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UNEP/MED WG.630/Inf.10



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

24 July 2025
Original: English

12th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group

Athens, Greece, 15 September 2025

Report of the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) Coast and Hydrography (Videoconference, 17 October 2024)

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2025



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UNEP/MAP WG.589/6



**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

22 October 2024
Original: English

Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) Coast and Hydrography

Teleconference, 17 October 2024

Report of the Meeting

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UNEP/MAP PAP/RAC
Split, 2024

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Report of the meeting

Introduction

1. In accordance with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2024-2025 adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Portoroz, Slovenia, 4 - 8 December 2023), PAP/RAC and the Coordinating Unit of UNEP/MAP are organizing a Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Coast and Hydrography Monitoring. The main objectives of the Meeting were to a) Discuss and agree on the Guiding Factsheet of the Candidate CI 25 Land cover change and its inclusion to the list of IMAP Cis, b) Agree on proposals for the revision of the Guiding Factsheet for the CI 15 on hydrographic alterations, c) Discuss proposals for modification of the Guiding Factsheet for CI 16 on coastline, d) Discuss and propose climate change-related indicators, and e) Inform on the on-going activities with regard to IMAP revision and EcAp Med PLUS project.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by participants from 15 Contracting Parties (CPs) of the Barcelona Convention: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, the Republic of Türkiye, and the EU. Two CPs provided comments and proposals in writing advance of the meeting (France and Israel).
3. Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) was present as the organizer, from the UNEP/MAP also Plan Bleu and the Coordinating Unit participated, as well as European Topic Centre from the University of Malaga (ETC-UMA).
4. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

Opening of the Meeting and Organizational Matters (Agenda Items 1 and 2)

5. The meeting was opened at 9:30 a.m. on 17 October 2024 by Ms. Daria Povh Škugor, PAP/RAC Director, who welcomed the participants. Mr. Marko Prem, PAP/RAC Deputy Director introduced the objectives of the meeting.

Rules of Procedure

6. The Meeting agreed that the rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/IG 43/6, annex XI), as amended by the Contracting Parties (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.1/5 and UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.3/5), would apply *mutatis mutandis* to their deliberations.

Election of Officers

7. Following rule 20 of the rules of procedure, the Meeting unanimously elected the following Officers:

Chair: Ms. Senida Džaić-Rghei (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Vice-chairs: Ms. Heba Sharawy (Egypt)
Ms. Helena Caserman (Slovenia)
Mr. Emrah Soylemez (Türkiye)
Rapporteur: Mr. Vasilios Kapsimalis (Greece)

Adoption of the Agenda

8. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the agenda and its timetable set out in documents UNEP/MED WG.589/1 and UNEP/MED WG.589/2, noting that simultaneous translation in English and French was to be provided during the Meeting. The final adopted agenda is presented in Annex II to this report.

Guiding Factsheet for the Candidate Common Indicator 25 “Land cover change” (Agenda item 3.1)

9. Mr. Marko Prem, Deputy Director at PAP/RAC presented the changes to the Guidance Factsheet as agreed at the previous CORMON meeting. These were related to the clear definition of land cover classes (UN); better presentation of reporting units; better presentation of indicator units, and clear instructions for statistical analyses and calculations of the indicator. He mentioned that also a Manual for calculating this indicator has been prepared and tested. As the previous CORMON has strongly recommended to include this Candidate CI 25 in the List of IMAP common indicators Mr. Prem asked the meeting to re-confirm this recommendation.
10. In the discussion that followed, participants welcomed the updates to the Guiding Factsheet and appreciated the additional clarifications provided by Mr. Prem. The group agreed to adopt the UN land use/cover classification as the most universal standard, despite one country suggesting adjustments to this classification. No further proposals were proposed. Based on this, the Guiding Factsheet will be adapted accordingly and considered finalized.
11. The meeting also reaffirmed the conclusion from the CORMON meeting (held on 28–29 March 2023 in Marseille, France) to include the CCI 25 in the List of IMAP Common Indicators as soon as possible. Malta will provide its official position on this matter in writing by 15 November 2024.
12. One participant raised a comment regarding the three reporting belts from the coastline, specifically referencing the 300-meter belt, which she noted is sufficient as a definition of the coastal zone in her country. In response, Ms. Povh Skugor clarified that the 300-meter belt is related to reporting requirements for this specific indicator, not as a definition of the coastal zone. She emphasized that the coastal zone should be defined according to the ICZM Protocol and that the three belts in the Guiding Factsheet are solely for reporting and monitoring purposes, aligning with European Environment Agency practices.

