



**Regional webinar:**

## **The Hidden Threat Beneath the Waves - Underwater Noise in the Mediterranean**

Online , 29 May 2025



**Mediterranean  
Action Plan**  
Barcelona  
Convention

# Institutional Process for Revising EcAp Policy and IMAP

CORMONs Pollution – Marine Litter (Jan. & May 2025)  
CORMONs Biodiversity and Fisheries (Apr. 2024 & June 2024)  
CORMONs Coast and Hydrography (Oct. 2024 & June 2025)

Consultation Process based on 8 Questions agreed during the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of EcAp CG (Oct. – Dec. 2024)

11<sup>th</sup> EcAp CG  
(2 Oct. 2024)

12<sup>th</sup> EcAp CG  
(15 Sept. 2025)

MAP FPs  
(16-19 Sept. 2025)

COP 24  
Cairo, Egypt  
(2-5 Dec. 2025)

Revised MSSD,  
Updated NAPs/POMs  
Preparation of 2026/2027 PoW  
Development of TVs/Reference Values for CIs  
Effective Implementation of EU funded projects  
Enhanced synergy with EU MSFD Implementation/evaluation  
Coordination with OSPAR HELCOM and BSC

Publication of MSFD and  
2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle PoMs Assessment

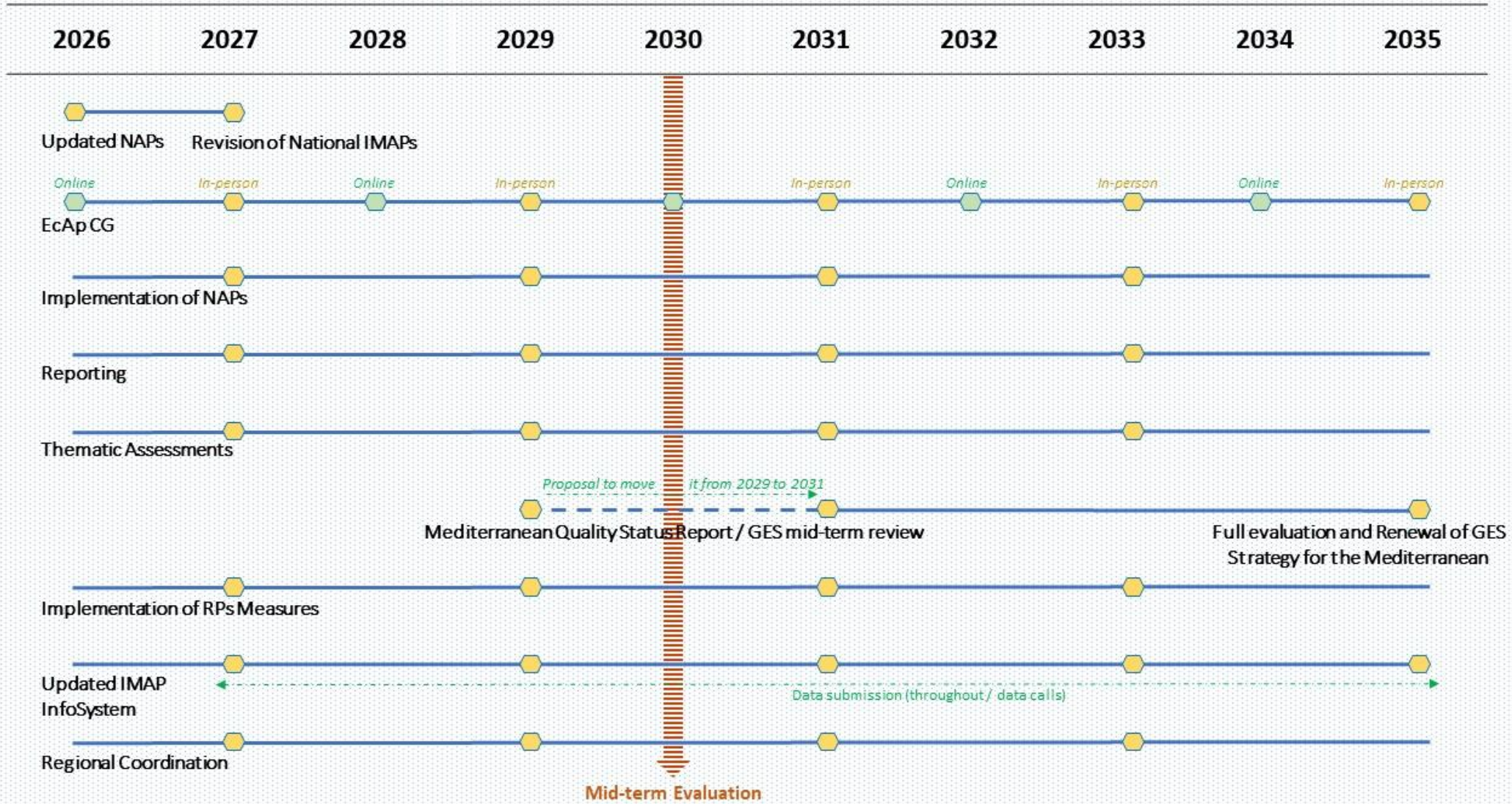
# Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035)

