



UNITED  
NATIONS

**EP**

UNEP/MED WG.502/9

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UNITED NATIONS  
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

UNEP

21 May 2021  
Original: English

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Fifteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points

Videoconference, 23-25 June 2021

**Agenda item 6: Conservation of sites of particular ecological interest**

**Report by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) on the group's works during the period 2020-2021**

## Note by the Secretariat

### Introduction

In accordance with the terms of reference<sup>1</sup> of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM), the Chair and Vice-Chair of AGEM should attend the meeting of Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) to report about the AGEM works and present each of the outputs it issued during the covered period.

The present report by the Chair and Vice-Chair of AGEM was prepared in this context, to inform the Fifteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (Videoconference, 23-25 June 2021) about the AGEM activities and outputs, since the first meeting of AGEM (Teleconference, 8 December 2020), as of 21 May 2021 (the day before the date of issuance of the present report).

These various activities were carried out as part of the AGEM Programme of Work for 2021, the SPA/RAC Programme of Work for 2020-2021 and the mandate emanating from COP Decisions.

This report includes a narrative part to which are annexed the reports of the First meeting of AGEM (Teleconference, 8 December 2020) and the Second meeting of AGEM (Teleconference, 3-4 May 2021).

The highest priority of the AGEM activities in this period was to guide and contribute to the development of the Draft Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), which is presented as document UNEP/MED WG.502/12 to the present meeting.

Two other outputs produced by AGEM were: (i) Draft Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs (in response to COP Decision 24/6, para 4) and (ii) Considerations on identifying and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment. These are also presented in separate documents to this meeting, referenced UNEP/MED WG.502/10 and UNEP/MED WG.502/11, respectively.

### Setting up of AGEM by SPA/RAC

Following a satisfactory outcome to the functioning of AGEM during a 2-year trial period (2018-2019) and a positive recommendation by the SPA/BD Focal Points at their Fourteenth Meeting (Portorož, Slovenia, 18-21 June 2019), the 21<sup>st</sup> ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 21; Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019) decided “to set up a multidisciplinary ad hoc group of experts for marine protected areas in the Mediterranean to support the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties to progress with the 2020 and post-2020 marine protected areas agenda in the Mediterranean and to work on related issues such as preparing guidelines, setting up definitions and measurable indicators, and tailoring global concepts and approaches to the Mediterranean context.” (Decision IG.24/6<sup>2</sup>).

According to its terms of reference, AGEM is composed of the following members:

- a) 16 independent experts in eight areas of expertise: MPA management, MPA planning, Marine biology/ecology, Law and regulation, Socio-economics, Fisheries, Nature-based tourism, and Financing; and
- b) representatives of the scientific bodies of 5 relevant partner organizations: the Scientific Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS), the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Marine working group of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA-Marine) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the

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<sup>1</sup> The terms of reference of AGEM as discussed and reviewed by the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (Alexandria, Egypt, 9-12 May 2017) are available here: [https://rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_agem/agem\\_tors\\_v2\\_16oct2017\\_eng.pdf](https://rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_agem/agem_tors_v2_16oct2017_eng.pdf). The terms of reference of AGEM are expected to be reviewed and updated by the end of 2021, when the post-2020 global and regional policies and targets for MCPAs and OECMs would be definitively set up and agreed.

<sup>2</sup> Decision IG.24/6 “Identification and Conservation of Sites of Particular Ecological Interest in the Mediterranean, including Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance”: [http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_cop/cop21/decision\\_24\\_6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop21/decision_24_6_eng.pdf)

Scientific Committee of the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), and the marine conservation team of the Mediterranean Programme of the World Wide Fund for Nature<sup>3</sup> (WWF Mediterranean).

In view of the setting-up of AGEM, the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) has compiled a list of 36 qualified experts and their CVs, based on (i) candidates proposed by the SPA/BD Focal Points, (ii) outgoing members (the 2018-2019 trial period) who wished to renew their application, and (iii) candidates proposed by SPA/RAC; and requested its focal points to select the 16 most suitable experts to be AGEM members, while considering gender and geographical balance.

On the other hand, the 5 partner organizations were requested to designate a representative of their respective scientific bodies.

The ensuing AGEM composition is presented in the following table (Table 1):

**Table 1: Composition of AGEM for the period 2020-2021**

#	Name	Area of expertise/Organization Scientific body
1	Ms. Nadia RAMDANE	MPA management
2	Mr. Robert TURK	MPA management
3	Ms. Zeljka RAJKOVIC	MPA planning
4	Mr. Leonardo TUNESI	MPA planning
5	Ms. Emna BEN LAMINE	Marine biology/ecology
6	Mr. Lovrenc LIPEJ	Marine biology/ecology
7	Ms. Pantelina EMMANOUILIDOU	Law and regulation
8	Mr. Tullio SCOVAZZI	Law and regulation
9	Mr. Saïd Chaouki CHAKOUR	Socio-economics
10	Ms. Marta PASCUAL	Socio-economics
11	Mr. Othman JARBOUI	Fisheries
12	Ms. Sandra RUNDE-CARIOU	Fisheries
13	Mr. Moustafa FOUDA	Nature-based tourism
14	Ms. Milena TEMPESTA	Nature-based tourism
15	Ms. Esra BASAK	MPA Financing
16	Mr. Romain RENOUX	MPA Financing
17	Ms. Léa DAVID	ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee
18	Mr. Alaa EL-HAWEET	GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee
19	Ms. Imèn MELIANE	IUCN WCPA-Marine
20	Mr. Joachim CLAUDET (Representative) Ms. Susan GALLON (Alternate)	MedPAN Scientific Committee
21	Ms. Marina GOMEI (Representative) Ms. Camille LOTH (Alternate)	WWF Mediterranean - marine conservation team

<sup>3</sup> In November 2019, SPA/RAC received a letter from WWF Mediterranean expressing their interest to become a member of AGEM. This request was submitted for approval and eventually approved by the SPA/BD Focal Points in March 2020.

## **Report by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) on the group's works during the period 2020-2021**

### **I. Report on the AGEM activities during the covered period**

#### **I.1. First meeting of AGEM (Teleconference, 8 December 2020)**

1. The first meeting of AGEM was convened on 8 December 2020, by videoconference in a session lasting four (4) hours.
2. During this first meeting and based on the principles of geographical and gender representation, the AGEM elected the following Chair and Vice-Chair:
  - Chair: Mr. Robert TURK, and
  - Vice-Chair: Ms. Imèn MELIANE.
3. The meeting, after discussions, agreed on the programme of work of AGEM for 2021, that includes the main following priority activities:
  - Support SPA/RAC in the elaboration of the post-2020 regional strategy for marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean;
  - Elaborate criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the SPA directory;
  - Prepare guidelines to define how to measure ecological coherence and representativeness of MPA networks, based on indicators adapted to the specificities of the Mediterranean region;
  - Reflect on how to define and measure connectivity; and
  - Reflect on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) for the marine environment, in the Mediterranean region, based on the definition of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
4. AGEM priority topics were selected to particularly prioritize those related to deliverables mandated by COP 21 decisions, and taking into consideration the recommendations of the report on the evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap for a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean<sup>4</sup>.
5. To deliver the agreed outputs in an efficient and timely manner, two working groups (WGs) were set up: WG-SPA/OECM that would focus on elaborating Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the SPA directory, and agreeing considerations for identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean that feed into the Post 2020 strategy; and WG-Coherence that would focus on elaborating guidance on connectivity, ecological coherence and representativeness of MPA networks in the Mediterranean.
6. The **report of the first meeting of AGEM** appears as **Annex I** to the present report.

#### **I.2. Contribution to the elaboration of the regional strategy for MCPAs and OECMs**

7. During its inception meeting in December 2020, AGEM acknowledged that the elaboration of an ambitious and transformational post-2020 regional strategy for MPAs and OECMs should be addressed as the most critical priority for the group and should appear on top of the list of activities of the AGEM programme of work for 2021.

8. For that reason, AGEM has oriented the drafting process and contributed substantively to every stage that led to the elaboration of the advanced draft of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and

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<sup>4</sup> [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28640/19wg468\\_inf12\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28640/19wg468_inf12_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

OECMs, submitted to the SPA/BD Focal Points (methodology, strategic framework, first draft, stakeholder consultation meeting, second draft, and discussion at the second meeting of AGEM).

9. AGEM has also shown its willingness to support the secretariat and the Contracting Parties, during the forthcoming biennial period 2022-2023, in the development of a robust and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, that should follow on the adoption of the strategy by COP 22.

### **I.3. Working Group WG-SPA/OECM**

10. Given that the WG-SPA/OECM outputs were mandatory by a specific COP decision and are expected for presentation to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (the OECM considerations were deemed a critical input into the mandated Post-2020 strategy), the working group has produced background documents with summary information and key questions to guide its discussions and met for three working sessions, each of three hours, according to the following schedule:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Session dedicated to SPAs: 15 February 2021, 2.00-5.00 p.m. UTC+1;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Session dedicated to OECMs: 1 March 2021, 2.00-5.00 p.m. UTC+1; and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session - Wrap up: 18 March 2021, 9.00 a.m.-12.00 p.m. UTC+1.

11. The WG-SPA/OECM outputs and recommendations were presented during the second meeting of AGEM (3-4 May 2021) and agreed by the whole AGEM. These products appear part of **Annex II** to the present report.

### **I.4. Working Group WG-Coherence**

12. During the covered period, the WG-Coherence working group had a single meeting on 30 April 2021, in which the members agreed on their provisional work plan for the period May-November 2021, and outlined their expected deliverables. The main output of this working group would consist of guidelines on connectivity, coherence and representativeness issues targeting both Mediterranean managers and decision-makers.

### **I.5. Second meeting of AGEM (Teleconference, 3-4 May 2021)**

13. The second meeting of AGEM was convened on 3 and 4 May 2021, by videoconference in two sessions, each lasting 4 hours and thirty minutes.

14. During their second meeting, AGEM members reviewed, discussed and agreed on the (i) draft Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean, (ii) the draft Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the SPA directory, and (iii) considerations for identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.

15. The **report of the second meeting of AGEM** appears as **Annex II** to the present report.

## **II. Expected activities until the end of 2021**

16. The AGEM will continue its work until the end of 2021. The group has mainly to deliver guidance on connectivity, representativeness and ecological coherence of the Mediterranean MPA network, and advance activities on OECMs.

17. The third meeting of AGEM will be held in November or December 2021. The exact dates will be set according to the members availability and in conjuncture with the global and regional meetings agenda. If conditions allow, a face-to-face meeting will be envisaged, and if not, a remote meeting via videoconferencing facilities will be carried on.

