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**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

24 July 2025
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12th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group

Athens, Greece, 15 September 2025

**Report of the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Pollution and Marine Litter
Monitoring (Anavyssos, Greece, 27 -28 May 2025)**

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2025



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31 July 2025

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Report of the Meeting

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Introduction

1. In accordance with Decision IG.26/14 on “UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2024 – 2025”, and Decision IG.26/3 on “The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean”, as adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023, including the revision of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) and the enhancement of IMAP, UNEP/MAP, at the kind invitation and hosting of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), organized the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring. The Meeting was held in Anavyssos, Greece, on 27-28 May 2025.

2. The objectives of the Joint Meeting of CORMONs, were to:

- a) Review the proposal related to GES definition and Targets for pollution litter cluster including the governance mechanism and flow of interaction for the implementation of EcAp, with a particular focus on the mandate of the CORMONs.
- b) Review the proposed update of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) for the Mediterranean, for EOs 5, 9, 10, and 11;
- c) Review the proposed updated Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Pollution Indicators;
- d) Review the proposed updated Proposal for Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24;

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. On behalf of UNEP/MAP, the Meeting was opened by Ms. Olfat Hamdan, Programme Management Officer of the Mediterranean Pollution Assessment and Control Programme (MED POL). She provided an overview of the meeting agenda and organizational matters, including a proposal for the election of the meeting officers. Ms. Hamdan emphasized the importance of the meeting’s outcomes in the context of the ongoing revision of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) of UNEP/MAP. Following her remarks, Mr. Faraj El Awar, the newly appointed Senior Programme Officer who will be heading MED POL and QSR at UNEP-MAP, was introduced to the participants.

4. On behalf of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), the host institution of the Joint CorMon Meeting, Mr. Aris Karageorgis, President of HCMR, welcomed the participants. He introduced the institutional, human, and technical capacities of HCMR, highlighting its facilities in Crete and Rhodes, as well as the construction of a new HCMR building in Anavyssos and plan to purchase a new research vessel. This was followed by a presentation of HCMR’s scientific and programmatic work, considering the framework of UNEP’s ongoing efforts to address the triple planetary crisis.

5. The Meeting was attended by representatives from the following Contracting Parties: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

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

Agenda items 2: Organizational Matters

a) Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring (CorMon on Pollution Monitoring)

7. The rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the

Mediterranean and its Protocols applied mutatis mutandis to the present Meeting (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI).

b) Election of officers

8. In accordance with the Rules of procedures for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties, the Meeting elected one (1) President, two (2) Vice-Presidents and one (1) Rapporteur from among the participants, as follows:

Chair: Greece, Ms. Kalliopi Pagkou
Vice-Chair: Libya, Mr. Saleh Diryak,
Vice-Chair: Montenegro, Ms. Ivana Mitrovic
Rapporteur: Lebanon, Mr. Milad Fakhry

c) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

9. The proposed Provisional agenda appearing in document UNEP/MED WG.626/2, was adopted without changes.

d) Organization of Work

10. Discussions were held in plenary sessions, as follows:

- (a) 27 May 2025: from 09:30 to 12:30, and from 14:30 to 17:30
- (b) 28 May 2025: from 09:30 to 12:30, and from 14:30 to 17:30

11. A visit to the HCMR premises and laboratories was organized for the Meeting Participants during the lunch break of both days (i.e., 27 and 28 May 2025).

12. A visit to Cape Sounion and the Temple of Poseidon was organized by HCMR on 28 May 2025, immediately after the Meeting.

13. Simultaneous interpretation into English and French was provided during the Meeting.

Agenda item 3: IMAP Update

a. IMAP Pollution Ecological Objectives and Indicators

b. IMAP Marine Litter Ecological Objective and Indicators

14. Ms. Jelena Knežević, Monitoring and Assessment Officer at UNEP/MAP – MED POL, presented **Working Document WG.626/3/Rev.1**. She explained that, in line with Decision IG.26/14 (COP 23, 2023) and the mandate on the EcAp Roadmap and IMAP revision, the Secretariat and MED POL prepared a draft to update Operational Objectives, IMAP Common Indicators, GES definitions, and Targets for EO 5 (Eutrophication) and EO 9 (Pollution). The proposal was first presented at the CorMon Pollution online meeting on 30 January 2025, where the establishment of an Online Working Group was agreed. This group finalized Annex I of WG.602/3 for submission to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting in June 2025, as noted in the Meeting report (UNEP MED WG.602/4). Following a careful review of the agreed document by the Online Working Group, the Secretariat identified minor adjustments needed to align fully with relevant decisions, especially regarding certain GES targets. Therefore, document WG.626/3/Rev.1 replaces the previously circulated version.

15. Following the introductory remarks, the Secretariat - MED POL presented the proposed revisions to the targets for IMAP Common Indicators 13 and 14 (EO 5 – Eutrophication), Common Indicators 17, 18, 20, and 21 (EO 9 – Contaminants), and Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27 (EO 11 – Underwater Noise), as outlined in Tables 1 and 2 of the **Working Document WG.626/3/Rev.1**. She explained revision for every Common Indicator in detail using the Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1, which was displayed on the screen. It emphasized key

achievements from 2019–2023 set the ground for the revised targets in order to ensure their alignment with GES/non-GES classifications used in the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR). She emphasized that the current document proposes upgrading Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27 to IMAP Common Indicators, reflecting major progress in underwater noise assessment. This includes the 2023 MED QSR noise assessment, based on the framework from the 2019 MED POL Focal Points Meeting's Guidance Factsheet, further refined with evolving scientific knowledge and presented in document UNEP/MED WG.626/5/Rev.1.

16. Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis, QSR Programme Management Officer at UNEP/MAP, proceeded to introduce **Working Document WG.626/6** “IMAP Update for Ecological Objective 10”. He provided detailed explanation on the proposed revisions under IMAP EO10, including the new indicator on riverine litter and the upgrade of Candidate Indicator 24 to Common Indicator. Explicit reference and review took place for the indicators, GES definitions and targets as outlined in Table 2 of Working Document WG.626/6.

17. Following the introductory remarks, **Working Documents UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev 1 and UNEP/MED WG.626/6** were displayed one by one on the screen for review and comment by the meeting participants.

18. Regarding **Working Documents UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1**, several meeting participants expressed concerns about elevating the status of the candidate to common for Indicators 26 and 27.

19. Following the request of the representative of France, who was unable to attend the meeting, the Secretariat - MED POL conveyed her country's questions and proposed amendments to document WG.626/3/Rev.1, along with the corresponding responses from the Secretariat for the consideration of the Meeting.

20. One country reported that it is currently piloting candidate Common Indicator 26 (cCI 26) and facing several challenges related to threshold values and modelling approaches. As for candidate Common Indicator 27 (cCI 27), it is newly introduced and lacks sufficient implementation experience. Consequently, the Secretariat – MED POL was advised to initiate a project aimed at providing technical assistance for noise monitoring and assessment. This perspective was supported by another participant, who raised concerns about the IMAP framework requiring a higher frequency of noise monitoring compared to the MSFD. The participant highlighted the challenges in noise modelling, particularly in the application of LOBE concept.