## New Elements:

- EcAp Vision for achieving GES by 2035 (achievements, persistent and emerging challenges, risks, opportunities)
- Updated Step-Approach: 6 Steps
- Governance Mechanism to support EcAp Implementation in the Mediterranean
- ✓ 11 Ecological Objectives
- ✓ 38 Common Indicators (11 new CIs)
- ✓ Indicator Definition, GES Definitions and Targets for the majority of CIs
- ✓ Establishment of assessment criteria to support GES assessment

# Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035)

## EcAp Roadmap Implementation 2026-2035

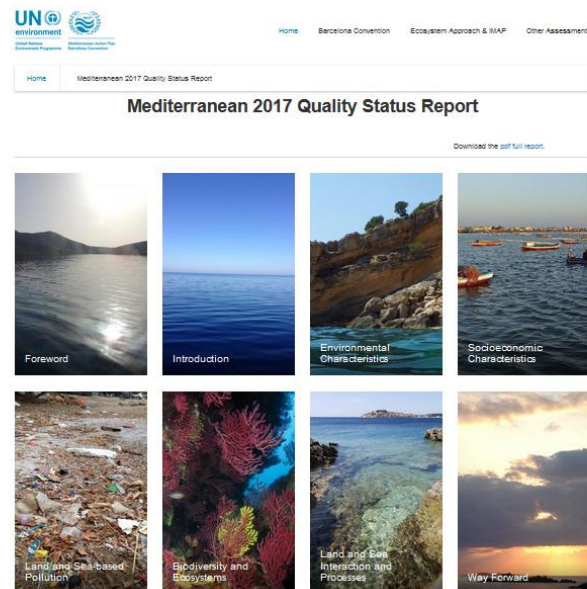


# From 2017 MED QSR to 2023 MED: Key steps and lessons learned

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**Mediterranean 2017 Quality Status**  
<http://www.medqsr2017.info-rac.org/>

**Decision IG.23/6 (COP 20, Tirana, Albania, 17-20  
December 2017)**



✓ **MED QSR 2023 Roadmap**

✓ **IMAP implemented at national and, where applicable, sub-regional level**

✓ **Towards the Fully Data-Based 2023 MED QSR**

✓ **Better linkages pressures/impact/states**



# The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report ([medqsr2023.info-rac.org](http://medqsr2023.info-rac.org))

UNEP/MED/IG.26/22  
Page 189

**Decision IG.26.3**

**The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a Renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean**

*The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols: at their 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting,*

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

*Recalling also* the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/296 of 21 July 2022, entitled "Our ocean, our future, our responsibility",

*Recalling* the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution UNEP/EA.5/Res. 3 of 2 March 2022, entitled "Future of the Global Environment Outlook",

*Recalling* the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that was adopted during the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15),

