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Sub-Group on Environmental Impact of Offshore Monitoring Programmes

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Agenda item 3: Offshore Monitoring Programme

Regional Road Map for the establishment of a Regional Offshore Monitoring Programme and Assessment

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Regional Road Map for the establishment of a Regional Offshore Monitoring Programme and Assessment

Objective

The objective of the present document, in the context of the development of a Mediterranean Monitoring Procedures and Programmes is to provide a detailed Regional Road Map for the Implementation of a Regional Offshore Protocol Monitoring Programme and Assessment, herein after referred to as “Offshore Protocol Monitoring Programme-OPMP”.

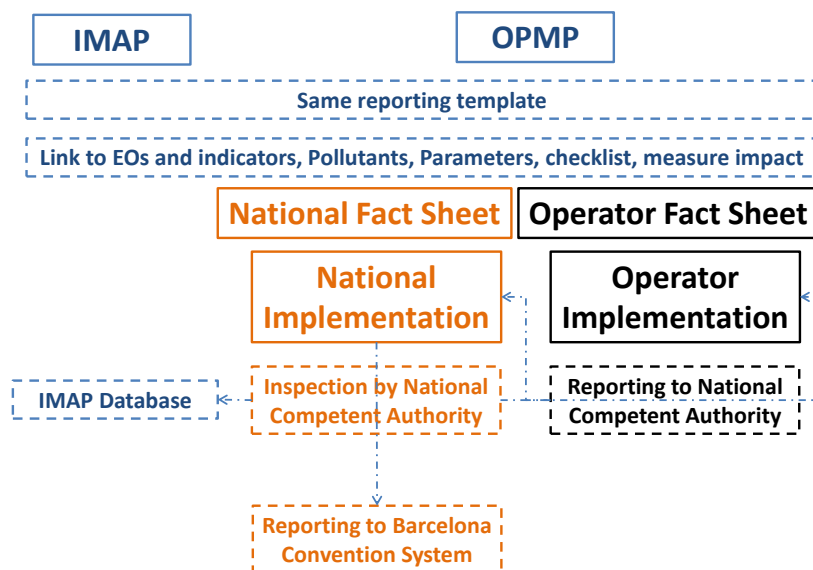
To this effect, the present document proposes recommendation for the steps that should be followed and implemented in order to establish National Offshore Monitoring Programmes and subsequently a Regional Offshore Protocol Monitoring Programme.

Purpose

The purpose of the monitoring program, and specifically of the “Offshore Protocol Monitoring Programme” (OPMP), is to provide an overview of environmental status and trends over time as a result of offshore exploration and exploitation activities of the continental shelf and the seabed and its subsoil (here within referred to as “offshore activities”). Monitoring programmes are intended to show whether the environmental status is stable, deteriorating or improving as a result of the Operators’ activities. Environmental monitoring of offshore activities includes monitoring of the water column (including surface), of the sediments, and of benthic habitats (soft- and hard-bottom fauna). The monitoring results, presented in assessments/reports, are used by Operators and Authorities as a source of information and as basis for making decisions on new measures to be implemented offshore. The results will also be used to develop and report on national environmental indicators for the offshore industry.

OPMP Steps

In accordance with the approach discussed under document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.434/6, in which Quality Indicators are embedded in the Common and Candidate Indicators of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), it is proposed to implement the OPMP as indicated in the below steps. In other words, the IMAP provides the technical and intellectual foundation of the OPMP, as depicted below.



Step 1: The Operators collect environmental data (as prescribed in the Indicator Guidance Factsheets), so that they may be able to determine whether they fulfil the requirements for compliance with each Quality Indicator.

Step 2: The environmental data referred to in Step 1 are recorded on the “Operator Compliance Factsheet” (OCF) established for each of the nineteen (19) IMAF Indicators that is being monitored.

Step 3: The Operator Compliance Factsheets (OCFs) are submitted by the Operators to the Competent Authority (e.g., Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Energy, etc.) in each country. The Competent Authority performs the necessary inspections to confirm that the data reported by the Operator were collected through scientifically appropriate methods, in correctly designated geographical locations, and at the prescribed time periods.

The reporting template of the Competent Authority is called “National Inspection Factsheet” (NIF), and is exactly the same in design and content with the OCF. Once the inspection is completed, the results are communicated to the Operator, so that appropriate corrective action (if necessary) may be undertaken. Both the NIF and the OCF are then entered into the IMAF database, and are also reported to the Barcelona convention System.

Templates for OCFs and NIFs is provided in Annex of the present document, while OCFs and NIFs for each of the nineteen (19) Common and Candidate Indicators relevant to Offshore Monitoring are proposed in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.434/Inf.6.