21. One meeting participant expressed a contrary opinion, suggesting that, given the extensive knowledge accumulated over the past few years, noise monitoring could begin with modelling, and then be further advanced with support from UNEP/MAP.

22. Another participant, seconded by a colleague, proposed incorporating new biological parameters into monitoring efforts, specifically related to algal blooms, including their frequency and toxicity, as part of the assessment of the marine environment with reference to Chlorophyll *a*.

23. Two participants expressed concern about maintaining the correlation of turbidity, transparency, and dissolved oxygen concentration with the monitoring and assessment of Chlorophyll *a*. They noted that these parameters are rarely reported under the MSFD and requested clarification on whether the dissolved oxygen also includes concentrations near the seabed. Another participant opined that the lower parts of the water column are less affected by anthropogenic impacts compared to surface layers. In this context, they suggested that the original target referring to dissolved oxygen concentration above the local threshold should instead refer to values below the threshold.

24. One participant requested a clear definition of "high-risk areas."

25. Another participant proposed a revised definition for Good Environmental Status (GES) under IMAP Common Indicator 18, suggesting it be decoupled from acute pollution events typically associated with Common Indicator 19. This was followed by an agreement of the Meeting to rephrase the target as follows: “Concentrations of contaminants are not giving rise to negative effects on the health status of marine biota.” The proposed rewording better reflects the key aspect of marine organism health rather than acute pollution.

26. With respect to the target for Common Indicator 17, a few rewording suggestions were made, particularly concerning the phrase “deterioration trend.” There was an agreement of the Meeting reached to replace it with the term: “no increasing trends” in contaminant concentrations in sediments and biota from human-impacted areas. This rewording enhances the accuracy of the GES target.

27. In response to the questions and proposals raised by several participants, the Secretariat – MED POL provided clarifications on various topics. She explained the collaborative work with ACCOBAMS on noise monitoring and assessment, emphasizing the science–policy interface component, which is being addressed by UNEP/MAP – MED POL.

28. Regarding algal blooms and their toxic impacts, the Secretariat – MED POL noted that these biological parameters responsible for key differences in EO5 monitoring between the MSFD and IMAP are rightly reflected in the current proposals. However, she emphasized the need to assess the capacity of countries to expand the current scope of eutrophication monitoring to include the biological parameters. These were initially excluded from IMAP due to limited national capacities. Given the state of data reporting for existing parameters over the past five years, it is unlikely that the situation will improve significantly. She also stated that any changes to GES (Good Environmental Status) targets and definitions in the current revision should remain minimal, maintaining alignment with those originally set in 2012, 2013, and 2016.

29. The ongoing revisions aim to retain targets for turbidity, water transparency, and dissolved oxygen concentrations, ensuring consistency with the GES definition for Common Indicator 14 on Chlorophyll-a: “Natural levels of algal biomass, water transparency, and oxygen concentrations in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic, and weather conditions.” The revised current document revisits the original GES definitions, which identified turbidity, water transparency, and dissolved oxygen as supporting parameters for assessing GES based on chlorophyll-a concentrations. This approach also promotes alignment between IMAP and MSFD.

30. The Secretariat – MED POL further clarified that the 2012 EcAp indicator list included both dissolved and bottom oxygen. However, with the subsequent development of IMAP indicators, dissolved oxygen concentration has been defined as a mandatory sub-indicator, and the monitoring guidelines specify the depths at which this indicator is to be measured—including near the bottom. Despite this, only surface oxygen data have been partially available for assessment within the 2023 MED QSR and are thus used in the eutrophication evaluation.

31. Any IMAP and EcAp related documents do not define high-risk areas, so no further detail can be provided at this stage.

32. Following the discussion on Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1, “MAP Update for Ecological Objectives 5, 9 and 11,” the Meeting endorsed the submission of the updated Ecological Objectives 5, 9, and 11, as presented in Appendix I to the conclusions and recommendations, to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting (17–19 June 2025).

33. Regarding **Working Documents UNEP/MED WG.626/6** for Ecological Objective 10, a number of Contracting Parties took the floor to express appreciation on the work conducted by the Secretariat and the CORMON Meeting on Marine Litter Monitoring (29 January 2025) to support the update of IMAP EO10 and endorsed the new/upgraded Common Indicators.

34. Representatives of Contracting Parties provided the following proposals to amend the text:
- a) The inclusion of references on mesoplastic and pellets on beaches;
 - b) Extensive revision of the indicator name as well as on GES definitions and targets for IMAP Common Indicator 24 under the rational of clearly distinguishing ingestion from entanglement;
 - c) Proposed the numbering of the new Indicator on riverine litter as “Common Indicator 28”.

35. In response, relevant references were included in paragraph 14 of Working Document WG.626/6, and in its table 2, a new indicator name was reflected for Common Indicator 24, and the respective GES definitions and targets were formulated for ingestion and entanglement, as reflected in Appendix 2 of the Conclusions and Recommendations.

36. The Meeting endorsed the updated version of Working Document WG.626/6, as reflected in Appendix 2 of the Conclusions and Recommendations, for submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17-19 June 2025).

37. The Secretariat – MED POL presented **Working Document WG.626/9**, explaining that it updates the *Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP)*, originally adopted by Decision IG.22/7 of COP 19. The updates reflect developments within the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention framework since 2016 and focus on the Pollution and Litter components—Ecological Objectives (EO) 5, 9, 10, and 11. An initial revision effort appeared in Document UNEP/MED WG.595/Inf.4, prepared for the 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG), held online on 2 October 2024. The current updates incorporate decisions made by the Contracting Parties (via EcAp CG, MAP, and COP) on methodologies and assessment criteria, which were applied during the preparation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR).

38. Referring to the on-screen document, she presented the updates to EO 5, 9, and 11, highlighting their alignment with revised targets for Common Indicators related to eutrophication, contaminants, and noise, as outlined in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1. She also referred to a few corrections included in Annex I, providing the assessment criteria as approved by COP 23 (Decision IG.26/3). The document also proposes a new Marine Litter Indicator (CI23 bis) and the elevation of candidate Indicators 24, 26, and 27—concerning impulsive and continuous noise—to the status of Common Indicators.

39. **Regarding the section on EO5**, one meeting representative proposed adding a point to paragraph 4 to ensure consistency among international data sources. For example, it was suggested that a system aligning the use of both IMAP and EMODnet should be proposed to better coordinate the use of international data. Another participant, supported by two others, requested clarification of the phrase “*monitoring and conducting GES assessments at national, sub-regional, and regional levels.*” They proposed distinguishing more clearly between assessments conducted at the national level and those carried out at the sub-regional and regional levels.

40. In response to the proposals, the Secretariat – MED POL clarified that “conducting assessments” primarily refers to the exchange of experiences and capacity-building efforts at all levels. She emphasized that sub-regional and regional assessments rely on national data, with ownership resting with the respective countries. To address the proposal put forward by a few meeting participants, she suggested additional wording to paragraph 17. Accordingly, the meeting agreed on the revised text for paragraph 17, which refers to exchange of experiences and strengthening national capacities by the Contracting Parties regarding monitoring, and conducting GES assessments at national level, while they should also contribute to sub-regional and regional efforts.