18. It should be noted that given the ambitious and high expectations that UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC and the Contracting Parties are putting on this group, the 2-year mandate, as it stands now in the 2017 terms of reference, is too short and not adequate for providing strategic thoughts and orientations for the region, and enabling good continuity of the work. It is thus recommended to the secretariat to assess the possibility of extending the duration of the mandate, while also allowing for AGEM membership renewal and rotation.

**ANNEX 1:**

**Report of the First meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for  
Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM),  
Teleconference, 8 December 2020**

SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (SPA/RAC)  
Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM)  
First meeting  
Teleconference, 8 December 2020

## Report

### Introduction

1. Pursuant to Decision IG.24/6<sup>1</sup> of the 21<sup>st</sup> ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 21) to the Barcelona Convention, the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) has set up the Ad hoc group of experts for marine protected areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) and convened its first meeting, on 8 December 2020, by teleconference.
2. All the group members have been invited to attend. A complete *list of participants* is set out in **Annex I** to the present report.
3. SPA/RAC acted as secretariat to the meeting.

### Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting

4. The meeting was opened at 9.00 a.m. UTC+1 on Tuesday, 8 December 2020, by Mr. Khalil Attia, SPA/RAC Director, who welcomed the participants and thanked them for having accepted to join the ad hoc group of experts. He pointed out the heavy, although interesting, programme of work that the AGEM members have ahead in the coming months, and its importance to support the Barcelona Convention Secretariat and Contracting Parties to progress with the 2020 and post-2020 marine protected areas agenda in the Mediterranean.
5. The AGEM members introduced themselves and briefly described their background, affiliation, expectations and interests.

### Agenda item 2. Organizational matters

#### **2.1. Background, objectives, missions and terms of reference of AGEM**

6. The SPA/RAC secretariat presented the AGEM background, objectives, mission, composition, and functioning modalities.
7. The initiative to create the AGEM group of experts is based on the need to have a multidisciplinary think tank that can provide advice and timely orientations on marine protected areas (MPAs) planning and management, in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocol concerning specially protected areas and biological diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol). The primary mission of the ad hoc group of experts is to provide scientific and technical guidance to improve the Mediterranean network of MPAs in terms of coverage, representativity, connectivity and management effectiveness.
8. The terms of reference<sup>2</sup> of the group were discussed and reviewed by the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (Alexandria, Egypt, 9-12 May 2017).

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_cop/cop21/decision\\_24\\_6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop21/decision_24_6_eng.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_agem/agem\\_tors\\_v2\\_16oct2017\\_eng.pdf](https://rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_agem/agem_tors_v2_16oct2017_eng.pdf)



9. AGEM includes 16 independent experts in 8 areas of expertise: MPA management, MPA planning, Marine biology/ecology, Law and regulation, Socio-economics, Fisheries, Nature-based tourism, and Financing; as well as representatives of the scientific bodies of 5 relevant partner organizations: the Scientific Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS), the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Scientific Committee of the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the Marine working group of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA Marine) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the marine conservation team of the Mediterranean Programme of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF Mediterranean).

10. AGEM should elect among its members a Chair and a Vice-Chair, that will attend the meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points to report about the group works and outputs during the covered working period.

11. The group of experts should meet physically at least once every year and exchange via electronic-mailing, online collaborative workspaces and videoconferences on a regular basis. AGEM should take advantage of already planned events attended by its members, to plan face-to-face meetings. Conclusions, recommendations and outcomes of the group should be made available on the SPA/RAC website.

12. The COP 21 decision that recommended the establishment of the ad hoc group of experts was based on the successful pilot phase of functioning of AGEM during the period 2018-2019<sup>3</sup>.

13. Replying to a question on when the AGEM terms of reference would be reviewed and updated, the secretariat indicated that this task is not a priority for the time being, and that it would be tackled when the post-2020 global and regional policies and targets will be definitively set up and agreed, rather by the end of 2021. In this context, it was noted that it is very likely that the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15) will be held by the end of 2021 (October or November), rather than mid-2021 (May or June).

14. A member proposed to focus AGEM efforts on capacity-building and institutional development. In this regard, he stated that the AGEM multidisciplinary group has been an inspirational model for the setting up of a multidisciplinary research laboratory on human and social sciences for development in Algeria. He also proposed to be efficient and to anchor the group reflections in the Mediterranean reality, embedding all the endogenous and exogenous factors on which MPAs depend: heterogeneity across countries, local and territorial context, legal and institutional frameworks, and overlap of competences and lack of coordination among various governmental departments in charge of conservation and management of natural resources.

15. Another member advised to tackle MPA issues in a cumulative, integrated, participatory and cross-sectoral manner. She mentioned protected areas role in restoring declining fisheries resources, the eagerness of fishers to restore fish stocks through a proper protection, and on the other hand, administrative burdens slowing declaration processes. In this respect, it was proposed to consider MPAs in project, as well as other area-based conservation measures, such as regulated fishing zones and other protection types.

16. The importance of taking into consideration the gap between northern and southern Mediterranean countries was emphasized by several members.

## **2.2. Election of an AGEM Chair and a Vice-chair**

17. Based on a proposal by the secretariat made in accordance with the principles of geographical and gender representation, the AGEM elected a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among its members, as follows:

Chair: Mr. Robert Turk, and  
Vice-Chair: Ms. Imen Meliane.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.rac-spa.org/nfp14/documents/01\\_working\\_documents/wg\\_461\\_15\\_en.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/nfp14/documents/01_working_documents/wg_461_15_en.pdf)

### **2.3. Adoption of the agenda**

18. The AGEM members adopted their agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda. The meeting **agenda** appears in **Annex II** to this report.

#### **Agenda item 3. Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2020-2021**

19. The secretariat presented a draft programme of work for review and feedback from the members.

20. Several members pointed out that AGEM would have only one year (i.e. 2021) to provide the requested support and advice, and even less for the deliverables requested for submission to COP 22 (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021), and that should go through the SPA/BD and MAP Focal Points meetings, to be held on 23-25 June 2021, and 14-17 September 2021, respectively.

21. In this respect, it was proposed to give the priority to the mandatory deliverables, during the first semester of 2021. The other tasks could be prioritized according to their relative importance, logical hierarchy and possible link with the ongoing global conservation frameworks negotiations.

22. One member advised to share the needed concepts, definitions and guidelines established or adopted at global and regional level, so that all the group members, regardless of their background, start from the same level of awareness and understanding.

#### **Supporting SPA/RAC in the elaboration of the post-2020 regional strategy for marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean**

23. Several members acknowledged that the elaboration of a transformative post-2020 regional strategy for MPAs and OECMs should be addressed as the most critical priority, and for this reason, it should appear on top of the list of activities of the AGEM programme of work for 2021.

24. It was pointed out that the strategy should be operational and grounded and consider the gap between the North and the South. It should also guide the countries towards achieving the targeted conservation objectives.

25. A member stated that the regional strategy is an overarching output that should encompass all the aspects dealt with at AGEM level, including not only the SPA/OECM's but also coherence aspects.

26. A number of members emphasized the importance of considering emerging issues and mainly the Covid-19 pandemic, which positive and negative impacts should be considered in AGEM works. In this regard, the secretariat proposed to reflect on the post-Covid-19 era opportunities and challenges in the framework of the post-2020 strategy for MPAs and OECMs.

27. The secretariat made it clear that the task of preparing the draft regional strategy will be entrusted to an external consultant. AGEM will have to orient the drafting process, and review and discuss the consecutive drafts, until submission of the strategy to the SPA/BD Focal Points meeting.

#### **Elaboration of criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the SPA directory**

28. Concerning the activity related to the elaboration of criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the SPA directory, it was proposed to start from a clear statement of the purpose, objectives and added value of such directory, and to strictly comply with the terms of the relevant SPA/BD Protocol articles.

29. Many members asked about the link between the prospective SPA directory and the existent Database on Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MAPAMED), co-managed by SPA/RAC and MedPAN. The secretariat clarified that the SPA directory should include marine, but also coastal, protected areas, that the countries would have established in compliance with the provisions of the SPA/BD Protocol; whereas the MAPAMED database includes strictly marine protected areas, and, in this

respect, is helping to monitor the progress towards the quantitative aspect of Aichi Target 11, i.e. the 10% of marine surface coverage.

30. The secretariat explained that defining criteria for SPAs would help the Contracting Parties in their reporting duties to the Barcelona Convention under the SPA/BD Protocol, and allow them to report on a common ground and in a consistent way. Few Parties are duly reporting about their SPAs, as required by the Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Decision IG.23/1<sup>4</sup> of COP 20, Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017), and those which are reporting, do it a very heterogeneous way. In that respect, a member proposed that AGEM provides recommendations on how to evaluate the SPA directory within the Barcelona Convention Compliance Committee, and asked about the way of making these recommendations operational. The secretariat clarified that AGEM could provide, as an independent group mandated by the COP, all the recommendations that it deems necessary, whereas the final decision rests with the Contracting Parties.

31. A member underlined that considering that SPAs include marine and coastal areas, and as a prerequisite, the Parties should designate their terrestrial coastal areas to which the SPA/BD Protocol applies.

32. In the approach for defining SPA criteria, a member proposed to start from the objectives that have motivated the creation of a protected area, then decline them into management measures, to be consolidated into a management plan, and eventually to add other relevant measures, that are not strictly related to the essence and objectives of the MPA.

33. Another member said that it would be difficult for the SPA/BD Focal Points to identify whether their protected areas are SPAs or not, especially in the absence of independent evaluations, like the ones undertaken in the framework of the ordinary reviews of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs). In this respect, AGEM should think about the authority that would be responsible for designating SPAs.

34. A member, supported by another, admitted that the 1995 SPA/BD Protocol has put much more emphasis on SPAMIs than on SPAs, i.e. "ordinary protected areas". The result is that the Protocol includes a specific annex (Annex I) on the common criteria for the choice of areas that could be included in the SPAMI List, and no provisions on criteria for SPAs. The number of SPAMIs is known, whereas the number of SPAs is not. This could be qualified as a gap and could be overcome by the definition of criteria for SPAs, that could have the format of an additional annex to the SPA/BD Protocol. Annexes to the Protocol could be adopted by a simple decision of the ordinary meetings of the Contracting Parties, unlike amendments to the Protocol that require a lengthy and complicated procedure.

#### **Reflecting on OECMs for the marine environment in the Mediterranean region, based on the CBD definition**

35. Concerning the activity related to defining other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) for the marine environment in the Mediterranean region, there has been a consensus that there is no need to propose a new definition of OECMs. The universal definition adopted by the Decision 14/8<sup>5</sup> of CBD COP 14 should be used. The decision states that "The guiding principles and common characteristics and criteria for identification of OECMs are applicable across all ecosystems currently or potentially important for biodiversity, and should be applied in a flexible way and on a case-by-case basis." Further guidance could be provided by the guidelines on recognizing and reporting OECMs<sup>6</sup> produced by the IUCN-WCPA Task Force on OECMs, which include examples for the marine environment.