*Having regard* to Article 12 of the Barcelona Convention and relevant articles of its Protocols addressing monitoring and assessment,

*Recalling* Decisions of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention related to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme, i.e. Decision IG.17/6 (COP 15), Decision IG.20/4 (COP 17), Decision IG. 21/3 (COP 18), Decision IG.22/7 (COP 19), Decision IG.23/6 (COP 20), and Decision IG.24/4 (COP 21) and their status of implementation,

*Expressing appreciation* for the work undertaken by the entire UNEP/IMAP Barcelona Convention system, in particular the Contracting Parties, Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group, CORMON, CORESA, MAP and MAP Components Focal Points, MAP Partners, and the Secretariat including MAP Components, for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap,

*Expressing also appreciation* for the support provided through the EU-funded projects, i.e. EcAp MED III, Marine Litter MED II and IMAP-MFA, and the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with Italy, as well as the GEF-funded MedProgramme, in the implementation of the IMAP-based national monitoring programmes and in the preparation of the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR), as well as on the implementation of Programmes of Measures/National Action Plans at national level,

*Concerned* by the pressures caused by human activities on the marine and coastal environment and *acknowledging* that unsustainable consumption and production patterns are the main drivers of environmental change in the Mediterranean, as highlighted in the socioeconomic and assessment chapters of the 2023 MED QSR,

*Having considered* the reports of the meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group, and the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on Pollution, Marine Litter, Biodiversity and Coast and Hydrography, the MED POL and RAC Focal Points,

1. *Take note* of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR) (UNEP/MED/IG.26/Inf.10);
2. *Endorse* the provisional Executive Summary of the 2023 MED QSR, as set out in Annex I to the present Decision with the understanding that further work needs to be undertaken in the form of preparing an additional Summary for Policy Makers as one of the communication products of the 2023 MED QSR planned under the MAP PoW/Budget. To this purpose, it is requested of the Secretariat to set up a dedicated Working Group, composed of Contracting Parties and supported by the Secretariat, with a view of finalizing this policy document by the next EcAp Coordination Group Meeting (June 2024);
3. *Take note* of the online publication of the integrated 2023 MED QSR, along with the public availability of the 2023 IMAP Pollution MED QSR, as approved by the Meeting of Integrated CORMON (27-28 June), and all thematic assessments, which will be provided by the Secretariat on the dedicated website for the 2023 MED QSR;
4. *Endorse* the assessment criteria and threshold values as set out in Annex II to the present Decision, acknowledging their evolving nature, based on quality assured data availability and in this

## 2023 MED QSR

Mediterranean Quality Status Report



UN environment programme | Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention

## 2023 MEDITERRANEAN QUALITY STATUS REPORT


Executive Summary



UN environment programme | Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention

## 2023 MEDITERRANEAN QUALITY STATUS REPORT

Summary for Policymakers



UN environment programme | Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention

Home Introduction The Mediterranean Sea Mediterranean Quality Status Assessments Actions and Measures

UN environment programme | Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention

The MEDITERRANEAN QUALITY STATUS REPORT is an important IMAP flagship publication for assessing the status of the Mediterranean ecosystem and the achievement of Good Environmental Status

## MEDITERRANEAN QUALITY STATUS REPORT




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## 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report

23 January 2025



Published every 6 years, the second edition of the MED QSR is the upshot of a collective endeavor involving the Contracting Parties, MAP partners, in particular the scientific community, the Secretariat and the MAP Components.

The MED QSR series builds on a robust conceptual foundation and nationally sourced, quality-assured data submitted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention or other reliable sources, to provide an evidence-based intelligible assessment of Good Environmental Status (GES) of the Mediterranean Sea and coast, based on a GES/non-GES approach, as defined in the framework of the ecosystem approach and its Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme IMAP.