41. Regarding the harmonization of international data sources, instead of revising the wording in paragraph 3, the Meeting found it more appropriate to amend paragraph 16 by explaining that data reporting should be supported through greater harmonization of diverse data management systems at the international level.

42. **Regarding the section on EO9**, one participant noted that excluding Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) from Good Environmental Status (GES) assessments could be problematic. While EACs are not perfect, their complete omission is not a viable option. Background Assessment Criteria (BACs) do not reflect the toxicity of various contaminants. Therefore, alternative approaches should be considered. To distinguish between GES and non-GES, assessments must be based on toxicity—i.e., actual impacts on marine organisms. He suggested a proportional use of EACs, with EAC values serving as upper thresholds, rather than relying solely on proportional use of BACs.

43. Another participant emphasized that incorporating toxicity into assessments is a distinct and complex issue. BACs can serve as a starting point for GES assessments, provided toxicity considerations are not excluded. Given varying laboratory capacities, there is no current plan to mandate detailed toxicity data. Replacing GES/non-GES classification with an evaluation of contaminant accumulation could be an alternative.

44. A third participant highlighted that the Bathing Water Directive is more stringent than IMAP, relying on two main parameters. Greater synergy between these frameworks is needed. This was noted as a general observation on bathing water, and support was expressed for the wording in paragraph 28.

45. In response to the proposals, the Secretariat – MED POL clarified that proportional use of BACs is currently the only feasible approach, though not ideal. EACs are not viable due to their high values, and scaling assessments based on them does not yield meaningful environmental results. Moreover, the use of existing EACs lacks justification, as they are not derived from ecotoxicity assessments specific to Mediterranean species. Therefore, the Secretariat – MED POL applied proportional BAC values and assessed their potential alignment with future, Mediterranean-relevant EACs. The IMAP Guidance Factsheets and 2023 MED QSR classification system are based on proportional BAC values, but the use of EACs remains valid. The 2023 MED QSR Decision supports continued efforts to develop Mediterranean-specific EACs. To advance this, the Secretariat – MED POL proposed forming three Working Groups—on eutrophication, contaminants, and biological effects—to compile scientific databases from existing literature. As IMAP does not mandate ecotoxicity data reporting, progress depends on active support from the Contracting Parties. Paragraph 33 of the current document includes both BACs and EACs as GES assessment criteria, with neither excluded.

46. The Secretariat – MED POL stressed that language approved by the COP cannot be altered to replace GES criteria with those based solely on contaminant accumulation. However, revisions of the wording in the IMAP Guidance Factsheet may address concerns without modifying the current document on Ecological Objectives.

47. Finally, the overall assessment methodology was designed to align with bathing water quality assessment practices. By applying the “one out – all out” principle, inconsistencies between the Bathing Water Directive and IMAP assessments were resolved.

48. Referring to the on-screen document, the Secretariat presented the **updates to IMAP EO 10**, highlighting their alignment with the content of the revised Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/6 (Appendix 2 of the Conclusions and Recommendations).

49. In alignment with the revisions reflected in Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/6, representatives of Contracting Parties took the floor and proposed to:

- a) Include references on mesoplastic and pellets on beaches;
- b) Revise the name of Common Indicator 24;
- c) Proposed the numbering of the new Indicator on riverine litter as “Common Indicator 28”.

50. Special reference was made to Annex I – Part II of the **Working Document WG.626/9**, reflecting the Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP EO10 Common Indicators, in particular for the new/updated values for Common Indicator 24.

51. **Regarding the section on EO11**, further to the discussion on the status of noise-related indicators within the context of WG.626/3/Rev.1, one meeting participant noted challenges in noise monitoring from building and military activities, as this may require data from various companies. He proposed removing references to these sources. Another representative questioned whether noise should be included in national monitoring programmes, pointing out that this would create a regular obligation for countries, which is unfeasible without technical assistance and adequate equipment.

52. In response, the Secretariat – MED POL explained that noise monitoring involves collecting data from multiple sources, including military activities, as was done for the 2023 MED QSR. Access to such data is governed by national procedures and relevant regulations. Revisions to the wording can be eventually considered by reviewing the IMAP Guidance Factsheets (WG.626/5/Rev.1). To address concerns about mandatory implementation of noise monitoring, and considering the Meeting's decision to retain both indicators as candidates, the Secretariat – MED POL proposed amending paragraph 61 to state that countries should "consider" including Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27 in their national IMAP-based monitoring programmes.

53. The Secretariat – MED POL also presented corrections in Annex I of the current document, containing the assessment criteria as approved by COP 23 (Decision IG.26/3). These include minor changes—to the second decimal place of Reference Conditions (RC) and Boundary Values (BV) for Chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) in water types II A FR SP and III W FR SP, based on one country's proposal. Gmean values for the 90th percentile of RC and BV for these types were added at another country's request. These explanations were followed by the Meeting's approval of the proposed corrections.

54. The Meeting endorsed the updated version of Working Document WG.626/9, as reflected in Appendix 3 of the Conclusions and Recommendations, for submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17-19 June 2025).

Agenda item 4: Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Pollution Indicators.

55. The Secretariat – MED POL presented **Working Document WG.626/4/Rev.1** on the updated Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, and 21. She recalled that, in alignment with IMAP, initial Guidance Factsheets for Pollution Common Indicators were developed, reviewed, and endorsed in 2016 and 2017, following Decisions IG.22/7 (COP 19, 2016) and IG.23/6 (COP 20, 2017). In 2019, these Factsheets were updated for Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, and 21. Initial Factsheets were also developed for Candidate Indicators 26 and 27 under Ecological Objective 11 (Energy, including underwater noise). Pursuant to Decision IG.24/4 on Assessment Studies, monitoring and assessment tools, practices, and standards were developed, as outlined in the 2023 MED QSR roadmap and needs assessment. Building on progress since 2019, the 2023 MED QSR was adopted by Decision IG.26/3 (COP 23, 2023). Additionally, Decision IG.26/14 (COP 23, 2023) on the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024–2025 mandated MED POL to deliver “e) IMAP pollution and marine Cluster CIs Guidance” under activity 6.2.2. The present document does not include the revised GES definitions and targets per indicator, as these must first be agreed upon in Meeting Document WG.626/4/Rev.1, and subsequently integrated into the Guidance Factsheets.

56. Referring to the on-screen document, she presented one by one the updates for Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, and 21, providing explanations for each and linking them to the achievements reviewed and agreed upon for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. At the request of the representative of France, who was unable to attend the meeting, she also conveyed her country's questions and proposed amendments to the current document, along with the corresponding responses from the Secretariat, for the Meeting's consideration.

