



**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

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**NOTE ON INTEGRATED LIST OF MEDITERRANEAN GOOD
ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS AND RELATED TARGETS**

**Submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme/
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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to
the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Istanbul, Turkey, 3-6 December 2013

Note on Integrated list of Mediterranean Good Environmental Status and related targets

Information Note for the 18th Conferences of Parties of the Barcelona Convention

In line with the recommendations of the 3rd meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (**3rd EcAp CorGr Meeting**), asking the Secretariat to explain further by COP18 key definitions and future process of the Ecosystem Approach (**EcAp**), the current information document aims to specify key definitions under EcAp, such as GES, target and indicator and clarify future proposed steps, especially in relation to GES and targets which need to be further developed.

I. EcAp process: state of play and future key steps up to 2015

The draft EcAp COP decision¹ proposes a list of Good Environmental Status (**GES**) and Targets, next to a process to achieve by COP19 (2015) an integrated Mediterranean Monitoring and Assessment Programme. For this Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme the necessary first steps to be carried out during next biennium are reaching agreement among Contracting Parties on a short list of **knot targets/common indicators**, with associated **thresholds and baselines**, while also addressing related **data-management** needs. In addition, **methodologies** will need to be drawn up to ensure the successful adoption of selected indicators and targets by the end of 2015.

At the same time, it will need to be ensured, that those ecological objectives and/or indicators which were not found mature enough to be part of the current draft EcAp COP decision's integrated GES and targets list, will not be left behind either and that scientific developments, work of other international, regional bodies will be able to be reflected and incorporated in the EcAp process, with the possibility to re-visit the list of indicators, GES and targets with these relevant updates in 2015.

The Secretariat is currently in the process of analysing possible knot targets/common indicators, thresholds and baselines, proposed methodologies, for discussion with Contracting Parties through a participatory process, starting in early 2014.

Regarding **knot targets/common indicators**, it is important to note that other Regional Seas Conventions² (**RSCs**) have defined common or core-indicators. However, in our case, the EcAp process has resulted in targets which are more measurable and concrete than the associated indicators.

Based on discussions at the last EcAp CG Meeting the Secretariat is currently thus studying possible bases of agreement both for some knot targets (which, if monitored, could assess different indicators and/or ecological objectives), and for common indicators (which could be applied through the whole Mediterranean region). Based on this analytical work Contracting Parties will have the chance to discuss and agree on key knot targets/common indicators and matching baselines/thresholds already in 2014.

Regarding **baselines/thresholds** the Secretariat is looking at previous work of UNEP/MAP, as well as the practice of other RSCs, international and regional bodies as possible bases for agreement, to be discussed together with the debate on possible knot-targets and/or common indicators, as of starting early 2014 at the first Coordination Group Meetings on

¹ As endorsed by the parties at the MAP Focal Points Meeting in September 2013 (*Draft Decision IG.21/3 on the Ecosystems Approach including adopting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and targets*)

² Relevant practice of OSPAR and HELCOM is being closely studied by the Secretariat, noting regional differences.

GES and Target (**COR-GEST**).

Based on the outcome of these discussions and based on already ongoing additional research work by the Secretariat on relevant monitoring **methodologies** and practices of other RSCs, the Secretariat will prepare during the first half of 2014 a **draft monitoring guidance**, which will include the proposed **knot-targets** and/or **common indicators, baselines/thresholds** and relevant **methodologies** and **data-management options**.

This draft will be presented to the Coordination groups on Monitoring (**COR-MON**) and further discussed at the relevant EcAp expert and policy groups, with the aim of agreement on the core of the draft by mid-2015, as a basis for the future Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme.

Next to the need of further integration in order to draw up the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme during the next biennium (as described above), there is also need to further address the **less mature Ecological Objectives (EOs)** and/or indicators, as highlighted by many of the Contracting Parties at the 3rd EcAp CorGr Meeting.