Download 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report

2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report



# 2023 MED QSR Initial Noise Assessment

- For the purpose of this assessment, the 10% threshold for impulsive noise (10%) is used for the assessment of a representative population will be considered sufficient between tolerable levels.
- For the years 2018-2020, the assessment was done for a month of July 2020 that can be seen as the worst-case scenario.
- In 2018, the population boundary value/whale habitats, k

A single threshold is defined and it applies to the % of habitat of noise-sensitive species affected by **continuous noise**. Based on that, to achieve or maintain the Good Environmental Status, the following thresholds should be observed : **No more than 20% of the habitat of selected species should experience noise levels above the Level of Onset of Biological Effects (LOBE) exceeding in any given month (based on the average noise level for that month) during the assessment year.**

The Summer months are those with the highest levels of vessel traffic and hence the 2023 MED QSR assessment was done for a month of July 2020 that can be seen as the worst-case scenario.

The two sub-regions were likely in GES in 2020, and another 2 sub-regions did not comply with the 20% threshold of impacted habitat over the monthly scenario.

## GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method

The assessment methodologies were developed based on the progress made in establishing thresholds within the EU TG Noise network, including their adapted application and the classification of GES versus non-GES within IMAP.

# **Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap and the Third IMAP Cycle for the Mediterranean (2026-2035) – Pollution Cluster (EO 11 – Underwater Noise)**

# Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035)

## Underwater Noise (E011):

### Common Indicator 26:

Proportion of days and geographical distribution where loud, low, and mid-frequency impulsive sounds exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animals;

### Common Indicator 27:

Levels of continuous low frequency sounds with the use of models as appropriate.

# Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap for the Mediterranean (2026-2035)

Updates for EO 11 (Underwater Noise) – [Common Indicators 26 and 27](#):

- ✓ **Reflection on progress achieved in the initial phase of IMAP Pollution implementation**
  - *Establishment and application of underwater noise monitoring methodologies;*
  - *Development and application of assessment methodologies, including GES/non-GES boundary values and related environmental classifications;*
  
- ✓ **Further Steps**
  - *Integration of both impulsive and continuous noise monitoring into IMAP-based national monitoring programmes;*
  - *Further enhancement of monitoring and assessment methodologies, including the use of threshold levels and GES/non-GES boundary values developed for the impulsive and continuous noise;*
  - *Improvement of the quality and availability of underwater noise data, and monitoring and assessment practices;*

# Updated Guidance Factsheets for IMAP EO 11

(available in UNEP/MED WG.630/11 (12th EcAp CG Meeting Report), Annex III, Appendices 3 and 4, as adopted by the 12th EcAp CG, September 2025, soon to be available online via the IMAP Info System);

## Document WG.630/7 presents the following revisions to the Guidance Factsheets for Common Indicators 26 and 27:

- GES definitions and targets;
- Scientific references;
- Policy context and references;
- Indicator definitions;
- Indicator units, including spatial and temporal aspects;
- Temporal and spatial scope of monitoring;
- Statistical data elaboration;
- Assessment methodologies and scales of assessment;
- Monitoring methodologies;
- Identified gaps and uncertainties.



**IMAP Pollution Priorities:  
Towards the 2031 Mediterranean Quality Status Report  
(MED QSR)**

# E011 (Underwater Noise)

		GES Definition	GES Targets	GFS	Assessment Criteria/ TVs	DS/DD	Guidelines	GES Method/ Alternative Assessment Method
E011	CI26	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 4	✓	n/a	n/a	The assessment methodologies were developed based on the progress made in establishing thresholds within the EU TG Noise framework, including their adapted application and the classification of GES versus non-GES within IMAP.
	CI27	✓	✓	✓ WG.630/11 App. 4	✓	n/a	n/a	