36. AGEM should focus its work on OECMs, on guiding the Mediterranean countries in their efforts towards identifying and reporting OECMs, including the ways of engaging other sectors (e.g. fisheries) in the OECM processes, both at regional and national levels. The Barcelona Convention might focus on how OECMs could contribute to its post-2020 targets. The EU is presently engaging in the same

<sup>4</sup> [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22557/17iq23\\_23\\_2301\\_eng.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22557/17iq23_23_2301_eng.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-08-en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PATRS-003-En.pdf>

reflection concerning the contribution of OECMs to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, part of the European Green Deal.

37. In the same lines, it was highlighted that OECM is a new tool for the Mediterranean countries, and that a decision could be proposed to the Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties informing them that the post-2020 area-based conservation targets will rely not only on MPAs, but also on OECMs, and that the latter is another way of conceiving protection, that should receive appropriate consideration at national level.

38. One member suggested that it would be useful to clarify the difference between the “area-based management tools”, terminology used by the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), and the “other effective area-based conservation measures”, terminology used by the UN CBD.

39. MPA management effectiveness, but also declaration and design effectiveness, were mentioned by a number of members, as important aspects to be addressed in the framework of AGEM reflections.

40. A member proposed to apply OECM criteria when assessing MPA effectiveness, the latter being “area-based conservation measures”. The idea is that all area-based conservation measures should prove to be effective, whether these are MPAs or OECMs. Thus, the AGEM mandate on OECM may extend to MPAs.

41. Another member suggested that the SPA- and OECM-related activities, proposed under the AGEM programme of work, are very linked and should be tackled in a coherent and integrated manner. In that sense, he proposed that a unique working group is dedicated to both tasks. This proposal was supported by all the members.

**Reflecting on how to define and measure connectivity; and preparing guidelines to define how to measure ecological coherence and representativity of MPA networks, based on indicators adapted to the specificities of the Mediterranean region**

42. With regard to the activity related to defining and measuring connectivity, ecological coherence and representativity of MPA networks in the Mediterranean, several members stated that this is a very ambitious task, that should be dissected and prioritized.

43. It was recalled that the qualitative aspects of Aichi Target 11 were left out compared to its quantitative aspect, i.e. coverage. This relies on the absence of quantifiable indicators for these qualitative aspects. Discussions on defining the post-2020 targets and indicators of effectiveness, connectivity, representativity are ongoing at the CBD global level, and should be considered in the framework of the AGEM reflections.

44. A member pointed out that talking about connectivity and representativity in the Mediterranean underlies the assumption that the region has an effective MPA network. Recognizing the underlying unsatisfactory conservation status and working on making existent MPAs operational and effective should be the priority. He added that thinking about connectivity and representativity needs to agree on a common reference, whether it is the overall declared MPAs, the highly protected zones, or the even less enforced areas.

45. Another member observed that measuring MPA connectivity is not an immediate priority for the region, and that assessing MPA effectiveness would be its enabling prerequisite, especially in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

46. Talking about the priorities to be considered in tackling the representativity aspects, a member proposed to provide recommendations for identifying unrepresented and underrepresented habitats and ecosystems, and for overcoming the lack of representativity at the geographical scale, especially given the expected expansion of the 2030 targets at global and regional levels.

47. A member stated that guidelines could not be provided before defining how to measure connectivity, coherence or representativity. She stated that countries proved to have better progress in their protected areas agenda, when thinking about “systems” of protected areas. In this sense, conceptualizing on these aspects in the design and set-off of MPA systems at national or regional level, should become a priority, and provide an insightful guidance to the countries in shifting from individual MPAs to systems of MPAs.

48. Another member mentioned that the heterogeneity of MPA types, measures, governance models and surrounding reality should be considered as a factor of diversity within the regional network, and that the establishment of standards and criteria should not censure this diversity. She mentioned also the concepts of seniority (age) and socio-economic impacts of protected areas as key aspects to be taken into consideration. She proposed to set the concept of efficiency/compliance towards commitments of coastal States, that might boost the commitment progress at national level.

49. The agreed **Programme of work of AGEM for 2021** is set out in **Annex III** to the present report.

#### **Agenda item 4. Follow-up after the meeting and next milestones/meetings**

50. The secretariat introduced briefly this agenda item, presenting the timeline of implementation of the activities of the AGEM 2021 programme of work, and highlighting its most important milestones.

51. The secretariat called on members to volunteer to be part of or to coordinate/co-ordinate any of the two agreed working groups (WGs): WG-SPA/OECM and WG-Coherence. Requests should be sent to the secretariat by e-mail before 13 December 2020.

52. The link between the AGEM group and its stemming working groups (WGs) was also clarified. In that respect, specific materials, outputs or recommendations produced by WGs will be discussed and agreed upon by AGEM. The idea of WGs was proposed as a working approach to allow AGEM members to have the needed flexibility and independency to input the group discussions.

53. WG coordinators and members have flexibility in organizing their work. The secretariat will be backing them with the needed background documents, and also technological means as requested and needed.

54. Concerning the next AGEM meetings, the secretariat proposed the following tentative schedule:

- Second meeting: face-to-face (if conditions allow), March 2021 (tentatively during the week of 29 March 2021);
- Third meeting: by teleconference, May 2021 (tentatively during the week of 3 May 2021); and
- Fourth meeting: by teleconference, October/November 2021 (date to be decided later).

55. **WG-SPA/OECM and WG-Coherence composition** is set out in **Annex IV** to this report.

#### **Agenda item 5. Closure of the meeting**

56. SPA/RAC Director thanked the Chair for his brilliant facilitation of the meeting and all the members for their valuable contribution and commitment, and recalled the high expectations that UNEP/MAP, SPA/RAC and the Contracting Parties are putting on this group.

57. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.40 p.m. on Tuesday, 8 December 2020.

### **Annex I: List of participants**

<b>Independent experts</b>	
<b>MPA management</b>	<p><b>Mme Nadia RAMDANE</b> Directrice de la Pêche et de la production halieutique de la Wilaya de Jijel Jijel, Algeria</p> <p><b>Mr. Robert TURK</b> Senior Nature Conservation Consultant Head of Regional Unit Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Regional Unit Piran Piran, Slovenia</p>
<b>MPA planning</b>	<p><b>Ms. Zeljka RAJKOVIC</b> Executive Director and Program Manager for Protected Areas and Policy Association Biom Zagreb, Croatia</p> <p><b>Mr. Leonardo TUNESI</b> Head of the Area "Marine biodiversity, habitats and species Protection" ISPRA - Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research Rome, Italy</p>
<b>Marine biology/ecology</b>	<p><b>Mme Emna BEN LAMINE</b> Fisheries and marine environment PhD Consultant Pégomas, France</p> <p><b>Mr. Lovrenc LIPEJ</b> Senior Research fellow, Scientific Counsellor National Institute of Biology, Marine Biology Station Piran, Slovenia</p>
<b>Law and regulation</b>	<p><b>Ms. Pantelina EMMANOULIDOU</b> Environmental law and policy expert Greece / France</p> <p><b>Mr. Tullio SCOVAZZI</b> Professor of International Law University of Milano-Bicocca Milan, Italy</p>
<b>Socio-economics</b>	<p><b>M. Saïd Caouki CHAKOUR</b> Enseignant-Chercheur permanent Expert / Consultant indépendant Directeur du "Laboratoire pluridisciplinaire des Sciences Humaines et Sociales Appliquées pour le Développement" Université de Jijel Jijel, Algeria</p> <p><b>Ms. Marta PASCUAL ALTARES</b> Senior Environmental Consultant Guest Researcher (Maritime Spatial Planning, Marine Ecosystem Services, MPA Socio-economics, Blue Growth) Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3) Basque Country, Spain</p>
<b>Fisheries</b>	<p><b>Mr. Othman JARBOUI</b> Professor of High Education National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies (INSTM), Sfax Center Sfax, Tunisia</p>
<b>Nature-based tourism</b>	<p><b>Mr. Moustafa FOUDA</b> Minister Advisor on Biodiversity Nature Conservation Sector Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) Cabinet of Ministers Cairo, Egypt</p> <p><b>Ms. Milena TEMPESTA</b></p>

	<p>Founder member, marine biologist and scientific responsible APS DelTa – Delfini e Tartarughe in Alto Adriatico Loc. Giasbana, S. Floriano del Collio, Trieste, Italy</p>
<b>MPA Financing</b>	<p><b>Ms. Esra BASAK</b> Independent environmental consultant (Ecosystem services, Economic analysis, Socio-economic surveying, Stakeholder analysis) Ayvalik, Turkey</p>
<b>Representatives of partner organization scientific bodies</b>	
<b>Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS</b>	<p><b>Ms. Léa DAVID</b> Vice-President of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee Task Manager on Protected Areas for Cetaceans Montpellier, France</p>
<b>Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of GFCM</b>	<p><b>Mr. Alaa EL-HAWEET</b> Chair of GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries Alexandria, Egypt</p>
<b>Scientific Committee of MedPAN</b>	<p><b>Mr. Joachim CLAUDET</b> Chair of the Scientific Committee of MedPAN Paris, France</p> <p><b>Ms. Susan GALLON</b> Scientific Officer MedPAN Secretariat Marseille, France</p>
<b>WCPA Marine of IUCN</b>	<p><b>Ms. Imen MELIANE</b> WCPA Vice Chair for North Africa, Middle East and West Asia Tunis, Tunisia</p>
<b>WWF Mediterranean marine conservation team</b>	<p><b>Ms. Marina GOMEI</b> Marine Project Manager and MPA specialist WWF Mediterranean Rome, Italy</p> <p><b>Ms. Camille LOTH</b> Marine Program Manager and Policy specialist WWF Mediterranean Paris, France</p>
<b>Secretariat</b>	
<b>SPA/RAC</b>	<p>Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre Tunis, Tunisia</p> <p><b>Mr. Khalil ATTIA</b> Director</p> <p><b>Ms. Souha EL ASMI</b> Programme Officer (Specially Protected Areas)</p> <p><b>Mr. Atef LIMAM</b> MPA Project Officer (IMAP-MPA project)</p> <p><b>Ms. Asma KHERIJI</b> MPA Associate Project Officer (IMAP-MPA project)</p> <p><b>Mr. Dhia GUEZGUEZ</b> Computing and Data Management Officer</p> <p><b>Ms. Dorra MAAOUI</b> Communication Assistant</p> <p><i>Interpreters</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Mondher KALAI</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Nadia ZOUITEN</b></p>

