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Regional Meeting on IMAP Implementation: Best Practices, Gaps and Common Challenges

Rome, Italy, 10-12 July 2018

Agenda item 3: Proposed IMAP Common Indicators Data Standards and Data Dictionaries

Biodiversity and Non-Indigenous Species: Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for Selected IMAP Common Indicators

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Note by the Secretariat

In the framework of the Programme of Work and Budget for 2018–2019 of UN Environment/MAP (Decision IG.23/14), INFO/RAC is working on the implementation of a fully operative Info-MAP system and on an IMAP compatible Data and Information System, connected to MAP Components' information systems and other relevant regional knowledge platforms.

The EU funded EcAp MED II Project is supporting the development of a Pilot IMAP compatible Data and Information System (Pilot IMAP Info System), which would lay down the basis for building a fully operational IMAP Info System, by the end of the initial phase of IMAP, as provided for by Decision IG.22/7.

INFO/RAC has developed the draft data standards and data dictionaries for ten selected IMAP Common Indicators (Common Indicators 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22 and 23). The following criteria were used for selecting these Common Indicators as part of the Pilot IMAP Info System:

- a) maturity of Common Indicator in terms of monitoring experiences and best practices;
- b) data collection and availability representing all IMAP clusters;
- c) availability of common indicator guidance fact sheets and/or metadata templates.

The purpose of this document is to present to the Contracting Parties the initially proposed preliminary data standards and data dictionaries for feedback and guidance towards their further development in the area of biodiversity and non-indigenous species (NIS).

Based on the preliminary discussion by the present meeting, work will continue by the CORMON Biodiversity and NIS Meetings, with the view of finalizing data standards and data dictionaries and making the respective component of the Pilot IMAP Info System fully operational by mid-2019. This would allow the Contracting Parties to upload their data generated as appropriate from the implementation of national monitoring programmes based on IMAP.

Data dictionaries are a set of information describing the contents, format, and structure of a database and the relationship between its elements. It is a crucial component of any relational database, invisible to most database users. Typically, only database administrators interact with the data dictionary.

In a relational database, the metadata, of which the data dictionary is composed of, includes the following:

- names of all tables in the database and their owners,
- names of all indexes and the columns to which the tables in those indexes relate,
- constraints defined in tables, including primary keys, foreign-key relationships to other tables, and not-null constraints.

Data dictionaries store and communicate metadata about data in a database, a system, or data used by applications. For groups of people working with similar data, having a shared data dictionary facilitates standardization by documenting common data structures and providing the precise vocabulary needed for discussing specific data elements. Shared dictionaries ensure that the meaning, relevance, and quality of data elements are the same for all users. Data dictionaries also provide information needed by those who build systems and applications that support the data. Lastly, if there is a common, vetted, and documented data resource, it is not necessary to produce separate documentation for each implementation.

The selected common indicators for the **Biodiversity and NIS** cluster of the Pilot IMAP Info System are as follows:

Common Indicator 1, Habitat distributional range (EO1) to also consider habitat extent as a relevant attribute;

Common Indicator 2, Condition of the habitat's typical species and communities (EO1);

Common Indicator 6, Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence, and spatial distribution of non-indigenous species, particularly invasive, non-indigenous species, notably in risk areas (EO2, in relation to the main vectors and pathways of spreading of such species);

After the discussion on the proposed preliminary biodiversity and NIS draft data standards and data dictionaries, work will continue by the upcoming meeting of the Biodiversity and NIS CORMON, with the aim of:

- i) finalizing data standards and data dictionaries related to the selected IMAP common indicators;
- ii) ensuring full consistency between the key messages of the guidance factsheets and Decision IG.22/7; and
- iii) making the respective component of the IMAP Pilot Info System fully operational by mid-2019.