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Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016

### **Agenda item 3: Thematic decisions**

#### **Draft Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance**

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### **Note from the Secretariat**

In line with Decision IG.21.3, as agreed at the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat was requested to “prepare in cooperation with MAP components and competent partner organizations, through a participatory process involving Contracting Parties and the scientific community, a Monitoring and Assessment Methodological Guidance for consideration during the first meeting of EcAp CG in 2014 and a draft Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme to be presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties for adoption”.

In order to meet the timeline set out in Decision IG.21/3, an Integrated Correspondence Group (Integrated EcAp CorGest) Meeting was held in February 2014, that gave specific recommendations for the future Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme, agreed on a list of common indicators, which would form the basis of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.390/4).

Following this key step, the Correspondence Groups on Monitoring (CORMONs) started their work, with the aim to further specify the common indicators, discuss methodologies and parameters related to them and as such form the core of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme.

Three CORMON Meetings took place in between May-July 2014, on Pollution and Litter; on Coastal Ecosystems and Landscapes and Hydrographical conditions; and, on Biodiversity and Fisheries. These meetings provided important guidance on and input to the draft Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance of the Secretariat.

The 4<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group took place following these specific monitoring and assessment related meetings, in October 2014 and it provided further comments, suggestions, political guidance on the Draft Monitoring and Assessment Methodological Guidance (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.401/3) and mandated informal online expert groups, with the leadership of volunteering Contracting Parties, to address the outstanding monitoring and assessment questions, with the overall aim to be able to meet the timeline of the COP 18 EcAp Decision and agree on an Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme by COP 19.

Based on the outcomes of the above meetings and of further input of these informal online working groups, the Secretariat has prepared the “Main elements of a Draft Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme”, which was discussed in an Integrated CORMON Meeting in April 2015.

This Integrated CORMON Meeting provided further useful input into the development of the draft Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme and mandated the informal online working groups to continue their work on monitoring and assessment specifics, while the draft to be further addressed also in the upcoming Focal Points Meetings (MED POL, PAP/RAC, REMPEC and SPA/RAC Focal Points Meetings, which took place in between May-July 2015).

This draft Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Guidance is building on all the above expert level work, input and aims to set out the monitoring and assessment specifics of the agreed common indicators (including assessment criteria, when available).

As such, together with the draft Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Coast and Sea and Related Assessment Criteria (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.420/3, the draft IMAP) it aims to lay down the principles for the update of the existing national monitoring and assessment programmes, following the agreed common indicators.

It provides to Contracting Parties guidance on methodologies, monitoring and assessment techniques, specifics, for each common indicator and analyses key outstanding issues also in an integrated manner.

While it will be a common basis for the development of the national integrated monitoring and assessment programmes, during the initial phase of IMAP, it will also be further developed in the

upcoming CORMON groups, in order to address still outstanding issues, in light of future scientific and methodological developments, best practices of Contracting Parties.

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