## Annex II: Agenda

<b>Time (UTC+1)</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Working/reference document(s)</b>
8.45-9.00	Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participants</li> <li>▪ Logistics support responsible from SPA/RAC</li> </ul>	Logistics note
9.00-10.00	<b>Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welcome and opening by the SPA/RAC Director</li> <li>▪ A round table of introduction of AGEM members and SPA/RAC secretariat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC Director</li> <li>▪ Members</li> </ul>	SPA/RAC/AGEM/1/Inf.2 (Provisional List of participants)  AGEM composition (2020)
10.00-10.30	<b>Agenda item 2. Organizational matters</b> <p><b>2.1. Background, objectives, missions and terms of reference of AGEM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation on AGEM rationale, background, objectives, mission, composition, and functioning modalities</li> <li>▪ Questions and answers</li> </ul> <p><b>2.2. Election of an AGEM Chair and a Vice-chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on a proposal by SPA/RAC, a Chair and a Vice-chair will be co-opted by the members</li> </ul> <p><b>2.3. Adoption of the agenda</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC</li> <li>▪ Members</li> <li>▪ SPA/RAC Director</li> <li>▪ Chair</li> </ul>	SPA/RAC/AGEM/1/1 (Provisional Agenda)  SPA/RAC/AGEM/1/Inf.1 (Provisional List of documents)  AGEM terms of reference
10.30-11.30	<b>Agenda item 3. Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2020-2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of the proposed programme of work by SPA/RAC</li> <li>▪ Review and feed-back from the members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC</li> <li>▪ Members</li> </ul>	SPA/RAC/AGEM/1/2 (Draft programme of work of AGEM for the biennial period 2020-2021)
11.30-12.00	<b>Agenda item 4. Follow-up after the meeting and next milestones/meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussion about next milestones and organisation of the AGEM work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members and SPA/RAC</li> </ul>	SPA/RAC/AGEM/1/2 (Draft programme of work of AGEM for the biennial period 2020-2021)
12.00-12.15	<b>Agenda item 5. Closure of the meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC Director</li> <li>▪ Chair</li> </ul>	



## **Annex III: Programme of work of AGEM for 2021**

### **1. Introduction**

1. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention decided, at their 21<sup>st</sup> ordinary meeting, COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019), to set up a multidisciplinary ad hoc group of experts for marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean, to support the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties to progress with the 2020 and post-2020 marine protected areas agenda in the Mediterranean, and to work on related issues such as preparing guidelines, setting up definitions and measurable indicators, and tailoring global concepts and approaches to the Mediterranean context (Decision IG.24/6<sup>7</sup>).
2. This decision was based on the successful pilot phase of functioning of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) during the period 2018-2019 (see the Report on AGEM during its trial period<sup>8</sup>).
3. The primary mission of AGEM is to provide scientific and technical guidance to improve the Mediterranean network of MPAs in terms of coverage, representativity, connectivity and management effectiveness.
4. The 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas (Alexandria, Egypt, 9-12 May 2017) have agreed on terms of reference<sup>9</sup> for the group.
5. AGEM is composed of 16 independent experts in 8 areas of expertise (MPA Management, MPA Planning, Marine biology/ecology, Law and regulation, Socio-economics, Fisheries, Nature-based tourism, and MPA Financing), and representatives of the scientific bodies of 5 relevant organizations: the Scientific Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea (ACCOBAMS); the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Scientific Committee of the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the Marine working group of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA marine) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the marine conservation team of the Mediterranean Programme of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF Mediterranean).
6. The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) is acting as the AGEM secretariat.
7. During its trial period, AGEM have held two face-to-face meetings in Tunis: the first on 22-23 February 2018, and the second on 15 March 2019, and have provided significant guidance and inputs, mainly the "Guidelines for strengthening the sustainable socio-economic role of Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas"<sup>10</sup>, and a document on "How to reach the qualitative aspects of Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean"<sup>11</sup>.
8. AGEM has also recommended to establish a directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPAs). This recommendation has been duly taken into consideration by COP 21 (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019) which requested the Secretariat to establish a directory of Mediterranean SPAs according to relevant articles of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol), and requested SPA/RAC to elaborate criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the directory, for consideration by COP 22 (Decision IG.24/6<sup>12</sup>).

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_cop/cop21/decision\\_24\\_6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop21/decision_24_6_eng.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.rac-spa.org/nfp14/documents/01\\_working\\_documents/wg\\_461\\_15\\_en.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/nfp14/documents/01_working_documents/wg_461_15_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_agem/agem\\_tors\\_v2\\_16oct2017\\_eng.pdf](https://rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_agem/agem_tors_v2_16oct2017_eng.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_medmpa\\_network/regional/socio\\_guidelines\\_agem\\_eng.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_medmpa_network/regional/socio_guidelines_agem_eng.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_medmpa\\_network/regional/reaching\\_aichi\\_target\\_agem\\_eng.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_medmpa_network/regional/reaching_aichi_target_agem_eng.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc\\_cop/cop21/decision\\_24\\_6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop21/decision_24_6_eng.pdf)

9. The evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed MPAs to Achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean, undertaken in 2019, has also identified many tasks that could be entrusted to AGEM (cf. the evaluation report<sup>13</sup>).

## 2. Priority topics for AGEM for 2021

10. Based on the COP 21 decisions and the recommendations of the evaluation report of the Roadmap on Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean, the AGEM work during the year 2021 will be oriented towards the following priorities:

- Support SPA/RAC in the elaboration of the post-2020 regional strategy for marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean;
- Elaborate criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the SPA directory;
- Prepare guidelines to define how to measure ecological coherence and representativity of MPA networks, based on indicators adapted to the specificities of the Mediterranean region;
- Reflect on how to define and measure connectivity; and
- Reflect on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) for the marine environment, in the Mediterranean region, based on the definition of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

## 3. Programme of work of AGEM for 2021

Activity	Responsible	Expected deliverable	Timeline of implementation
<b>A 1:</b> Support SPA/RAC in the elaboration of the post-2020 regional strategy for marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean.	All AGEM members providing guidance to SPA/RAC, which is supported by a consultant.	<b>D 1:</b> Draft post-2020 regional strategy for MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean duly reviewed and steered by AGEM members, given the multidisciplinary character of the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>December 2020:</b> AGEM inception meeting;</li> <li>▪ <b>January-March 2021:</b> preparation of the first draft of the regional strategy for MPAs and OECMs (by SPA/RAC, supported by a consultant);</li> <li>▪ <b>March 2021:</b> submission of the first draft of the regional strategy to the second meeting of AGEM for orientations and comments // submission of the first draft of the regional strategy to a regional consultation workshop for discussion (back-to-back to the AGEM second meeting);</li> <li>▪ <b>April 2021:</b> preparation of the second draft of the regional strategy;</li> <li>▪ <b>May 2021:</b> submission of the second draft of the regional strategy to the third meeting of AGEM for comments;</li> <li>▪ <b>May 2021:</b> finalization of the draft regional strategy by the consultant and SPA/RAC for timely submission to the SPA/BD Focal Points meeting;</li> <li>▪ <b>June 2021:</b> submission of the draft regional strategy to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points;</li> <li>▪ <b>September 2021:</b> submission of the draft regional strategy to the MAP Focal Points meeting, as reviewed by the SPA/BD Focal Points;</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28640/19wg468\\_inf12\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28640/19wg468_inf12_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>December 2021</b>: submission of the draft regional strategy to the Barcelona Convention COP 22, as reviewed by the MAP Focal Points.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A 2</b>: Elaborate criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the SPA directory.</p>	<p>A sub-group of AGEM, reporting to AGEM: the SPA/OECM Working Group (WG-SPA/OECM), backed by SPA/RAC.</p>	<p><b>D 2.1</b>: A set of criteria consolidated in a short document entitled: Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the SPA directory of the Barcelona Convention;</p> <p><b>D 2.2</b>: A draft SPA directory under the Barcelona Convention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>December 2020</b>: AGEM inception meeting;</li> <li>▪ <b>January 2021</b>: setting up of WG-SPA/OECM</li> <li>▪ <b>January-February 2021</b>: preparation of the draft criteria;</li> <li>▪ <b>March 2021</b>: discussion and finalization of the draft criteria at the second meeting of AGEM;</li> <li>▪ <b>April-May 2021</b>: finalization of the draft criteria for submission to the SPA/BD Focal Points meeting;</li> <li>▪ <b>June 2021</b>: submission of the draft criteria to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points;</li> <li>▪ <b>September 2021</b>: submission of the draft criteria to the MAP Focal Points meeting, as reviewed by the SPA/BD Focal Points;</li> <li>▪ <b>December 2021</b>: submission of the draft criteria to the Barcelona Convention COP 22, as reviewed by MAP Focal Points.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A 3</b>: Elaborate guidance on identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.</p>	<p>A sub-group of AGEM, reporting to AGEM: the SPA/OECM Working Group (WG-SPA/OECM), backed by SPA/RAC.</p>	<p><b>D 3</b>: Reflections and guidance on identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>December 2020</b>: AGEM inception meeting;</li> <li>▪ <b>January 2021</b>: setting up of WG-SPA/OECM;</li> <li>▪ <b>February-May 2021</b>: reflection on identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment;</li> <li>▪ <b>June 2021</b>: informing the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points on the progress made in this regard, having their feedback and orientations, and assessing the possibility of submitting a decision to COP 22;</li> <li>▪ <b>June-December 2021</b>: elaborating guidance on identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A 4</b>: Reflect on defining and measuring connectivity, representativity and ecological coherence of MPA networks, based on indicators adapted to the specificities of the Mediterranean region</p>	<p>A sub-group of AGEM, reporting to AGEM: the Coherence Working Group (WG-Coherence), backed by SPA/RAC.</p>	<p><b>D 4</b>: Reflections on connectivity, representativity and ecological coherence of the Mediterranean region MPA system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>December 2020</b>: AGEM inception meeting;</li> <li>▪ <b>January 2021</b>: setting up of WG-Coherence;</li> <li>▪ <b>February-May 2021</b>: reflection on connectivity, representativity and ecological coherence of the Mediterranean region MPA system;</li> <li>▪ <b>June 2021</b>: informing the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points on the progress made in this regard, and having their feedback and orientations;</li> <li>▪ <b>June-December 2021</b>: finalizing the reflections on connectivity, representativity and ecological coherence of the Mediterranean region MPA system.</li> </ul>

