

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

12. 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.

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

2.1 Composition

13. 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.

2.2 Operation

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

2.3 Mandate

15. 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

3. Effective interaction among different MAP bodies

16. 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.