# Interrelations between the IMAP – Pollution and the MSFD

Ecological Objective 11 (EO11): Noise from human activities cause no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems				MSFD Descriptor 11 (D11): Introduction of energy (including underwater noise) does not adversely affect the ecosystem			
Operational Objective	Indicator	GES Definition	GES Targets	Criteria	Definition	GES at the criterion level (Com Dec (EU) 2017/848)	Environmental Targets
11.1 Energy inputs into the marine environment, especially noise from human activities are minimized	11.1.1 Proportion of days and geographical distribution where loud, low and mid-frequency impulsive sounds exceed levels that are likely to entail significant impact on marine animals (Common Indicator 26)	Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems.	<u>State:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent (%) of habitat of noise-sensitive species within the assessment area that is impacted by impulsive noise events is below thresholds.</li> </ul>	D11C1:	Impulsive sound sources (spatial/temporal distribution and levels)	(D11C1) Spatial distribution, temporal extent and levels of impulsive noise do not exceed levels that adversely affect marine animal populations	Reduce or maintain the proportion of marine area exposed to high-intensity impulsive sound below levels that could cause significant adverse effects on marine animals.( MSFD TG Noise)
	11.1.2 Levels of continuous low frequency sound with the use of models as appropriate (Common Indicator 27)	Noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems	<u>State:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent (%) of the assessment area which is above levels causing disturbance to sensitive marine animal is below limits, or such limits are exceeded for a limited amount of time.</li> </ul>	D11C2	Continuous low-frequency sound (spatial/temporal distribution and levels).	(D11C2) Spatial distribution, temporal extent and levels of continuous low-frequency sound do not exceed levels that adversely affect marine animal populations	Achieve and maintain sound levels in the 20 – 200 Hz band below thresholds known to cause adverse effects on marine animals; demonstrate a stable or decreasing trend in ambient noise

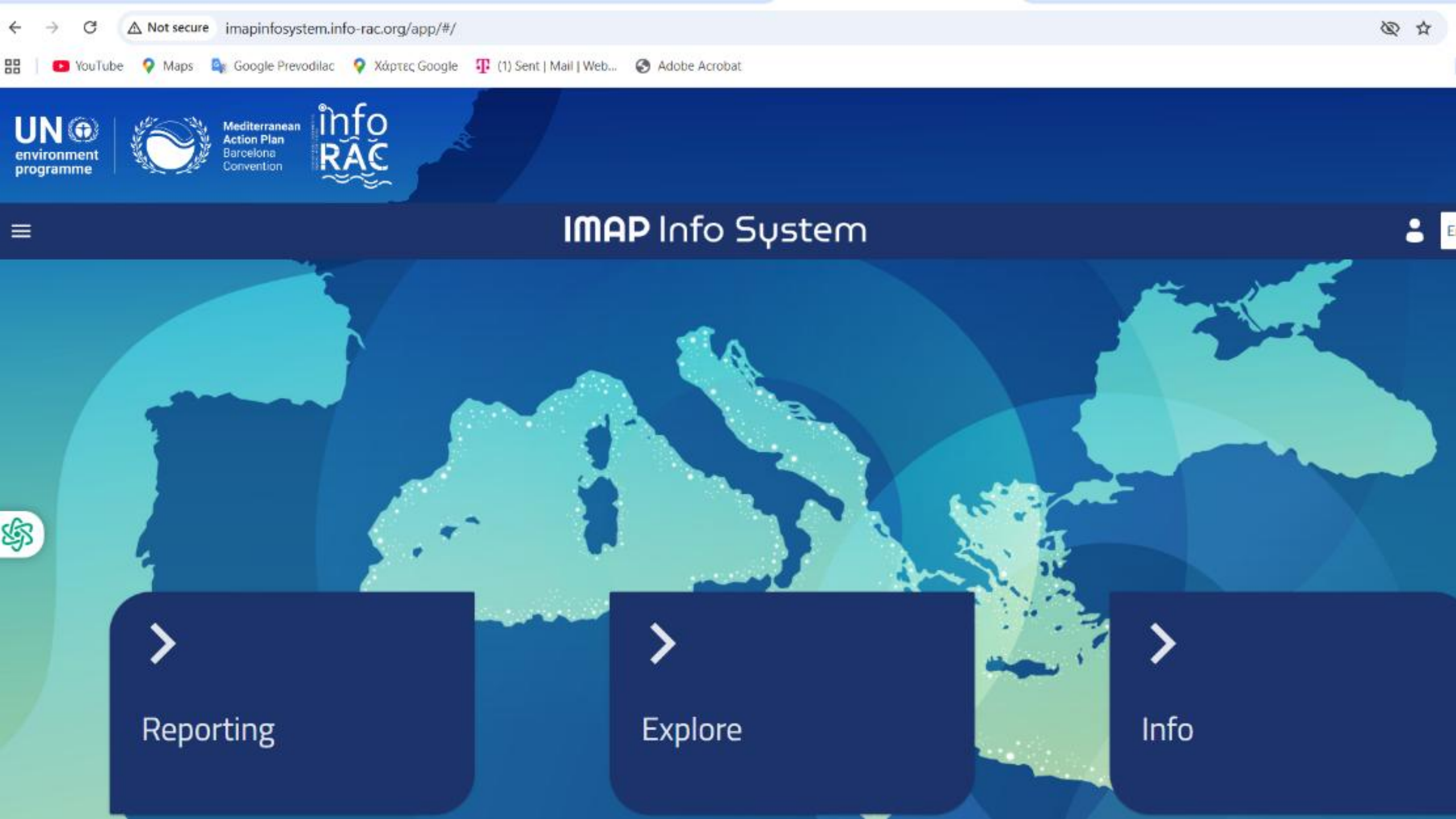
# IMAP Data Reporting via the IMAP Info System