**Annex IV: WG-SPA/OECM and WG-Coherence composition**

**1) WG-SPA/OECM**

<b>Co-coordinators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ms. Imen MELIANE</li> <li>2. Mr. Robert TURK</li> </ol>
<b>Members</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Ms. Esra BASAK</li> <li>4. Mr. Alaa EL-HAWEET</li> <li>5. Ms. Marina GOMEI / Ms. Camille LOTH</li> <li>6. Ms. Pantelina EMMANOUILIDOU</li> <li>7. Mr. Moustafa FOUDA</li> <li>8. Mr. Tullio SCOVAZZI</li> <li>9. Mr. Leonardo TUNESI</li> </ol>

**2) WG-Coherence**

<b>Co-coordinators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ms. Emna BEN LAMINE</li> <li>2. Mr. Joachim CLAUDET</li> </ol>
<b>Members</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Mr. Lovrenc LIPEJ</li> <li>4. Ms. Marta PASCUAL</li> <li>5. Ms. Milena TEMPESTA</li> </ol>

## **ANNEX 2:**

**[Draft] Report of the Second meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM), Teleconference, 3-4 May 2021**

SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (SPA/RAC)  
Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM)  
Second meeting  
Teleconference, 3-4 May 2021

## [Draft] Report

### Introduction

1. The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) convened the second meeting of the Ad hoc group of experts for marine protected areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) on 3 and 4 May 2021, by teleconference.
2. All the group members have been invited to attend. A complete *list of participants* is set out in **Annex I** to the present report.
3. The meeting aimed at reviewing, discussing and agreeing on the (i) draft Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean, (ii) the draft Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the SPA directory, and (iii) considerations for identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.
4. SPA/RAC acted as secretariat to the meeting.

### Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting

5. The meeting was opened at 9.00 a.m. UTC+1 on Monday, 3 May 2021, by Mr. Khalil ATTIA, SPA/RAC Director, who welcomed the participants and thanked them for their active involvement and valuable input to the many important processes and reflections on marine protected areas in the framework of the Barcelona Convention. He highlighted the importance of the present meeting for the preparation of key inputs to be submitted to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD), to be held from 23 to 25 June 2021.
6. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Robert TURK, Chair of AGEM, who invited the secretariat to briefly present the objectives and expected results of the meeting, then invited the meeting to adopt its agenda on the basis of the submitted provisional agenda. The meeting **agenda** appears in **Annex II** to this report.

### Agenda item 2. Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean

7. Given that the draft Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean was shared with the AGEM members and their comments were collected before the meeting, the secretariat summarized the main comments received on part 1, then on part 2 of the strategy, that are "Background and Context" and "Strategy and implementation", respectively.
8. Many members congratulated the secretariat for the huge work done on advancing with the draft strategy since the stakeholder consultation workshop held virtually on 8 and 9 April 2021.
9. The meeting agreed that part 1 of the draft strategy was too long and requested the secretariat to summarize it in around five pages.

10. Concerning the draft target of the regional strategy, the meeting advised to follow the current proposal under the draft CBD Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims at 30% overall spatial conservation target and to adhere to using the same language used for the global target as presented in the August 2020 updated zero draft. In this respect, and recognising that Mediterranean countries are at different levels of advancement, it was recommended that the strategy mentions that this is a regional target and that it is not meant to be mirrored by every individual country.

11. With regard to the term “effective” used in the draft target, with reference to systems of marine and coastal protected areas, it was recommended to clarify that this term is understood to cover all four main aspects of effectiveness, as defined by the IUCN Green List standards, which are: (i) good governance; (ii) sound design and planning, (iii) management effectiveness and (iv) achieving conservation outcomes.

12. The meeting discussed having a sub-target related to areas offering strict protection. Given the disagreement on this element in previous rounds of consultation, and the disagreement between the AGEM members, it was finally agreed to suggest in brackets, for consideration of the Contracting Parties, a strict protection target for 10% of the Mediterranean Sea, in line with the EU 2030 biodiversity strategy.

13. Part 2 of the draft strategy was reviewed in detail taking each strategic pillar individually. The meeting revised the wording of each outcome and outputs provided under every strategic pillar/outcome, and rephrased, prioritized, aggregated or clarified the activities proposed for the Contracting Parties and for regional and international organizations.

14. Regarding the monitoring and evaluation section, the AGEM recognized that it is important to have a monitoring and evaluation framework, and it is particularly important to define scientifically sound and practical indicators. The meeting recommended to develop such framework once the strategy is adopted by COP 22. This would enable sufficient time to research and define a suitable set of indicators and agree on a robust and comprehensive monitoring framework, as well as evaluation timelines harmonized with those that would be agreed upon and clarified at global level by the CBD COP 15 (Kunming, China, 11-24 October 2021) and other important Mediterranean elements (e.g. Post-2020 SAPBIO). The AGEM stressed its willingness to be involved in the future drafting of such monitoring and evaluation framework.

### **Agenda item 3. Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the SPA directory**

15. Ms. Imèn MELIANE, AGEM Vice-Chair and WG-SPA/OECM working group co-coordinator, presented the draft Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the SPA directory.

16. Only one minor comment was made, to include a reference to Article 2 of the SPA/BD Protocol in the section referring that a SPA is a geographically defined marine or terrestrial coastal area and with that addition, the AGEM agreed the draft criteria. The **draft Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the SPA directory**, as reviewed and agreed by the meeting appear in **Annex III** to this report.

### **Agenda item 4. Considerations for identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment**

17. Ms. Imèn MELIANE further presented the conclusions and recommendations agreed by the WG-SPA/OECM concerning the identification and reporting of OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.

18. The meeting agreed on the presented **considerations for identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment**. These appear in **Annex III** to the present report.

### **Agenda item 5. Any other matters**

19. Under this agenda item, Ms. Emna BEN LAMINE, co-coordinator of the WG-Coherence working group, briefed the meeting about the provisional work plan and expected deliverables set out and agreed during the first meeting of the working group.

20. The WG-Coherence work will first consist of a literature review to be performed until mid-June 2021, followed by a gap analysis and definition of priority topics and their applicability to the Mediterranean MPA system at local (country) and regional (Mediterranean) scales. During the summer period (July-August 2021), the working group will reflect on the selected priority topics, then, in September 2021, develop recommendations with regard to enhancing connectivity, coherence and representativeness in the Mediterranean. In October-November 2021, the reflection outcomes, targeting both managers and decision-makers, will be finalized, and forwarded to the overall AGEM group members for review and discussion.

### **Agenda item 6. Wrap-up and closure of the meeting**

21. The secretariat summarized the main recommendations of the meeting and informed the members about the following steps before the formal submission of the discussed draft outputs to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of SPA/BD Focal Point in June 2021.

22. SPA/RAC informed the AGEM members that it had invited its SPA/BD Focal Points to an online consultation workshop on 18 May 2021, to discuss the advanced draft of the regional strategy for MCPAs and OECMs. The secretariat has only a few days after the AGEM meeting to finalize the draft in view to its submission, tentatively on 10 May 2021 to the SPA/BD Focal Points consultation workshop.

23. SPA/RAC Director thanked the Chair, Vice-Chair and all the AGEM members for their time, commitment and valuable contribution.

24. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 13.30 p.m. UTC+1, on Tuesday, 4 May 2021.



### Annex I: List of participants

<b>Independent experts</b>	
<b>MPA management</b>	<p><b>Mme Nadia RAMDANE</b> Directrice de la Pêche et de la production halieutique de la Wilaya de Jijel Jijel, Algeria</p> <p><b>Mr. Robert TURK (AGEM Chair)</b> Nature Conservation and MPA expert Piran, Slovenia</p>
<b>MPA planning</b>	<p><b>Mr. Leonardo TUNESI</b> Head of the Area "Marine biodiversity, habitats and species Protection" ISPRA - Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research Rome, Italy</p>
<b>Marine biology/ecology</b>	<p><b>Ms. Emna BEN LAMINE</b> Fisheries and marine environment PhD Consultant Pégomas, France</p> <p><b>Mr. Lovrenc LIPEJ</b> Senior Research fellow, Scientific Counsellor National Institute of Biology, Marine Biology Station Piran, Slovenia</p>
<b>Law and regulation</b>	<p><b>Ms. Pantelina EMMANOUILIDOU</b> Environmental law and policy expert Greece / France</p> <p><b>Mr. Tullio SCOVAZZI</b> Professor of International Law University of Milano-Bicocca Milan, Italy</p>
<b>Socio-economics</b>	<p><b>M. Saïd Caouki CHAKOUR</b> Enseignant-Chercheur permanent Expert / Consultant indépendant Directeur du "Laboratoire pluridisciplinaire des Sciences Humaines et Sociales Appliquées pour le Développement" Université de Jijel Jijel, Algeria</p> <p><b>Ms. Marta PASCUAL ALTARES</b> Senior Environmental Consultant Guest Researcher (Maritime Spatial Planning, Marine Ecosystem Services, MPA Socio-economics, Blue Growth) Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3) Basque Country, Spain</p>
<b>Fisheries</b>	<p><b>Mme Sandra RUNDE-CARIOU</b> Chargée de mission AMP et gestion du milieu marin - usages côtiers-PACA ouest Délégation de façade Méditerranée Office français de la Biodiversité (OFB) Marseille, France</p>
<b>Nature-based tourism</b>	<p><b>Mr. Moustafa FOUDA</b> Minister Advisor on Biodiversity Nature Conservation Sector Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) Cabinet of Ministers Cairo, Egypt</p> <p><b>Ms. Milena TEMPESTA</b> Founder member, marine biologist and scientific responsible APS DelTa – Delfini e Tartarughe in Alto Adriatico Loc. Giasbana, S. Floriano del Collio, Trieste, Italy</p>