57. **Following the introduction of Common Indicators 13 and 14 (CIs 13 and 14)**, and at France's request, the Secretariat – MED POL presented French experts' views on using satellite-derived chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) data in France. These data, calibrated with *in situ* measurements, do not represent the wider Mediterranean context. It was clarified that satellite-derived Chl-a is neither mandatory nor voluntary under IMAP and was used in the 2023 MED QSR as a practical substitute due to missing IMAP data. Differences between *in situ* and satellite data were explained, including the lack of inter-calibration across the region. Procedures for threshold calculation were outlined, with proposed amendments to the "Scale of Simplified Assessment of Chlorophyll-a (IMAP Common Indicator 14)" in the Guidance Factsheets.

58. Taking into account the proposal of another meeting participant, which complemented the proposal of France, an addition was made to recognize satellite-derived Chl-a as a supplementary parameter. The amendment emphasizes the need for statistical calculation of assessment criteria based on satellite data in the absence of *in situ* data, particularly in cases where Contracting Parties have not reported a proven relationship between *in situ* Chl-a and satellite-derived data. The amended text also includes consideration of scientifically justified national findings in cases of discrepancies between regional assessments based on satellite-derived data and national assessments using *in situ* data and country-specific scales.

59. Following the explanation of the corrections in Annex I of Working Document WG.626/9, the Secretariat – MED POL provided further technical clarification on minor adjustments to Reference Conditions (RC) and Boundary Values (BV) for Chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) in water types II A FR SP and III W FR SP, as reflected in the Assessment Criteria section of the IMAP Guidance Factsheets. The Meeting subsequently approved the proposed corrections in WG.626/4/Rev.1 and Annex I of WG.626/9.

60. One participant supported the supplementary use of satellite-derived data not only for chlorophyll-a but also for other physic-chemical parameters, especially in marine areas lacking *in-situ* coverage. He also mentioned the use of arithmetic mean modelling as an alternative and requested information from the Secretariat on the consideration of this technology. Another participant stressed the necessity of calibrating satellite-derived data with *in-situ* data, particularly in coastal waters.

61. The Secretariat – MED POL explained that IMAP Info System data were not correlated with satellite-derived data used from various sources for the 2023 MED QSR, considering different scope of these sources regarding both temporal and spatial aspects. While inter-calibration with *in-situ* data is ensured by satellite data producers through quality control procedures—rendering them pre-calibrated—they are not equated with *in-situ* IMAP data. Instead, assessment criteria were calculated from satellite-derived data. If funding allows, arithmetic mean modelling could be used to enhance monitoring.

62. Responding to concerns about assessment methodologies, the Secretariat – MED POL clarified that IMAP Guidance Factsheets do not state that current methods are fixed, and future revisions are possible. Another participant noted differing chlorophyll-a values for Type III E waters in Malta under development at the EU level, which may be addressed within IMAP during the upcoming review of values within the next two to three years.

63. A participant suggested expanding assessment criteria to include other parameters like orthophosphates. The Secretariat clarified that while the 2021 and 2022 CorMons conclusions require criteria for Chlorophyll a, TP, and DIN as a minimum, they do not restrict developing criteria for other parameters if data are available.

64. **Following the introduction of Common Indicator 17 (CI 17)**, and at France's request, the Secretariat presented the views of French experts on assessment criteria for contaminants and their units of measurement. In response to the proposals, the Secretariat clarified that the IMAP Guidance Factsheet for CI 17 introduces no new developments in assessment criteria, methodologies, scales, or

monitoring practices beyond those agreed upon by all Contracting Parties for the 2023 MED QSR. While national processes are acknowledged, a clear distinction exists between regional and national values and considerations. Most of threshold values are expressed in dry weight, in accordance with the IMAP Decision and the MSFD (in sediment matrix), reflecting also the fact that most national datasets report contaminant concentrations in dry weight without providing a dry/wet weight conversion factor. Several literature sources were added in IMAP Guidance Factsheet due to their relevance to those already included, and their contribution to supporting progress as of 2016.

65. One participant raised concerns about several points already discussed and agreed by the CorMons in 2021 and 2022. These included the definition of Background Concentrations (BCs) and Background Assessment Concentrations (BACs), established in 2012, 2016, and most recently in 2022; the application of regional values of Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) at the sub-regional levels; the lack of alignment between GES/non-GES classification and ecotoxicity and the use of concentrations below detection limits for calculation of assessment criteria. He also proposed replacing the term “emerging contaminants” with “contaminants of emerging concern,” explaining that many of these contaminants have been used and released into the environment for a long time, while concerns about their effects and on need for regulation have begun to emerge. Another participant opposed the inclusion of new contaminants in the mandatory IMAP list.

66. In response, the Secretariat – MED POL explained that the calculation of sub-regional BACs is necessary to account for specific ecosystem characteristics, and their influence on local contaminant dynamics. This is essential to avoid biased assessments. She also clarified that the consideration of non-traditional contaminants relates to data collection on their ecotoxicity, not to expanding the mandatory list. To reflect the importance of ecotoxicity, an addition was proposed and agreed upon in the section on Known Gaps, stating that further efforts are needed to ensure the revised Environmental Assessment Criteria integrate toxicity considerations into future GES/non-GES assessments. It was also noted that, in addition to traditional contaminants, the optional inclusion of other environmental contaminants should be considered for setting the thresholds based in ecotoxicity.

67. Another participant referred to the species currently agreed upon as biota matrices for pollutant monitoring. She noted that in her country, GES cannot be assessed using these species and requested that other species be considered for the next QSR analysis. She also raised concerns about eutrophication, noting that measuring Total Phosphorus (TP) is very difficult, and suggested that inorganic phosphorus be considered as an alternative.

68. One participant asked the Secretariat to elaborate on the use of EMODnet as a new data source. Another participant provided comments on the list of contaminants, suggesting editorial corrections related to organochlorine contaminants, and emphasized the need to define the list of individual PCB congeners that comprise the sum of PCBs.

69. In response, the Secretariat – MED POL explained that the section *Improve the GES Assessment* includes a provision for expanding the list of commonly agreed IMAP pollution indicator species. The Guidance Factsheet specifies that, in addition to the currently mandatory *Mytilus galloprovincialis* and *Mullus barbatus*, other species should be added based on their presence in the sub-regions and their relevance as pollution indicators. Harmonization in the use of different species across sub-regions is also encouraged.

70. The Secretariat – MED POL further explained inconsistencies between the Data Dictionaries and the list of mandatory contaminants adopted by the 2019 MED POL Focal Points. A question was raised regarding the retention of 9 PCB congeners, including congeners 105 and 156. The meeting agreed to retain all 9 individual PCB congeners as mandatory parameters and clarified that the sum of 7 PCBs includes congeners 28, 52, 101, 118, 138, 153, and 180. The meeting also agreed to include Copper and its compounds, as decided in 2019, which were omitted from the Data Dictionaries under CI 17. Additionally, it was agreed to list all 16 individual PAHs required to be reported as mandatory, and to specify that the sum includes all 16 compounds. It was also confirmed that the mandatory list

includes both heavy metals (Hg, Cd, Pb, and Cu) and their respective compounds, as also defined under the WFD.