Four EOs are in need of further development (EO 3, 4, 6 and 11) addressing fisheries, food-webs, seafloor integrity and marine noise. The development of these EOs is foreseen, also in collaboration with the GFCM, ICCAT and ACCOBAMS, which are also developing in a participatory manner and testing draft indicators, GES and targets. The foremost challenge for these EOs is data-availability, but next to the on-going work of the partner organizations described above, several on-going European FP7 scientific projects address the development and application of indicators, GES and targets included in these four EOs. These projects include MEDISEH³, MERMAID⁴ and CREAM⁵ for fisheries, DEVOTES⁶ for food webs and CoCoNET⁸, DEVOTES⁶, PEGASO⁷ and MEDINA⁹ for seafloor integrity and the produced data and project outcomes shall help to prepare these EOs for adoption at COP19.

In addition there are some operational objectives or indicators in other EOs that are not currently included, such as habitats of birds and reptiles in (1.4) EO1, for which future COR-GEST meetings shall decide on the feasibility of the indicators and based on the results, the operational objective or one/some of its' indicators will either be removed from the list, or GES and targets will be developed to be adopted at COP19/20.

The other currently not-included operational objectives/indicators are contained in EO7, EO8 and EO9 and are mainly hampered by data-availability. However, the scientific projects in the Mediterranean such as CoCoNET⁸, MERMAID⁴, PEGASO⁷ and MEDINA⁹ address the development of the targets, GES and indicators and the produced data and project outcomes will help to prepare these EOs for adoption at COP19.

Based on the above, the Secretariat will propose a process (initial thinking reflected in Annex I to this document on future EcAp process graph) to Contracting Parties at their next COR-GEST meetings, with the overall aim of not leaving any EOs behind and achieve an update the integrated list of EOs, reflecting scientific and data developments, work of other regional, international bodies, relevant projects, pilots, as well as discussions on monitoring feasibility and needs in the COR MON groups during the next biennium.

³ <http://mareaproject.net/contracts/5/overview/>

⁴ <http://mermaid-era.eu>

⁵ www.cream-fp7.eu

⁶ www.devotes-project.eu

⁷ www.pegasoproject.eu

⁸ <http://www.coconet-fp7.eu>

⁹ www.medinaproject.eu

II. Definitions for GES, Target and Indicator

All definitions under are proposed by the Secretariat, based on previous discussions of the Contracting Parties and in case of the absence of these, on definitions used by other regional, international bodies on the above, based on also the work of ongoing scientific research work.

All definitions under will be further developed in a participatory manner by the Contracting Parties, in the upcoming COR-GEST groups in 2014.

1. Good Environmental Status (GES):

- i) Environmental Status means the overall state of the environment in marine waters, taking into account the structure, function and processes of the constituent marine ecosystems together with natural physiographic, geographic, biological, geological and climatic factors, as well as physical, acoustic and chemical conditions, including those resulting from human activities inside or outside the area concerned.
- ii) Good Environmental Status means the environmental status of marine waters where these provide ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive within their intrinsic conditions, and the use of the marine environment is at a level that is sustainable, thus safeguarding the potential for uses and activities by current and future generations

2. Target: a qualitative or quantitative statement on the desired condition of the different components of, and pressures and impacts on, marine waters in respect to each marine region or sub-region.

Interpretation: A target expresses 'where we want to be' or 'what we want to achieve' that will attain or contribute towards reaching GES. In a context of planning and management based on the ecosystems approach paradigm, it would be useful to apply the DPSIR framework, where **D = drivers** (human activities) lead to **P= pressures** (emissions, fish captures), that change **S = State** (of the environment), and result in **I = impacts** (pollution, health related issues, erosion). Such impacts are counteracted by **R = Responses** (policy, conventions, regulations), which aim to control Drivers.

3. Indicator: An indicator is a parameter chosen to represent (indicate) a certain situation or aspect and to simplify a complex reality. In this context, indicators are specific attributes of each GES criteria that can be measured to make such criteria operational and which allow subsequent change in the attribute to be followed over time.

Appendix I

Visualization of the EcAp process and time-lines regarding GES and targets requiring further work and the development of common indicators/knot targets (to be further developed and discussed in a participatory manner at the next COR-GEST meeting).