<b>MPA Financing</b>	<p><b>Ms. Esra BASAK</b> Independent environmental consultant (Ecosystem services, Economic analysis, Socio-economic surveying, Stakeholder analysis) Ayvalik, Turkey</p> <p><b>Mr. Romain RENOUX</b> Executive Director The MedFund Nice, France</p>
<b>Representatives of partner organization scientific bodies</b>	
<b>Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS</b>	<p><b>Ms. Léa DAVID</b> Vice-President of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee Task Manager on Protected Areas for Cetaceans Montpellier, France</p>
<b>Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of GFCM</b>	<p><b>Mr. Alaa EL-HAWEET</b> Chair of GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries Alexandria, Egypt</p>
<b>Scientific Committee of MedPAN</b>	<p><b>Ms. Marie ROMANI (Replacing Mr. Joachim CLAUDET and Ms. Susan GALLON, excused)</b> Executive Secretary MedPAN Secretariat Marseille, France</p>
<b>IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas</b>	<p><b>Ms. Imen MELIANE (AGEM Vice-Chair)</b> Vice Chair for North Africa, Middle East and West Asia Tunis, Tunisia</p>
<b>WWF Mediterranean marine conservation team</b>	<p><b>Ms. Marina GOMEI</b> Marine Project Manager and MPA specialist WWF Mediterranean Rome, Italy</p> <p><b>Ms. Camille LOTH</b> Marine Program Manager and Policy specialist WWF Mediterranean Paris, France</p>
<b>Secretariat</b>	
<b>SPA/RAC</b>	<p>Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre Tunis, Tunisia</p> <p><b>Mr. Khalil ATTIA</b> Director</p> <p><b>Ms. Souha EL ASMI</b> Programme Officer (Specially Protected Areas)</p> <p><b>Mr. Atef LIMAM</b> MPA Project Officer (IMAP-MPA project)</p> <p><b>Ms. Asma KHERIJI</b> MPA Associate Project Officer (IMAP-MPA project)</p> <p><b>Ms. Anouska KINAHAN</b> SPA/RAC consultant</p> <p><i>Interpreters</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Mondher KALAI</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Lamine KHEDIRI</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Nejet MCHALA</b></p>

## Annex II: Agenda

Time (UTC+1) <sup>1</sup>	Agenda item	Responsible
<b>Day 1: Monday 3 May 2021</b>		
8.50-9.00 UTC+1	Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All participants</li> <li>▪ Logistics support from SPA/RAC</li> </ul>
9.00-09.20 UTC+1	<b>Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welcome and opening</li> <li>▪ Presentation of the meeting objectives and expected results</li> <li>▪ Adoption of the agenda and organization of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC Director</li> <li>▪ SPA/RAC</li> <li>▪ Chair</li> </ul>
09.20-12.10 UTC+1 <i>(including a 10-min break)</i>	<b>Agenda item 2. Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of the draft strategy</li> <li>▪ Review and discussion of the draft strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC</li> <li>▪ Members</li> </ul>
12.10-12.30 UTC+1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wrap-up and end of day 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC</li> </ul>
<b>Day 2: Tuesday 4 May 2021</b>		
8.50-9.00 UTC+1	Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All participants</li> <li>▪ Logistics support from SPA/RAC</li> </ul>
9.00-10.30 UTC+1	<b>Agenda item 3. Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the SPA directory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of the criteria</li> <li>▪ Review and discussion of the draft criteria strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WG-SPA/OECM</li> <li>▪ Members</li> </ul>
10.30-12.00 UTC+1 <i>(including a 10-min break)</i>	<b>Agenda item 4. Guidance on identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of the draft guidance paper</li> <li>▪ Review and discussion of the draft guidance paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WG-SPA/OECM</li> <li>▪ Members</li> </ul>
12.00-12.20 UTC+1	<b>Agenda item 5. Any other matters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members</li> </ul>
12.20-12.45 UTC+1	<b>Agenda item 6. Wrap-up and closure of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wrap-up of day 2</li> <li>▪ Follow-up and next steps</li> <li>▪ Closure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPA/RAC</li> <li>▪ Chair</li> <li>▪ SPA/RAC Director</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The meeting schedule is provided in UTC+1 time (Tunis Time).

## **Annex III: Main conclusions of the AGEM Working Group on SPA and OECMs (WG-SPA/OECM)**

### **1. Objective**

During the first meeting of the AGEM held in December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 by teleconference, it was agreed to form a specific Working Group that is in charge of:

- I. the elaboration of Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the SPA directory, and;
- II. proposing considerations for identifying and reporting Other Effective area-based Conservation measures (OECMs).

This group is hereafter referred to as WG-SPA/OECM (or shortly WG).

The outputs and recommendations produced by the WG are to be discussed and agreed upon by AGEM.

### **2. Composition:**

The following table provides the list of the AGEM members who have volunteered to join the Working Group WG-SPA/OECM

<b>Co-coordinators</b>	1. Ms. Imen MELIANE 2. Mr. Robert TURK
<b>Members</b>	3. Ms. Esra BASAK 4. Mr. Alaa EL-HAWEET 5. Ms. Pantelina EMMANOUILIDOU 6. Mr. Moustafa FOUDA 7. Ms. Marina GOMEI / Ms. Camille LOTH 8. Mr. Tullio SCOVAZZI 9. Mr. Leonardo TUNESI

### **3. Organization of work:**

The WG-SPA/OECM has met for three working sessions, each of three hours, according to the following schedule:

- 1<sup>st</sup> session dedicated to SPAs: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 2-5 pm CET
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session dedicated to OECMs: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021, 2-5 pm CET
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session- Wrap up: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 9 am-12 pm CET

The consultant in charge of developing the Post-2020 MPA/OECM strategy was invited to join the WG discussion in its second session dedicated to OECMs.

The WG Coordinators produced background documents with summary information and key questions to guide the discussions of the SPA/OECM working group. These can be found in **Appendix 2 (Background on SPA Directory)** and **Appendix 3 (Background on OECMs)**.

### **4. Main discussion and conclusions:**

#### **4.1. SPA Directory**

The Working Group had a rich discussion on the following points:

- a. Difference between SPAs and Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs), and if SPA should be a special category of MCPAs similar to the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs);
- b. Definition of a SPA;
- c. Purpose of SPA Directory;
- d. Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the Directory (and format of the proposal);
- e. Format/data to be contained in a SPA Directory;
- f. Maintenance and update of SPA Directory.

The SPA/OECM WG unanimously agreed the following points:

- a. **SPAs don't have special criteria different from MCPA. They are the same as MCPAs**, but they are meant to be "officially established and fully managed" MCPAs (as opposed to paper parks).
- b. **SPA definition:** Given that there's no definition of SPA under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol), it would be useful to have a definition of SPA (particularly to avoid confusions that may arise) and **based on an examination of the various relevant articles of the SPA/BD Protocol**, the WG agreed that this definition should include the following points:
  - A geographically defined marine or terrestrial coastal area (Article 2 of the SPA/BD Protocol),
  - Established by law,
  - Devoted to protection (should be amongst its objectives)
  - Includes measures in the law-indications about key elements for management

The WG-SPA/OECM discussed and agreed the following wording for a SPA definition:

***"a geographically defined marine or coastal area that is designated by legal enactment and managed to achieve specific protection objectives (as listed in article 4 of the protocol) through appropriate protection measures"***.

The WG also agreed that it is particularly important that the SPAs have clear protection objectives that aim to reach a specific conservation goal. It is not enough that the SPA is legally established. The protocol is clear that the SPA needs to have some binding management measures in it and in particular a management plan. In addition, it would be useful to account for the effectiveness of the protection measures in the data to be requested in the directory.

The WG also agreed that it may be useful to have guidance on which MCPA categories could be considered as SPA and included in the SPA directory.

### **c. Purposes of SPA directory**

The WG agreed that the main purpose of the directory is to facilitate and standardize reporting on progress toward the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its SPA/BD Protocol.

The WG stressed the fact that the current reporting to the Barcelona Convention has a section on SPAs, however, the information requested in the current format of the reporting is very limited. Improving this format of standard reporting on SPAs would be needed, taking into account the criteria for the areas that should be considered as SPAs.

The SPA directory could also serve as a tool recognized by the country to report on international and regional MCPA targets and improve level of transparency in reporting and measure progress towards these targets. It therefore should accommodate reporting needs for various commitments on MPAs (CBD, EU, etc) and also enable reporting on OECMs. With regard to OECMs, the group was of the views that the Barcelona Convention COP should invite SPA/RAC to have a section on OECMs in the database of MPAs in the Mediterranean (MAPAMED of the SPA/RAC and MedPAN) and also invite Parties to Identify and report OECMs. However, it is important to have a clear distinction on reporting between SPAs and OECMs and avoid creating confusion.

The SPA Directory could also provide other objectives and services including:

- enable reporting effectiveness of the protection measures. This could ultimately enable enhance management effectiveness of these protected areas;
- facilitate the creation of networks at Mediterranean level amongst MPAs in different countries sharing similar objectives;
- enable analysis of Mediterranean other effective area-based conservation measures.

The WG also discussed that ideally a SPAMI should be first listed as SPA and meet all the SPA criteria before being evaluated as SPAMI. Every SPAMI should be a SPA but not all SPAs are SPAMIs.

**d. Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the Directory (and format of the proposal)**

The WG examined in details Articles 4, 6, 7, 16, 19, 23 and 26 of the SPA/BD Protocol and agreed on the following criteria for inclusion of an area in the SPA Directory:

1. The SPA must be declared (established) through a legal enactment that clearly states its protection objective(s) and its boundaries. The text of the legal enactment must be provided and included in the SPA Directory.
2. The legal enactment of the SPA must include at least one of the following conservation objectives, as listed in Article 4 of the Protocol:
  - i. to safeguard representative types of coastal and marine ecosystems of adequate size to ensure their long-term viability and to maintain their biological diversity;*
  - ii. to safeguard habitats which are in danger of disappearing in their natural area of distribution in the Mediterranean or which have a reduced natural area of distribution as a consequence of their regression or on account of their intrinsically restricted area;*
  - iii. to safeguard habitats critical to the survival, reproduction and recovery of endangered, threatened or endemic species of flora or fauna;*
  - iv. to safeguard sites of particular importance because of their scientific, aesthetic, cultural or educational interest.*
3. To achieve the area's conservation objectives the legal enactment of the SPA must define relevant protection measures as per Article 6 of the SPA/BD Protocol. In particular, the protection measures should include:
  - i. the regulation or prohibition of fishing, hunting, taking of animals and harvesting of plants or their destruction, as well as trade in animals, parts of animals, plants, parts of plants, which originate in specially protected areas;*
  - ii. the regulation and if necessary the prohibition of any other activity or act likely to harm or disturb the species or that might endanger the state of conservation of the ecosystems or species or might impair the natural or cultural characteristics of the specially protected area;*

As relevant, the legal enactment of the SPA should also include the following protection measures (protection measures also listed under the Article 6 of the SPA/BD Protocol):

- iii. the regulation of the introduction of any species not indigenous to the specially protected area in question, or of genetically modified species, as well as the introduction or reintroduction of species which are or have been present in the specially protected area;*
  - iv. the prohibition of the dumping or discharge of wastes and other substances likely directly or indirectly to impair the integrity of the specially protected area;*
  - v. the regulation of the passage of ships and any stopping or [any] anchoring;*
  - vi. the regulation or prohibition of any activity involving the exploration or modification of the soil or the exploitation of the subsoil of the land part, the seabed or its subsoil;*
  - vii. the regulation of any scientific research activity;*
  - viii. the strengthening of the application of the other Protocols to the Convention and of other relevant treaties to which they are Parties;*
  - ix. any other measure aimed at safeguarding ecological and biological processes and the landscape.*
4. To be included in the SPA Directory, a SPA must have planning, management, surveillance and monitoring measures. As per Article 7 of the Protocol they should include:
    - i. the development and adoption of a management plan that specifies the legal and institutional framework and the management and protection measures applicable;*
    - ii. the continuous monitoring of ecological processes, habitats, population dynamics, landscapes, as well as the impact of human activities;*

- iii. *the active involvement of local communities and populations, as appropriate, in the management of the specially protected area, including assistance to local inhabitants who might be affected by its establishment;*
- iv. *the adoption of mechanisms for financing the promotion and management of the specially protected area, as well as the development of activities which ensure that management is compatible with its objectives;*
- v. *the regulation of activities compatible with the objectives for which the specially protected area was established and the terms of the related permits;*
- vi. *the training of managers and qualified technical personnel, as well as the development of an appropriate infrastructure.*

**e. Format and data to be contained in a SPA Directory**

The SPA Directory should be constructed as a multifunctional tool that would accommodate the different demands in terms of reporting, as discussed under Point c. above.