71. Regarding the use of EMODnet, it was clarified that this database serves only as a supplementary data source, and only in cases where data are missing from the IMAP Info System.

72. **Regarding the sections on Common Indicators 18 (CI 18)**, the Secretariat – MED POL informed that the two countries submitted written pre-session proposals aimed at reviewing the proposed Guidance Factsheet for CI 18. Their representatives took the floor to elaborate on their proposals for the Meeting's consideration.

73. One participant presented several suggestions, including:

- a) Improving the definitions of LMS (Lysosomal Membrane Stability) and AChE (Acetylcholinesterase);
- b) Emphasizing that the use of biomarkers should not be exclusively limited to hotspot stations but should instead encompass a range of possible applications;
- c) In addition to assessing environmental status for CI 18 using BAC (Background Assessment Criteria) and EAC (Environmental Assessment Criteria) values, supporting the assessment of effects by comparing biomarker values at monitoring stations with those measured at control sites;
- d) Adding additional biomarkers to address damage, such as DNA damage;
- e) Removing “% LMS – Mean percentage of Lysosomal Membrane Stability in mussel” from the list of biomarkers included in the CI 18 data dictionary;
- f) Removing malondialdehyde accumulation levels (MDA) from the list of additional new indicators;
- g) Including fish alongside bivalves for the monitoring of LMS and AChE;
- h) Considering the need to organize intercalibration tests with partners beyond IAEA/MESL, including exploring alternative modalities such as ring tests.
- i) Another participant advocated for integrating chemical and biological monitoring, emphasizing the importance of monitoring biomarkers not only in reference areas but also in hotspots and other relevant locations. This participant also called for:
- j) Improved definitions of LMS and AChE;
- k) Consideration of proposals for additional biomarkers based on experience from other sub-regions.

74. A third participant supported enhancing the definitions of the mandatory biomarkers LMS and AChE and recommended the inclusion of biomarkers that reflect damage responses, such as oxidative stress. She also emphasized that biomarkers should be measured in both hotspots and reference areas, and that assessments may be conducted by comparing measured values with reference values, rather than relying solely on EACs. She highlighted the importance of giving due attention to a broad range of additional biomarkers, while noting the challenges in ensuring their proper interpretation.

75. Two participants reported limited national capacity for biomarker monitoring. They called for a possible reduction in the list of mandatory species and recommended adding fish as a matrix for biomarker measurement, alongside mussels.

76. Referring to the on-screen document, the Secretariat – MED POL revised the Guidance Factsheet for Common Indicator 18 by incorporating the following revisions as agreed by the Meeting:

- a) Strengthening the policy section by adding a paragraph on integrated chemical and biological monitoring;
- b) Improving the definitions of AChE and LMS;
- c) Revising unit definitions by including labialization time, and incorporating fish alongside bivalves for biomarker analysis;
- d) Clarifying the text to explicitly refer to the use of biomarkers in reference areas, other areas, and hotspots;
- e) Extending the list of additional biomarkers, and deleting one indicator from the list included in the Data Dictionary for CI 18;

- f) Emphasizing the need for intercalibration tests for CI 18, including consideration of different modalities such as ring tests;
- g) Revising the monitoring frequency to ensure the annual collection of both bivalves (e.g., *Mytilus galloprovincialis*) and fish (e.g., *Mullus barbatus*);
- h) Adding an alternative assessment method for effects, involving comparison of biomarker values at monitoring stations with those measured at control sites monitored concurrently, and applying environmental status assessments for CI 18 using BAC and EAC values.
- i) Including a few editorial corrections.

77. The Meeting also agreed on the need to amend the Data Dictionaries to reflect the inclusion of yearly sampling, as outlined in the Guidance Factsheets for CI 18, as well as including fish species (e.g., *Mullus barbatus*) alongside bivalves (e.g., *Mytilus galloprovincialis*) for biomarker analysis.

78. **Regarding the sections on Common Indicators 20 (CI 20)**, the Secretariat introduced revision of the Guidance Factsheet referring to the on-screen document.

79. One meeting participant, followed by two others, took the floor to request a revision of the units used for CI 20. The Meeting agreed with their proposal to replace the “frequency” with the following:

- a) Measured concentrations expressed in mg/kg w.w. for metals, and in µg/kg w.w. for non-metals, in line with the *Data Standards for IMAP CI 20*; and
- b) The percentage (%) of detected regulated contaminants* exceeding regulatory limits, calculated as a proportion of the total number of measured contaminants.

80. To reflect this change of the units, the Meeting agreed to revise definition for Common Indicator 20 by replacing the term “number” with “proportion.”

81. The Secretariat – MED POL also explained that the current assessment criteria incorporate the maximum regulatory levels for the contaminants in foodstuffs, as established in EU legislation available in 2023, to ensure the protection of human health. Given the evolving nature of assessment criteria, their further revision will reflect the latest developments at the EU level.

82. **Regarding the sections on Common Indicators 21 (CI 21)**, the Secretariat – MED POL introduced revision of the Guidance Factsheet referring to the on-screen document.

83. Two meeting participants took the floor to propose a revision, suggesting that the phrase “the summer season focusing on the touristic beaches” be replaced with “bathing seasons.”

84. One participant further proposed amending the wording regarding the minimum of four samples per season by adding the phrase: “with the interval between samplings not exceeding one month.”

85. Following the Meeting’s agreement on the proposed revisions, the Secretariat introduced the corresponding changes to the on-screen document.

86. The Meeting endorsed the revised version of Working Document WG.626/4/Rev.1, as presented in Appendix 4 of the Conclusions and Recommendations, for submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17–19 June 2025) under the no-objection procedure.

87. The Secretariat – MED POL presented **Working Document WG.626/5/Rev.1** on the updated Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27. She explained that the present document outlines the revision of noise monitoring and assessment, incorporating achievements in monitoring and assessment methodologies, as approved for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. This document did not include targets for IMAP Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27, as their minor adjustments, along with the proposed GES definitions, were included in working document UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1 for further consideration at the current meeting.

88. Referring to the on-screen document, the Secretariat – MED POL presented one by one the updates for **Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27 (cCIs 26 and 27)**, providing explanations for each and linking them to the achievements reviewed and agreed upon for the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR. At the request of the representative of France, who was unable to attend the meeting, she also conveyed her country's questions and proposed amendments to the current document, along with the corresponding responses from the Secretariat, for the Meeting's consideration. She also suggested a correction to the one source used, following a proposal made by another meeting participant.

89. Except for the views expressed on noise monitoring during the discussions on WG.626/3/Rev.1 and WG.626/4/Rev.1, no additional proposals were made regarding the review of the Guidance Factsheets. Consequently, the Meeting endorsed the revised version of Working Document WG.626/5/Rev.1, as presented in Appendix 5 of the Conclusions and Recommendations, for submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17–19 June 2025) under the no-objection procedure.

Agenda item 5: Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24

90. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat presented Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/7 “Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24”, in particular for ingestion and entanglement on marine turtles.