Revision of the Guiding Factsheet for the CI 15 “Location and extent of the habitats impacted directly by hydrographic alterations” (Agenda item 3.2)

13. Under this Agenda Item, Mr. Ivan Sekovski, Programme Officer at PAP/RAC, presented the proposal to simplify the Factsheet for the Common Indicator 15, based on the conclusions from the Decision IG.26/3 the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report. Decision IG.26/3 in its points 205 and 209 highlights that all countries had difficulties with the monitoring of the CI15; the Good Environmental Status has not been assessed, and revising the existing indicator Factsheet should be considered.
14. The Meeting agreed on two important (simplified) steps to assess hydrographical alterations: (i) to delineate the area/polygon of the seafloor lost by the structure itself, i.e. the „footprint“ of the structure; and to delineate the surrounding area of potential permanent changes to habitats by establishing a perimeter/buffer around the structure. This area should be estimated based on the data/information extracted from the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) procedures to which these structures are subject.
15. Changes to the CI15 factsheet will be made and presented with a view to be agreed at the next CORMON meeting.

Fine tuning of the Guiding Factsheet for the CI 16 “Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human-made structures” (Agenda item 3.3)

16. Mr. Ivan Sekovski, presented the need to “fine-tune” the Guiding factsheet for the CI16, based on the challenges identified in the UNEP/MED IG.26/3 such as: (i) selection of the reference coastline; (ii) synchronizing the methods of mapping the coastline (which would improve CI 16 assessment on Mediterranean level because it will contribute to more consistent data at regional level); and (ii) artificial structure classification (which is sometimes challenging and can result in same types of objects being classified into different categories or vice versa).
17. The idea to have a single reference coastline for the entire Mediterranean, to have more data consistency between countries, was presented. It is essential to agree on, if the use of a single source coastline for all countries gets encouraged, which coastline source should be used. For the given reason, it was agreed that the use of a unique data source as the reference coastline requires further discussion and that for the time being the official coastline as defined by the respective countries should stay as it is in the current Factsheet.
18. It was decided to include archaeological sites as human-made and assigned a specific category “Historical cultural structure”, as well as for all other structures that do not fall under any category should be regarded as “Other”. Both these decisions require some changes in CI16 Information standards.
19. As far as the structures detached from the coastline (e.g. offshore breakwaters not intersecting with the coastline) majority of participants felt that such structures are human-made with the impact on coastal environment and should therefore be taken into account when monitoring this CI (i.e. projecting to the official coastline and consider it as artificial).
20. As for the landward structures, only those that intersect with the reference coastline will be taken into account as artificial.
21. The Meeting appreciated the elaboration regarding different interpretation of human-made structures and clarifications made. The most typical examples could be included in the CI16 Guidance Factsheet to avoid future misinterpretations.

22. Two presentations on the lessons/experience in applying the Guiding document for the definition of GES for the CI16 were presented namely, by Ms. Mounia Hamdaoui for Morocco case and Mr. Emrah Söylemez for the case from Türkiye. Both presentations were welcomed and served as an inspiration/encouragement to other CPs to use this Guiding document for the definition of GES for the CI16. They were all invited to define GES in the near future so to enable assessment for the next QSR.

Indicators related to climate change within EO7 and EO8 (Agenda Item 4)

23. Mr. Prem presented the initial proposals for indicators and/or themes related to the development of climate change related indicators, as requested by the Decision on the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (Med QSR) and the conclusions of the EcAp Coordination Group meeting held on 2 October 2024. Within EO7 (Hydrographic Alterations), the proposed hydrographic parameters included salinity, temperature, waves, currents, and bathymetry. He emphasized that these parameters are equally important for assessing other Ecological Objectives (EOs)/specific indicators related to pollution, eutrophication, and biodiversity. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of leveraging remote sensing and satellite data for monitoring these parameters to optimize resource use. For EO8 (Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes), he suggested focusing on specific coastal ecosystems as themes for developing concrete indicators. These proposed themes, aligned with Article 10 of the ICZM Protocol, include wetlands and estuaries, coastal dunes and beaches, and coastal forests and woods.
24. Mr. Prem outlined that PAP/RAC would prepare a proposal for a set of climate change-related indicators and present it at the next CORMON meeting. Furthermore, PAP/RAC would contribute to the relevant Working and Information documents for the upcoming EcAp Coordination Group (CG) meeting scheduled for September 2025. If the proposed themes and indicators are approved by the EcAp CG, and the set of climate change-related indicators is endorsed by CORMON, a specific Guidance Factsheet will be developed.
25. An engaging discussion followed Mr. Prem's presentation. Regarding the inclusion of climate change-related indicators in EO7 (Hydrographic Alterations), participants proposed incorporating additional parameters such as sea level rise (SLR), stormwater, and acidification. It was also recommended to consider the spatial scope for monitoring these indicators, noting that values can be significantly higher in local bays or enclosed marine areas compared to the open sea, leading to stronger impacts on habitats. The importance of utilizing remote sensing for parameter measurement and monitoring was emphasized to optimize resource use. As the proposed indicators are relevant not only for hydrographic alterations connected to CI15 but also for other Ecological Objectives (EOs), participants stressed the need for coordination and linkages, particularly with EOs related to biodiversity (including invasive species), eutrophication, and pollution. Additionally, it was suggested to differentiate, as much as possible, between climate change impacts and other human-induced factors influencing changes in the proposed indicators. Beyond EO7, some participants highlighted climate change-related indicators pertinent to the terrestrial part of the coastal zone, such as air temperature, which affects coastal ecosystems through stress, drought, and extreme events. Monitoring trends in all these parameters was recognized as highly important.