The WG agreed that the reporting of the Contracting Parties to the SPA Directory should build upon the current reporting requirement under the Barcelona Convention. Taking into consideration the proposed purpose of the Directory and SPA criteria, the current reporting requirement should be amended to contain the additional information contained in **Appendix 1**.

In addition, the WG noted that it is necessary for the SPA to have a management plan that is adopted as per Article 7 of the SPA/BD Protocol (See Section d, para 4 i above). The reporting format should therefore be amended to delete the sub-columns "No" and "Under Development" with reference to the management plan (see Appendix 1, stricken-through text).

**f. Maintenance and update of SPA Directory**

The WG agreed that the SPA directory should be updated every two years, as part of the regular reporting under the Barcelona Convention.

The WG also agreed that it is important that an analysis of all submitted reports is provided by SPA/RAC at every meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points. The WG also agreed that the COP of the Barcelona Convention should request SPA/RAC to include the submitted reports on SPAs in MAPAMED and should also encourage Parties to report additional information on other MCPA and OECMs to MAPAMED.

**4.2. OECM**

The WG has had an initial general discussion on OECMs to better understand the context and highlight some key issues from the global discussions on OECMs of relevance to the Mediterranean. The discussion covered the following main points:

- Few experiences exist of countries that have reported OECMs at global level. By the time of the WG meeting, only Canada and Algeria reported OECMs to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).
- The workshop on OECMs in North Africa organized by the IUCN Med in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat and FAO, that was held on 10-11 February 2020 in Tunis raised important issues and questions, particularly on OECM criteria and the process for recognizing and reporting OECMs that should be taken into account. With regard to this latter point, it would be important to have a certain level of coordination in recognizing marine OECM in the Mediterranean.
- There's a clear need for developing guidance on the application of the criteria in the Mediterranean marine context. Such guidance should include species and habitat types in the Annexes II and III of the SPA/BD Protocol, Reference List of Habitats in the Mediterranean and Species/Habitats Action Plans and other relevant priority species and ecosystems identified by other regional bodies in the Mediterranean (e.g. GFCM), given that OECMs should contribute to conserving the key biodiversity of the Mediterranean.
- Some of the Mediterranean fisheries reserves (particularly the Fisheries Restricted Areas -FRAs) may be potential OECMs but it is important to evaluate on a case-by-case basis if they have been successful in contributing to conservation of biodiversity.
- The Barcelona Convention can play an important role in assisting Parties to identify OECMs and apply the CBD criteria (as per paras 5 and 9 of CBD Decision 14/8).

- It is important that the Mediterranean Post-2020 Strategy on MPAs and OECMs contain specific actions on OECMs, recognizing that the role of the Barcelona Convention would be largely to assist in identification and reporting of OECMs, but that the management of OECM would largely fall under the mandate of other sectors and organizations. Collaboration with other sectoral organizations such as FAO, GFCM, UNESCO etc. would be necessary.
- For the fisheries sector, it is important to note that the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in its 34th session “noted the relevance of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) to achieving a number of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global biodiversity targets, and requested that FAO produce and disseminate practical guidelines to support Members in their identification and implementation.” FAO is currently starting the process to develop such guidelines on fisheries-related OECMs.
- The process of identifying OECMs provides opportunities to bring together Fisheries and Conservation sectors both at national level and regional level to help build a dialogue. In addition, Fisheries related OECMs could help achieve objectives of both GFCM and Barcelona Conventions. It may be useful to invite a representative of the GFCM secretariat to the AGEM.
- OECM identification should ideally be undertaken by national cross-sectoral platforms to enable multidisciplinary discussions. Barcelona Convention could prioritize Spatial planning under target 1 of the new Global Biodiversity Framework for the OECMs to increase their protection level. Also, a link to the Ecosystem Approach of Barcelona Convention is to be reinforced.
- The WWF Mediterranean report on 30x30 may be a useful resource as it identifies many areas as potential MPAs. It used already recognized priority conservation areas and tested closure of these areas to see what benefits they could provide. It provides scenarios to allow countries to prioritize their protection levels (these could be MPAs or OECMs) and it would be up to the countries to identify areas at national level and in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).

**a. Different types of areas that could include potential OECMs in the region**

The Working group had an initial discussion to identify the types of areas that could be potential OECMs (list below). **This initial list is non exhaustive and it is important to stress that it is critical to undertake a detailed assessment for each specific site to evaluate if they meet the OECM criteria or not.**

- o Fisheries restricted areas (FRAs), in particular those that host critical species, and those that overlap with Key Bird and biodiversity Areas (KBA) or Ecologically or Biologically Significant marine Areas (EBSAs);
- o Marine or coastal military closure areas, as some such closure are often no go-areas and can have good conservation outcomes<sup>2</sup>;
- o Archeological and cultural heritage<sup>3</sup> (sunken ships, archeological shipwrecks, underwater ancient remains, cities, etc.);
- o Areas with oil and gas restrictions;
- o Areas managed for Navigation purposes such as IMO Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas.

**b. Providing guidance to understand, interpret and apply the OECM criteria**

The WG discussed that the CBD OECM criteria seem rigid and may seem daunting or discouraging to countries. The CBD decision highlights that the criteria should be applied “in a flexible manner and on a case-by-case basis”. It is important to provide guidance on how to interpret this flexibility in applying the criteria while maintaining a coherence and a certain “threshold” of the OECM across the Mediterranean.

The WG agreed that the main characteristic of OECMs is that they contribute to Biodiversity conservation. In assessing if an area is an OECM or not, we need to evaluate if the management of the area effectively contributes to conservation. The Working Group unanimously agreed that it is critically important to ensure a certain threshold of biodiversity conservation in order to recognize an area as OECM.

A member of the WG informed that Italy in its report to the CBD in 2019 (through the Clearing House Mechanism) accounted for an area where oil and gas exploration and new exploitation is prohibited in the 12 nm surrounding the entire Italian coast. This area was declared through a national decree of the Ministry of Environment with the objective to protect the environment and biodiversity. The prohibition also applied around all MPAs and the Pelagos sanctuary. This brings the marine coverage reported by Italy under Aichi

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<sup>2</sup> Note that some such areas are for weapon testing and could have impacts on ecosystems.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the location of these areas may be a sensitive data to share publicly because of risks of looting and illegal trade



Target 11 to 19%. This area has not yet been reported to the WD-OECM, and it is unclear if Italy has undertaken or started a process to apply the OECM criteria to the area and officially recognize it as OECM.

The WG discussed that in line with the approach adopted by Canada, in Mediterranean the GFCM bottom trawling ban below 1000m- could also be considered as potential OECM, and further assessed against the OECM criteria. The WG noted that the areas recognized by Canada are relatively small FRAs and not large areas as the area concerning the ban below 1000m. It was also noted that FRAs propose complementary conservation and management measures for above 1000m.

### **c. How should the post 2020 Mediterranean MPA/OECM strategy advance OECMs**

The WG unanimously agreed that the Mediterranean post-2020 strategy should include a specific section on OECM. This is particularly important as OECMs are a relatively new concept and Mediterranean countries should start thinking about OECMs and working toward identifying and recognizing them to achieve the future Post 2020 target.

The strategy should include activities related to developing guidance and orientations on OECMs to ensure that the OECMs recognized in Mediterranean meet a threshold of conservation outcomes. The strategy should also catalyze identification of OECMs by countries and enable sharing experiences and feedback from countries on their processes and the challenges they encountered.

The WG discussed the main content of the proposed section on OECMs in the strategy and agreed that one Outcome or pillar in strategy could be "Mediterranean countries are advancing, recognizing and reporting OECMs". The WG also agreed that this section should contain at least the following outputs:

- 1 output on countries advancing and recognizing OECMs, with clarity on contribution to biodiversity conservation under the SPA/BD Protocol;
- 1 output related to coordinating reporting to MAPAMED and WD-OECMs;
- 1 output related to promoting intersectoral dialogue (at national and regional levels);
- 1 output related to increasing communication and awareness about OECMs and their role in contributing to Biodiversity and SDGs.

The WG also discussed that KBAs and EBSAs might support recognition of OECMs through facilitating recognizing the biodiversity values in the areas. It is understood that KBAs/EBSAs are "only" areas recognized as important but this recognition does not imply any management measure and therefore, as such cannot be considered OECMs unless they overlap with an area that is managed and results in biodiversity outcome. But they do not by themselves have a de-facto biodiversity outcome.

### **d. What guidance/best practices may be needed to advance OECMs in the region (including future actions by AGEM and indicative process at national/regional level)**

The WG agreed that the AGEM should provide support for the implementation of the post 2020 strategy and its actions on OECMs. Specifically, the WG agree that the AGEM should undertake the following actions:

- Develop a questionnaire to scope progress on OECMs in countries and document their experiences and challenges to date (this can include experience on terrestrial OECMs and lessons learned that can be applied in marine and coastal environments);
- Document types of marine and coastal areas already subject to specific management measures that can be potential OECMs and developing case studies of existing/potential marine and coastal OECMs in the Mediterranean;
- Enhance intersectoral dialogue and invite additional experts from other secretariats to AGEM OECM related discussions (particularly GFCM);
- Provide guidance to Parties on the application of the criteria (CBD) at the Mediterranean level, particularly to ensure maintaining a coherent threshold on biodiversity outcomes.

- Support reporting OECMs to MAPAMED.<sup>4</sup> It is recommended that the Barcelona Convention includes in its decision an explicit recommendation for Parties to report OECMs to MAPAMED.
- Collaborate with other processes on OECM in different fora and inform Mediterranean countries on best practices and lessons learned on OECMs. (e.g. IUCN, FAO, etc.).