## Data Generation and Reporting

**Data Quality Control and Quality Assurance (QA/QC)** applied in line with IMAP Pollution Monitoring Guidelines

**Quality-assured data** must be uploaded to the **IMAP Information System (IMAP IS)** in line with IMAP IS Data Dictionaries and IMAP Data Standards

<http://imapinfosystem.info-rac.org/app/#/>



# IMAP Info System

>  
Reporting

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Explore

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# IMAP Info System

## INFORMATION STANDARDS

Download Data Standards (DSs) and Data Dictionaries (DDs) of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment

Code	Indicator	Category	Description	Frequency	Availability	Year
			non-indigenous species, particularly invasive, non-indigenous species, notably in risk areas		Yes	2019
EO5 - Pollution	E1	Nutrients & physical and chemical parameters	<a href="#">Common indicator 13</a> : Concentration of key nutrients in water column <a href="#">Common indicator 14</a> : Chlorophyll-a concentration in water column	1	Yes	08-08-2019
EO7 - Coastal & Hydrography	H1	Hydrography	<a href="#">Common indicator 15</a> : Location and extent of the habitats impacted directly by hydrographic alterations to also feed the assessment of EO1 on habitat extent	1	Yes	08-08-2019
EO8 - Coastal & Hydrography	C1	Coastline	<a href="#">Common indicator 16</a> : Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of man-made structures to also feed the assessment of EO1 on habitat extent	1	Yes	08-08-2019
EO9 - Pollution	P1	Contaminants in Seawater, Sediment and Biota	<a href="#">Common indicator 17</a> : Concentration of key harmful contaminants measured in the relevant matrix (EO9, related to biota, sediment, seawater)	1	Yes	08-08-2019
EO9 - Pollution	PAE1	Acute pollution events	<a href="#">Common indicator 19</a> : Occurrence, origin (where possible), extent of acute pollution events (e.g. slicks from oil, oil products and hazardous substances), and their impact on biota affected by this pollution (EO9)	1	Yes	10-07-2024
EO9 - Pollution	PMO1	Level of pollution effects	<a href="#">Common indicator 18</a> : Level of pollution effects of key contaminants where a cause and effect relationship has been established	1	Yes	18-11-2022

# Pollution Data Standards

 E1\_ver\_1

 P1\_ver\_1

 PAE1\_ver\_1

 PMO1\_ver\_1

 PSF1\_ver\_1

 Q1\_ver\_1

## DOWNLOAD STANDARD "P1" - Ver. 1

INFORMATION STANDARD 

IMAP documents

Factsheets Pollution ML EN.zip



Reference documents

Monitoring Protocols Pollution EN.zip



CLOSE

affected by this pollution (E09)

Thank you !



**Mediterranean  
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