A description of the technical details of the parameters to be monitored by Operators was provided in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.434/4 - List of parameters. Similarly, specific technical guidance to Competent Authorities for the set-up of National Inspection Programmes was provided in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.434/5 - Minimum requirements for the establishment of a National Offshore Monitoring Inspection Programme. Therefore, in the remainder of this document, a description is provided of the organizational and administrative actions that are recommended for the establishment of an effective and efficient OPMP. These actions should precede Steps 1-3 above, and will comprise the preparatory work that should be undertaken to enable the implementation of Steps 1-3 above.

Preparatory Actions for the establishment of an effective and efficient OPMP

Whilst the recommendation for the implementation of the OPMP is presented in Steps 1-3 above, the following recommendations are provided for the specific preparatory actions needed for the introduction of the OPMP in the Mediterranean Sea.

- **Preparatory Action 1: Composition of the Operator Compliance Factsheets (OCFs) and the National Inspection Factsheets (NIFs) by a Task Force comprising the Offshore Protocol Secretariat and external experts/consultants**

It is recommended to review and agree upon the proposed nineteen (19) OCFs (one for each Common/Candidate Indicator to be monitored), which will indicate which environmental parameters should be monitored through a common methodology. Whilst the proposed OCFs have been prepared to initiate the process, their completion will most likely require additional work through correspondence under the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (BARCO OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact and possibly with the assistance of external expertise.

As described earlier, the NIFs will provide comprehensive methodological guidance to the Competent Authorities regarding the execution of inspections, so as to confirm that the data reported by the operator on the OCF were collected through scientifically correct methods, in the appropriate geographical areas, and at the prescribed time periods.

It is proposed to use a similar reporting template for the OCF and the NIF to emphasise the connection of the two documents, and to facilitate communication and co-operation between operator compliance personnel and national inspectors (i.e., competent authority/contracting party inspectors).

- **Preparatory Action 2: Dispatch of approved OCFs and NIFs to Operators and Competent Authorities for feedback**

Once the nineteen (19) draft OCFs are reviewed, in the framework of the Preparatory Action 1, they should be dispatched to all operators (i.e., oil and gas exploration and production companies) active in the Mediterranean Sea, and to all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (i.e., the Competent Authorities thereof) for their feedback. It is also recommended that the Operators and the Competent Authorities be given a period of 2 months, during which they may request additional information and clarifications, and submit their final comments on the draft OCFs and NIFs. The Secretariat would then be in a position to prepare the final version of the documents for adoption by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and subsequently forward it to the relevant stakeholders (operators and competent authorities) for implementation.

It is also suggested that the operators and competent authorities be given a maximum period of six months in which to commence the implementation of the OPMP based on the OCFs and the NIFs. During the first two months of this six-month period, a one-week training programme focused exclusively on the OPMP, should be envisaged so that both groups of stakeholders will be aligned with regard to each other's obligations and expectations. It is strongly recommended to designate the relevant body within UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinating Unit, which is in charge of facilitating the implementation of all training that is required for the implementation of the two pillars of OPMP (OCF and NIF), and for all technical assistance/consultation to be extended to competent authorities. The aforementioned OPMP training programme could be implemented in the third month following the conclusion of Preparatory Action 2.

- **Preparatory Action 3: Entry into force of the OPMP**

In the three months following the implementation of the training programme, the operators and the competent authorities will proceed to carry out all necessary actions, so that (at the end of the three-month period), the operators will complete the first environmental assessment in their area of offshore activity (utilising the 19 OCFs) and the competent authorities will execute the first national inspections of offshore exploration and production activities in their respective exclusive economic zones.

Actions requested by the Meeting

The Meeting is invited to:

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2 **review and comment** upon the Regional Road Map for the establishment of a Regional Offshore Monitoring Programme and Assessment

Annex I

**Reporting Templates for Operator Compliance Factsheets (OCFs) and
National Inspection Factsheets (NIFs)**

Template for Operator Compliance Factsheets (OCFs)

Operator Compliance Factsheet for Well XXX (Country XXX)		
Indicator Title		
Ecological Objective		
	Compliance Criteria/Parameters	Operator's Actions to Fulfil Criteria/Satisfy Parameters
Temporal Criteria/Parameters		
Spatial Criteria/Parameters		
Methodological Criteria/Parameters		

Template for National Inspection Factsheets (NIFs)

National Inspection Factsheet for Well XXX (Country XXX)				
Indicator Title				
Ecological Objective				
	Compliance Criteria/Parameters	Competent Authority's Actions to Verify that Compliance Criteria/Parameters were Satisfied by Operator	Findings	Corrective Actions Required
Temporal Criteria/Parameters				
Spatial Criteria/Parameters				
Methodological Criteria/Parameters				