91. A number of representatives of the Contracting Parties, took the floor, welcomed the updated version of the document and requested a number of changes, in particular on the section on entanglement, under the overall guidance of the already established Online Working Group (OWG):

- a) To double check the number of data included in Table 1, improve the wording for the Frequency of Occurrence (FO) and split the table for ingestion and entanglement;
- b) To retain the approach used for ingestion to exclude individuals with zero stomach content in the calculation of TV;
- c) To use the 15th percentile approach for entanglement applied to the total number of samples; and
- d) To add an explicit reference in the document that the resulted values will be subject to update for the next iteration of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR).

92. In response the Secretariat provided a number of clarifications and committed to prepare an updated version of the BVs and TVs for Common Indicator 24 for submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17-19 June 2025).

Agenda item 6: Terms of Reference and Flow of Interaction for the Correspondence Groups on Monitoring and Online Working Groups

93. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat presented Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/8 “Terms of Reference and Flow of Interaction for the Correspondence Groups on Monitoring and Online Working Groups”, with an emphasis on the sections relevant to the CORMONs mandate.

94. A number of representatives of Contracting Parties took the floor, welcomed and endorsed the possible products and proposed interaction between EcAp governing bodies, and in particular for the CORMONs.

95. The Meeting endorsed the submission of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/8 to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17-19 June 2025) for review and further integration in the draft Decision on EcAp (i.e. as an annex), to be subsequently submitted to the 12th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (EcAp CG) (15 Sept. 2025), as well as the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (16-19 Sept. 2025) and COP24 (2-5 Dec. 2025).

Agenda item 7: Any Other Business

96. Under this agenda item, Mr. Malek Smaoui, Programme Officer (OPRC) at REMPEC, presented progress made in defining reporting thresholds for oil spills, as well as in proposing training activities to support the monitoring of accidental spills under Common Indicator 19 (CI 19). This information was shared with the current Meeting with the understanding that a separate technical group of Mediterranean experts, coordinated by REMPEC, will continue reviewing the specific technical details, with the aim of proposing final documents for consideration by the REMPEC Focal Points.

Agenda item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

97. The Meeting reviewed, commented on, and approved the draft Conclusions and Recommendations as attached to the present report as Annex III. This includes final refinements to ensure full consistency between the English and French versions.

Agenda item 9: Closure of the Meeting

98. After expressing the usual courtesies, the Chair declared the Meeting closed at 17:30 pm on Wednesday 28 May 2025.

Annex I
List of Participants

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES / REPRESENTANTS DES PARTIES
CONTRACTANTES**

ALBANIA/ALBANIE	Ms. Enkeleda Shkurta Head of Information Sector Environment Statistics and GIS Ms. Agalliu Roven Ministry of Tourism and Environment Ms. Vardhami Edit Ministry of Tourism and Environment
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE ET HERZEGOVINE	Ms. Čengić Selma Deputy Director Hydro Engineering Institute Sarajevo Ms. Senida Dzajic -Rghei Hydro Engineering Institute Sarajevo Ms. Ana Sudar Agency for Watershed of the Adriatic Sea
CROATIA/CROATIE	Ms. Slavica Matijević Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries Ms. Jelena Lusic Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries Ms. Mirta Smolaka Tankovic Ruder Boskovic Institute, Center for Marine Research
CYPRUS/CHYPRE	Mr. Konstantinos Antoniadis Officer of Fisheries and Marine Research
GREECE/GRECE	Ms. Kalliopi Pagkou Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography Research director Ms. Christina Zeri Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography Research director Ms. Eleni Kaberi Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography Research director Ms. Aikaterini Tsangkari Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography Research director
ISRAEL/ISRAEL	Mr. Dror Zurel Israel Ministry of Environmental Protection Marine Monitoring and Research Coordinator Ms. Yael Segal Israel Oceanographic & Limnological Research Ltd.
ITALY/ITALIE	Mr. Marco Matiddi Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA). Ms. Cecilia Silvestri

	Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA). Ms. Ginevra Molto Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) Ms. Paola Guarracino Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA)
LEBANON/LIBAN	Mr. Milad Fakhri Director of the National Center for Marine Sciences Ms. Celine Mahfouz National Council for Scientific Research Lebanon (CNRS-L)
MALTA/MALTE	Ms. Annabelle Haber Environment & Resources Authority Ms. Juliane Baldacchino Assistant Environment Protection Officer
MONTENEGRO/MONTENEGRO	Ms. Ivana Mitrović Advisor - Department of Nature Protection, Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Environmental Protection Agency Ms. Bojana Knežević Center for Ecotoxicological Research Podgorica Ms. Dragana Drakulović University of Montenegro-Institute of Marine Biology
MOROCCO/MAROC	Ms. Mariama Zbiry INRH Ms. Bouchra Oujidi Department of Sustainable Development, Morocco Mr. Abeslam Abid LNESP/Département du Développement Durable
SPAIN /ESPAGNE	Ms. Candela García Gómez Spanish Institute of Oceanography Ms. Nerea Valcarcel-Perez Spanish Institute of Oceanography, IEO-CSIC) Mr. Victor Leon Instituto Español de Oceanografía (IEO-CSIC)
TUNISIA/TUNISIE	Mr. Lassaad Chouba Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer Mr. Afef Fathalli National Institute of Marine sciences and technologies Mr. Noureddine Zaaboub National institute of marine sciences and technologies

TURKIYE/TURKIYE	Mr. Bahar Özögüt Ministry of Environment Urbanization and Climate Change Mr. Ebru Olgun Eker Ministry of Environment Urbanization and Climate Change Mr. Hacer Selamoğlu Çağlayan Ministry of Environment Urbanization and Climate Change
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**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME - COORDINATING UNIT AND COMPONENTS
OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

**PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT - UNITÉ DE COORDINATION
ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

UNEP/MAP COORDINATING UNIT PNUE/PAM UNITÉ DE COORDINATION	Mr. Faraj El Awar Senior Programme Officer (MED POL and QSR), UNEP E-mail: faraj.el-awar@un.org Ms. Olfat Hamdan MED POL Programme Management Officer E-mail: olfat.hamdan@un.org Ms. Jelena Knezevic MED POL Monitoring and Assessment Officer E-mail : jelena.knezevic@un.org Mr. Christos Ioakeimidis QSR Programme Management Officer E-mail: christos.ioakeimidis@un.org Mr. Malek Smaoui REMPEC Programme Officer (OPRC) E-mail : msmaoui@rempec.org Ms. Nathalie Gomez Programme Assistant E-mail : nathalie.gomez@un.org
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**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS /
ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES**

HELLENIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (HELMEPA)	Mr. Stathis Kostakopoulos Ms. Eleni Tsolka
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**OBSERVERS/
OBSERVATEURS**

HELLENIC CENTER MARINE RESEARCH	Ms. Aikaterini Anastasopoulou Ms. Ester Skylaki Ms. Alexandra Pavlidou Ms. Efthimia Cotou Ms. Ourania Karydi Mr. Elias Dimitriou
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Annex II
Agenda of the Meeting

Agenda of the Meeting

- Agenda Item 1:** Opening of the Meeting
- Agenda Item 2:** Organizational Matters
- Agenda item 3:** IMAP Update
a. IMAP Pollution Ecological Objectives and Indicators
b. IMAP Marine Litter Ecological Objective and Indicators
- Agenda item 4:** Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Pollution Indicators
- Agenda item 5:** Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24
- Agenda item 6:** Terms of Reference and Flow of Interaction for the Correspondence Groups on Monitoring and Online Working Groups
- Agenda Item 8:** Any Other Business
- Agenda Item 9:** Conclusions and Recommendations
- Agenda Item 10:** Closure of the Meeting

Annex III
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

On 27-28 May 2025, the Joint Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Pollution and Marine Litter Monitoring was held in Anavyssos, Greece, at the kind invitation of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR). The Meeting was organized by UNEP/MAP Secretariat (MED POL Programme).