26. The parameters proposed for EO8 (Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes) were well received by participants, as they align closely with the ICZM Protocol, particularly its articles addressing specific coastal ecosystems. The discussion placed special emphasis on the significance of coastal wetlands and forests, including their roles in blue carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation, vulnerability analysis, forest fire dynamics, restoration rates, wetland habitat health, and the frequency of extreme events. The meeting highlighted the need for these indicators to be discussed comprehensively at the UNEP/MAP level, specifically during the EcAp CG meeting, and with the involvement of all MAP components to prevent overlap in monitoring efforts and the future "mandate" for data retrieval on specific monitored parameters.

Information on IMAP Revision (Agenda Item 5)

27. Mr. Prem provided information on the overall process of the IMAP revision including relevant conclusions from the EcAp Coordination Group meeting that took place 2 October 2024. No further clarifications were asked for by the participants nor further suggestions provided. The relevant points for the EcAp/IMAP revision related to coast and hydrography cluster were agreed and will be communicated to the next EcAp Coordination Group meeting.

Information on the EcAp Med PLUS project (Agenda Item 6)

28. Mr. Marc Attallah, the Project Coordinator from the Coordinating Unit presented the EcAp Med PLUS project in particular its objectives, activities and deliverables. Participants had no further questions related to the presentation.

Any Other Business (Agenda Item 7)

29. No other business items have been suggested for this agenda item.

Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting (Agenda Item 8)

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

Introduction

The Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) on Coast and Hydrography was held on 17 October 2024 as a teleconference.

Following presentations and discussions within all agenda items, the Meeting agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

Agenda Item 3:

3.1 Guiding Factsheet for the Candidate Common Indicator 25 “Land cover change”

The Meeting appreciated and reviewed the document on the *Guiding Factsheet for the Candidate Common Indicator 25 “Land cover change”* (UNEP/MED WG.589/3). The Meeting adopted the document as presented and re-confirmed the Conclusion from the CORMON meeting (28 and 29 March 2023 in Marseille, France) to include the CCI 25 in the List of IMAP Common Indicators as early as possible. Malta will provide its position on this

by 15 November 2024. This conclusion will be presented to the next PAP/RAC NFPs meeting and the EcAp Coordination Group meeting.

3.2 Revision of the Guiding Factsheet for the CI 15 “Location and extent of the habitats impacted directly by hydrographic alterations”

The meeting, taking into considerations the Measures and Actions from the Med 2023 QSR on CI 15 and recalling the conclusions from the previous CORMON meeting regarding the simplification of the monitoring method for this CI 15 according to the current Guidance Factsheet suggested:

- To delineate the area/polygon of the seafloor lost by the structure itself, i.e. the „footprint“ of the structure
- To delineate the surrounding area of potential permanent changes to habitats by establishing a perimeter/buffer around the structure. This area should be estimated based on the data/information extracted from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports required for such structures.

The meeting suggested to change the current Guidance Factsheet accordingly and present the draft at the next CORMON meeting for approval.

3.3 Fine tuning of the Guiding Factsheet for the CI 16 “Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human-made structures”

The Meeting appreciated the analysis of the lessons learned during the preparation of the Med 2023 QSR and in particular the varying elements related to the coastline presented in the document *Proposal for the fine tuning of the Guiding Factsheet for CI 16* (UNEP/MED WG.589/4). The meeting agreed the following:

- the use of a unique data source as the reference coastline requires further discussion
- the coastline will be considered artificial only if landward structures intersect the reference coastline
- the archaeological remains will be considered a separate category in CI 16 Information standard. Other human-made structures that do not fall into any established categories (e.g. parking lots, quarries etc) will be considered as ‘Other’
- the off-shore breakwaters should be projected to the reference coastline as artificial

These amendments will be reflected in the Guidance Factsheet for the CI 16 that will be presented at the next CORMON meeting.

The Meeting agreed to invite the countries to prepare or complement the baseline status report for CI 16 with the definition of the country-specific GES based on the assessment criteria contained in the Guiding document (UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.3).

Agenda Item 4: Indicators related to climate change within EO7 and EO8

31. The Meeting welcomed and reviewed the draft document *Climate change-related CIs within EO7 and EO8* (UNEP/MED WG.589/5). The meeting agreed on the proposed hydrographic parameters with additional parameters such as SLR, ocean acidification, extreme events. The meeting agreed with the proposed themes related to specific coastal ecosystems for which CIs could be developed. PAP/RAC will prepare a proposal of the List of CC-related indicators with brief justification.

Agenda Item 5: Information on IMAP Revision

32. The meeting has been informed on the conclusions and recommendations of the 11th EcAp Coordination Group meeting (teleconference, 2 October 2024) related to Coast and Hydrography cluster, in particular on EcAp and IMAP revision. The meeting agreed on the proposals related to Coast and Hydrography cluster to be addressed during the next EcAp Coordination Group meeting.

Closure of the meeting (Agenda Item 9)

33. The Chairperson closed the Meeting at 14:00 on Thursday, 17 October 2024.

Annex I List of participants

REPRESENTATIVES OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	Ms. Senida Džaić-Rghei Hydro-Engineering Institute, Sarajevo
CYPRUS	Mr. Stelios Zervos Department of Public Works, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works, Cyprus
EGYPT	Ms. Heba Sharawy Mr. Mohamad Said
GREECE	Mr. Vasilios Kapsimalis Research Director Department of Marine Geology and Geophysics Institute of Oceanography Hellenic Centre for Marine Research Athens, Greece
ITALY	Ms. Iolanda Lisi Researcher Ms. Valeria Pesarino Technologist National Centre for Characterization and Coastal Protection, Marine Climatology and Operational Oceanography. Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), Rome, Italy
LIBYA	Mr. Almunji Alsamh
MALTA	Ms. Elaine Sciberras Ms. Andrea Carolina Perez Pardo
MONTENEGRO	Ms. Djina Bulatović Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development, Podgorica, Montenegro

MOROCCO	Ms. Mounia Hamdaoui Service du Littoral Ministère de la Transition Energétique et du Développement Durable
SLOVENIA	Ms. Helena Caserman Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia
SPAIN	Ms. Isabel Flores Montoya Madrid, Spain
SYRIA	Ms. Rula Jabbour Mr. Batoul Al Roustom
TUNISIA	Ms. Kaouthar Ben Houidi Observatoire du Littoral à l'APAL
TÜRKİYE	Mr. Emrah Söylemez Ms. Tutku Karadoğan Ministry of Environment Urbanisation and Climate Change Directorate General of Spatial Planning Department of Spatial Strategies and Environmental Plans
EU	Ms. Ioanna Varkitzi Ms. Fanny Gard European Commission
OTHER	
Plan Bleu	Mr. Antoine Lafitte
European Topic Center, University of Malaga	Ms. Mar Otero Senior Specialist in Nature Based Solutions and Marine Conservation

PAP/RAC	Ms. Daria Povh Škugor, Director Mr. Marko Prem, Deputy Director Mr. Ivan Sekovski, Programme Officer UN Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan, Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC), Split, Croatia http://www.paprac.org
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Annex II Meeting agenda

Teleconference 17 October 2024		Relevant documents
9.30 – 9.45	Agenda item 1 Opening of the meeting	
9.45 – 10.00	Agenda item 2 Organizational matters	UNEP/MED WG.589/1 UNEP/MED WG. 589/2 UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.1
10.00 – 13.00	Agenda item 3 3.1 Guiding Factsheet for the Candidate Common Indicator 25 “Land cover change” 3.2 Revision of the Guiding Factsheet for the CI 15 “Location and extent of the habitats impacted directly by hydrographic alterations” 3.3 Fine tuning of the Guiding Factsheet for the CI 16 “Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human-made structures” Training session: Best practices on GES definition for the CI16: .	UNEP/MED WG.589/3 UNEP/MED WG.589/4 UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.2 UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.3 UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.7
13.00 – 14.00	Break	
14.00 – 15.00	Agenda Item 4 Indicators related to climate change within EO7 and EO8	UNEP/MED WG.589/5 UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.4
15.00 – 15.30	Agenda Item 5 Information on IMAP Revision	UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.5
15.30 – 15.50	Agenda Item 6 Information on the EcAp PLUS project	UNEP/MAP WG.589/Inf.6
15.50 – 16.15	Agenda Item 7 Any Other Business	
16.15 – 16.45	Agenda item 8 Conclusions and recommendations	
16.45	Agenda item 9 Closure of the meeting	