Further to its deliberations, the Meeting reached the following conclusions:

Agenda item 3: IMAP Update

a. IMAP Pollution Ecological Objectives and Indicators

b. IMAP Marine Litter Ecological Objective and Indicators

1. The Meeting thanked the Secretariat for organizing the Meeting and for the preparation of Working Documents.
2. Following the presentation by the Secretariat of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1, “IMAP Update for Ecological Objectives 5, 9 and 11,” the Meeting reviewed the updated Operational Objectives, IMAP Common Indicators, Good Environmental Status (GES) definitions, and Targets for Ecological Objectives 5 (Eutrophication), 9 (Pollution), and 11 (Noise). These had been proposed by the Secretariat based on Annex I of Working Document WG.602/3 previously approved by the Online Working Group established by the Meeting of CorMon Pollution (30 January 2025). The Meeting also considered additional modifications proposed during the session. It endorsed the submission of the updated Ecological Objectives 5, 9, and 11, as presented in Appendix I to the conclusions and recommendations, to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting (17–19 June 2025). This also included agreement to enhance the monitoring and assessment of impulsive and continuous noise, while not elevating Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27 to the status of Common Indicators.
3. Following the presentation of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/6, “MAP Update for Ecological Objective 10,” the Meeting reviewed the updated Operational Objectives, IMAP Common Indicators, GES definitions, and Targets for Ecological Objective 10 (Marine Litter). It endorsed the submission of the updated version, incorporating changes outlined in Appendix II to the conclusions and recommendations, to the Meeting of MED POL Focal Points to be held on 17–19 June 2025.
4. The Meeting reviewed Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/9, “Revised Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria for Pollution and Marine Litter (EO5, EO9, EO10, EO11).” It considered the updated IMAP Common Indicators for EO5, EO9, EO10, and EO11, as proposed by the Secretariat and based on the version reviewed by the 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (2 October 2024), along with further modifications from participants during the session. The Meeting endorsed their submission, as outlined in Appendix III to the conclusions and recommendations, to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting (17–19 June 2025). This included an annex presenting the assessment criteria approved by COP23 (Decision IG.26/3), with an addition for Common Indicator 24 and corrections to minor errors in Common Indicator 14, based on proposals by representatives of two Contracting Parties.
5. By endorsing Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/9, the Meeting emphasized the evolving nature of assessment criteria and the importance of their regular updates, especially for the third iteration of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report. It highlighted the need to integrate toxicity considerations into future GES/Environmental assessments. The Meeting agreed to establish online working groups tasked with reviewing scientific literature and compiling data related to nutrients, toxicity testing, occurrence of contaminants and biomarker analysis, to improve assessment criteria for eutrophication, contaminants in biota and sediments, and biomarkers.

6. Regarding the marine litter component (IMAP EO10) of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/9, the Meeting agreed to introduce two new Common Indicators, as follows:

- a) Common Indicator 24: Trends in the amount of litter ingested by marine organisms and in the number of individuals entangled in marine litter (EO10).
- b) Common Indicator 28: Trends in the amount of litter coming from riverine sources (EO10)

Agenda item 4: Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Pollution Indicators

7. The Meeting endorsed the “Updated Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, and 21” (UNEP/MED WG.626/4/Rev.1) and the “Updated Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Candidate Common Indicators 26 and 27” (UNEP/MED WG.626/5/Rev.1), as revised and presented in Appendix IV to the conclusions and recommendations, as well as their submission to the MED POL Focal Points Meeting (17–19 June 2025) for no objection. These updates reflect the modifications agreed during the meeting and ensure consistency with the revised IMAP for Ecological Objectives 5, 9, and 10 (UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1 and UNEP/MED WG.626/9).

Agenda item 5: Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24

8. The Meeting reviewed Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/7, “Baseline Values (BV) and Threshold Values (TV) for IMAP Candidate Indicator 24,” and welcomed the updated version prepared by the Secretariat (MED POL and SPA/RAC) under the guidance of an Online Working Group composed of experts from France, Greece, and Italy, which improved the analysis and proposed values.

9. The Meeting requested a number of changes in the document, in particular on the section on entanglement, to incorporate the following changes [under the overall guidance of the already established OWG]:

- a) Double check the number of data included in Table 1, improve the wording for the Frequency of Occurrence (FO) and split the table for ingestion and entanglement;
- b) Retain the approach used for ingestion to exclude individuals with zero stomach content in the calculation of TV;
- c) To use the 15th percentile approach for entanglement applied to the total number of samples;
- d) Add an explicit reference in the document that the resulted values will be subject to update for the next iteration of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report.

10. The Meeting recommended the submission of the revised version of Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/7 to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17-19 June 2025) for further review and endorsement.

Agenda item 6: Terms of Reference and Flow of Interaction for the Correspondence Groups on Monitoring and Online Working Groups

11. The Meeting reviewed Working Document UNEP/MED WG.626/8, “Terms of Reference and Flow of Interaction for the Correspondence Groups on Monitoring and Online Working Groups,” with special focus to the sections concerning CORMON. It endorsed their submission to the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points (17-19 June 2025) for further review and approval, with a view to be annexed to the draft decision for the updated EcAp Policy for the Mediterranean.

Conclusions et recommandations

A l'aimable invitation de Centre Hellénique de Recherche Marine (HCMR), la Réunion conjointe des Groupes de Correspondance sur l'Approche Écosystémique pour le Suivi de la Pollution et des Déchets Marins s'est tenue les 27 et 28 mai 2025 à Anavyssos, Grèce. La réunion a été organisée par le Secrétariat du PNUE/PAM et son Programme MED POL.

A l'issue de ses délibérations, la réunion a adopté les conclusions suivantes :

Point 3 de l'ordre du jour : Mise à jour de l'IMAP

a. Objectifs écologiques et indicateurs de pollution dans l'IMAP

b. Objectif écologique et indicateurs relatifs aux déchets marins dans l'IMAP

1. La réunion a remercié le Secrétariat pour l'organisation de la réunion et pour la préparation des documents de travail.
2. À la suite de la présentation par le Secrétariat du document de travail UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1 intitulé « Mise à jour de l'IMAP pour les Objectifs écologiques 5, 9 et 11 », la réunion a examiné les Objectifs opérationnels actualisés, les Indicateurs communs de l'IMAP, les définitions du Bon État Écologique (BEE), ainsi que les Cibles pour les Objectifs écologiques 5 (eutrophisation), 9 (pollution) et 11 (bruit). Ces éléments avaient été proposés par le Secrétariat sur la base de l'Annex I du document de travail WG.602/3 précédemment validé par le Groupe de travail en ligne établi lors de la réunion du CorMon Pollution du 30 janvier 2025. La réunion a également pris en compte les modifications supplémentaires proposées au cours des discussions. Elle a approuvé la soumission des Objectifs écologiques 5, 9 et 11 actualisés, tels que présentés en appendice 1 aux conclusions et recommandations, à la réunion des Points focaux du MED POL (17–19 juin 2025). Cela inclut également l'accord visant à renforcer le suivi et l'évaluation du bruit impulsif et continu, sans pour autant élever les Indicateurs candidats 26 et 27 au statut d'Indicateurs communs.
3. À la suite de la présentation du document UNEP/MED WG.626/6, « Mise à jour de l'IMAP pour l'Objectif écologique 10 », la réunion a examiné les Objectifs opérationnels actualisés, les Indicateurs communs de l'IMAP, les définitions du BEE et les Cibles pour l'Objectif écologique 10 (déchets marins). Elle a approuvé la soumission de la version mise à jour, intégrant les modifications présentées dans l'Annexe 2 aux conclusions et recommandations, à la réunion des Points focaux du MED POL, qui se tiendra du 17 au 19 juin 2025.
4. La réunion a examiné le document UNEP/MED WG.626/9 intitulé « Programme intégré révisé de surveillance et d'évaluation de la mer et des côtes méditerranéennes et critères d'évaluation connexes pour la pollution et les déchets marins (OE5, OE9, OE10, OE11) ». Elle a considéré les Indicateurs communs de l'IMAP actualisés pour les Objectifs écologiques 5, 9, 10 et 11, tels que proposés par le Secrétariat, en s'appuyant sur la version examinée lors de la 11e réunion du Groupe de coordination pour l'Approche écosystémique (2 octobre 2024), ainsi que sur les modifications supplémentaires proposées par les participants. La réunion a approuvé leur soumission, telle que décrite dans l'appendice 3 aux conclusions et recommandations, à la réunion des Points focaux du MED POL (17–19 juin 2025). Cette soumission comprend une annexe présentant les critères d'évaluation approuvés par la CdP23 (Décision IG.26/3), avec un ajout pour l'Indicateur commun 24 et la correction d'erreurs mineures dans l'Indicateur commun 14, sur la base de propositions de deux Parties contractantes.
5. En approuvant le document UNEP/MED WG.626/9, la réunion a souligné le caractère évolutif des critères d'évaluation et l'importance de leur mise à jour régulière, en particulier dans le cadre de la troisième édition du Rapport sur l'état de l'environnement en Méditerranée. La réunion a souligné la nécessité d'intégrer les considérations de toxicité dans les futures évaluations du BEE/de l'état environnemental. La réunion a convenu de créer des groupes de travail en ligne chargés d'examiner la littérature scientifique et de compiler des données relatives aux nutriments, aux tests de toxicité, à la

présence de contaminants et à l'analyse des biomarqueurs, afin d'améliorer les critères d'évaluation de l'eutrophisation, des contaminants dans le biote et les sédiments, et des biomarqueurs.

6. Concernant la composante « déchets marins » (OE10 de l'IMAP) du document UNEP/MED WG.626/9, la réunion a convenu d'introduire deux nouveaux Indicateurs communs, comme suit :

- a) **Indicateur commun 24** : Tendances de la quantité de déchets ingérés par les organismes marins et du nombre d'individus empêtrés dans des déchets marins (OE10).
- b) **Indicateur commun 28** : Tendances de la quantité de déchets provenant de sources fluviales (OE10)

Point 4 de l'ordre du jour : Fiches d'orientation pour les indicateurs de pollution de l'IMAP

7. La réunion a approuvé les « Fiches d'orientation mises à jour pour les Indicateurs communs 13, 14, 17, 18, 20 et 21 » (UNEP/MED WG.626/4/Rev.1) et les « Fiches d'orientation mises à jour pour les Indicateurs communs candidats 26 et 27 » (UNEP/MED WG.626/5/Rev.1), telles que révisées et présentées dans l'appendice 4 et 5 4 aux conclusions et recommandations, ainsi que leur soumission à la réunion des Points focaux du MED POL (17–19 juin 2025) pour approbation sans objection. Ces mises à jour reflètent les modifications convenues pendant la réunion et garantissent la cohérence avec l'IMAP révisé pour les Objectifs écologiques 5, 9 et 10 (UNEP/MED WG.626/3/Rev.1 et UNEP/MED WG.626/9).

Point 5 de l'ordre du jour : Valeurs de référence (VR) et Valeurs seuils (VS) pour l'Indicateur candidat 24 de l'IMAP

8. La réunion a examiné le document UNEP/MED WG.626/7, « Valeurs de référence (VR) et Valeurs seuils (VS) pour l'Indicateur candidat 24 de l'IMAP », et a salué la version mise à jour préparée par le Secrétariat (MED POL et SPA/RAC) sous la direction d'un Groupe de travail en ligne composé d'experts de France, de Grèce et d'Italie, qui a amélioré l'analyse et les valeurs proposées.

9. La réunion a demandé plusieurs modifications au document, en particulier dans la section relative à l'empêchement, afin d'y intégrer les changements suivants [sous la supervision générale du Groupe de travail en ligne déjà établi] :

- a) Vérifier de nouveau le nombre de données figurant dans le Tableau 1, améliorer la formulation relative à la Fréquence d'Occurrence (FO) et séparer le tableau en deux pour ingestion et empêchement ;
- b) Conserver l'approche utilisée pour l'ingestion afin d'exclure les individus dont le contenu stomacal est nul du calcul de la TV ;
- c) Utiliser l'approche du 15e percentile pour l'intrication par ingestion appliquée au nombre total d'échantillons ;
- d) Ajouter une référence explicite dans le document indiquant que les valeurs résultantes seront mises à jour lors de la prochaine édition du Rapport sur l'état de l'environnement en Méditerranée.

10. La réunion a recommandé la soumission de la version révisée du document UNEP/MED WG.626/7 à la réunion des Points focaux du MED POL (17–19 juin 2025) pour examen et approbation ultérieurs.

Point 6 de l'ordre du jour : Mandat et modalités d'interaction des Groupes de correspondance sur le suivi et des Groupes de travail en ligne

11. La réunion a examiné le document UNEP/MED WG.626/8, « Mandat et modalités d'interaction des Groupes de correspondance sur le suivi et des Groupes de travail en ligne », avec un accent particulier sur les sections concernant CORMON. Elle a approuvé sa soumission à la réunion des Points focaux du MED POL (17–19 juin 2025) pour examen et approbation ultérieurs, en vue d'être annexé au projet de décision pour la politique EcAp actualisée pour la Méditerranée.