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<sup>4</sup> Noting that the April 2020 release of MAPAMED and its User manual recognizes MPAs, OECMs, potential OECMs (until it is officially reported) and other important areas for conservation (KBA, EBSAs, etc). In addition, MAPAMED co-managers (SPA/RAC and MedPAN) plan to contact WCMC to coordinate reporting and centralise reporting to WDPA and WD-OECMs.



## **Appendix 2**

### **Background and Considerations for the SPA Directory**

The background of the SPA Directory is outlined in a concept note prepared by the Secretariat and presented to the Fourteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points (Portorož, Slovenia, 18-21 June 2019) part of document UNEP/MED WG.461/15 and which states:

*“The Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPA Protocol) adopted in 1982 in the framework of the Barcelona Convention indicates in its Article 8 that the Contracting Parties should notify to the Specially Protected areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) information concerning the Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) that they created within their territories. This information should include in particular SPA boundaries as well as the regulation applicable to them. They are to be compiled by SPA/RAC to set up, publish and keep up to date a directory of Specially Protected Areas in the areas to which the Protocol applies.*

*In the framework of the implementation of the SPA Protocol provisions, SPA/RAC elaborated a Directory composed of information sheets on SPAs notified by the Contracting Parties. After its first publication, this directory was updated in 1989.*

*Since the notification of SPAs by Parties has not been included in the provisions of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of 1995, there has not been any official notification on SPAs after the Directory version published in 1989. As a result, there is no longer any official directory of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the Barcelona Convention’s application area. Indeed, the only list of protected areas maintained by SPA/RAC, based on official notifications, is the List of SPAMIs, although the SPA/BD Protocol provides for the establishment of both SPAs and SPAMIs. This makes it difficult to monitor the status of protected areas in the Mediterranean as well as to assess countries’ efforts to preserve sites.*

*To address this situation, it is proposed to set up a procedure, based on the provisions of the SPA/BD Protocol that allows SPA/RAC to develop a directory listing the specially marine and coastal protected areas that are created by the Contracting Parties within the SPA/BD Protocol’s application area. This directory must contain for each listed site information on its geographical location, surface, boundaries, objectives, the applicable regulations, main protection measures required (in particular presence and surface of no-take areas and of areas where industrial fishing (beam-trawling and purse seine) is forbidden), and an overview of its main natural features. This directory should not, in any way, duplicate or be confused with the SPAMI List, that includes sites intended to have a value of example and model for the protection of the natural heritage in the region.”*

Following that, the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted Decision IG.24/6 on the [“Identification and Conservation of Sites of Particular Ecological Interest in the Mediterranean, including Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance”](#) which states the following:

**“4. Request the Secretariat to establish a directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas according to Articles 16 (guidelines and common criteria), 19 (publicity, information, public awareness and education) and 23 (reports of the Parties) of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, and the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre to elaborate criteria for inclusion of specially protected areas in the directory, for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their 22nd Meeting (COP 22);”**

While the COP 21 decision singles out Articles 16, 19 and 23, there are many more articles in the Protocol that are directly relevant to SPAs, these are highlighted in at the end of this paper.

After reviewing these articles, we note the following points that may be helpful in organizing our discussions:

- The protocol does not provide a definition of a “Specially Protected Area”
- The protocol provides a list of objectives (Art. 4) and specific protection measures (Art. 6) that SPA should have. This list is very similar to the set of protection measures generally used in “normal” Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) that countries have established.

This suggests that the SPA are not meant to be a different category other than Marine and Coastal Protected Areas. We note that the [Specially Protected Areas Protocol of 1982](#) explicitly refers to “specially protected areas” as “protected areas” in its Article 2.

- The protocol calls for the development of “guidelines for the establishment and management of specially protected areas” (Art.16) that can be adopted (and amended) by the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Art. 26). While other elements under art 16 have been developed and adopted by the Contracting Parties as Annexes to the Protocol, the SPA guidelines have not.
- Art 23 does not outline specific reporting requirements for SPA as it does for SPAMI, however, the requirement for reporting on SPA is implicit as part of the report on the implementation of this Protocol. It is important to note that the 20<sup>th</sup> COP of the Barcelona Convention adopted Decision IG.23/1 “[Revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols](#)”. Pages 125, 127-129 and 130 are directly relevant to the Specially Protected Areas requirements under the Protocol, including Table III (p 130) through which should be reported the “List of SPAs within the SPA/BD Protocol’s geographical coverage”.
- While the SPA/BD Protocol does not mention a “directory” per se (as per its predecessor), it provides a requirement for “creating and updating databases of specially protected areas” under Art.25.

Taking account of the above, we propose that the Working Group considers the following items in its discussions:

- 1- Views on difference between SPAs and MCPAs, and if SPA should be a special category of MCPA similar to SPAMIs
- 2- Definition of a SPA (based on result of 1)
- 3- Purpose of SPA directory
- 4- Criteria for inclusion of SPAs in the Directory (and format of the proposal, e.g. Annex to the protocol?)
- 5- Format/data to be contained in a SPA Directory
- 6- Maintenance and update of SPA Directory
- 7- The need to establish “guidelines for the establishment and management of specially protected areas” as per Art.16

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE PROTOCOL CONCERNING SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN RELEVANT TO SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS**

### **PART I - GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 3 - General obligations**

1. Each Party shall take the necessary measures to:

- (a) protect, preserve and manage in a sustainable and environmentally sound way areas of particular natural or cultural value, notably **by the establishment of specially protected areas**;
- (b) protect, preserve and manage threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna.

### **PART II - PROTECTION OF AREAS**

#### **Section 1 - Specially protected areas**

#### **Article 4 - Objectives**

The objective of specially protected areas is:

- (a) **to safeguard representative types of coastal and marine ecosystems of adequate size** to ensure their long-term viability and to maintain their biological diversity;

- (b) to safeguard habitats which are in danger of disappearing in their natural area of distribution in the Mediterranean or which have a reduced natural area of distribution as a consequence of their regression or on account of their intrinsically restricted area;
- (c) to safeguard habitats critical to the survival, reproduction and recovery of endangered, threatened or endemic species of flora or fauna;
- (d) to safeguard sites of particular importance because of their scientific, aesthetic, cultural or educational interest.

#### **Article 5 - Establishment of specially protected areas**

1. Each Party may establish specially protected areas in the marine and coastal zones subject to its sovereignty or jurisdiction.
2. If a Party intends to establish, in an area subject to its sovereignty or national jurisdiction, a specially protected area contiguous to the frontier and to the limits of a zone subject to the sovereignty or national jurisdiction of another Party, the competent authorities of the two Parties shall endeavour to cooperate, with a view to reaching agreement on the measures to be taken and shall, inter alia, examine the possibility of the other Party establishing a corresponding specially protected area or adopting any other appropriate measures.
3. If a Party intends to establish, in an area subject to its sovereignty or national jurisdiction, a specially protected area contiguous to the frontier and to the limits of a zone subject to the sovereignty or national jurisdiction of a state that is not a Party to this Protocol, the Party shall endeavour to cooperate with that state as referred to in the previous paragraph.
4. If a state which is not a party to this Protocol intends to establish a specially protected area contiguous to the frontier and to the limits of a zone subject to the sovereignty or national jurisdiction of a Party to this Protocol, the latter shall endeavour to cooperate with that state as referred to in paragraph 2.

#### **Article 6 - Protection measures**

The Parties, in conformity with international law and taking into account the characteristics of each specially protected area, shall take the protection measures required, in particular:

- (a) the strengthening of the application of the other Protocols to the Convention and of other relevant treaties to which they are Parties;
- (b) the prohibition of the dumping or discharge of wastes and other substances likely directly or indirectly to impair the integrity of the specially protected area;
- (c) the regulation of the passage of ships and any stopping or anchoring;
- (d) the regulation of the introduction of any species not indigenous to the specially protected area in question, or of genetically modified species, as well as the introduction or reintroduction of species which are or have been present in the specially protected area;
- (e) the regulation or prohibition of any activity involving the exploration or modification of the soil or the exploitation of the subsoil of the land part, the seabed or its subsoil;
- (f) the regulation of any scientific research activity;
- (g) the regulation or prohibition of fishing, hunting, taking of animals and harvesting of plants or their destruction, as well as trade in animals, parts of animals, plants, parts of plants, which originate in specially protected areas;
- (h) the regulation and if necessary the prohibition of any other activity or act likely to harm or disturb the species or that might endanger the state of conservation of the ecosystems or species or might impair the natural or cultural characteristics of the specially protected area;
- (i) any other measure aimed at safeguarding ecological and biological processes and the landscape.

#### **Article 7 - Planning and management**

1. The Parties shall, in accordance with the rules of international law, adopt planning, management, supervision and monitoring measures for the specially protected areas.
2. Such measures should include for each specially protected area:
  - (a) the development and adoption of a management plan that specifies the legal and institutional framework and the management and protection measures applicable;
  - (b) the continuous monitoring of ecological processes, habitats, population dynamics, landscapes, as well as the impact of human activities;

- (c) the active involvement of local communities and populations, as appropriate, in the management of specially protected areas, including assistance to local inhabitants who might be affected by the establishment of such areas;
  - (d) the adoption of mechanisms for financing the promotion and management of specially protected areas, as well as the development of activities which ensure that management is compatible with the objectives of such areas;
  - (e) the regulation of activities compatible with the objectives for which the specially protected area was established and the terms of the related permits;
  - (f) the training of managers and qualified technical personnel, as well as the development of an appropriate infrastructure.
3. The Parties shall ensure that national contingency plans incorporate measures for responding to incidents that could cause damage or constitute a threat to the specially protected areas.
4. When specially protected areas covering both land and marine areas have been established, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure the coordination of the administration and management of the specially protected area as a whole.

#### **PART IV - PROVISIONS COMMON TO PROTECTED AREAS AND SPECIES**

##### **Article 16 - Guidelines and common criteria**

The Parties shall adopt:

- (a) common criteria for the choice of protected marine and coastal areas that could be included in the SPAMI list which shall be annexed to the Protocol;
- (b) common criteria for the inclusion of additional species in the annexes;
- (c) guidelines for the establishment and management of specially protected areas.

The criteria and guidelines referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c) may be amended by the meeting of the Parties on the basis of a proposal made by one or more Parties.

##### **Article 19 - Publicity, information, public awareness and education**

1. The Parties shall give appropriate publicity to the establishment of specially protected areas, their boundaries, applicable regulations, and to the designation of protected species, their habitats and applicable regulations.
2. The Parties shall endeavour to inform the public of the interest and value of specially protected areas and species, and of the scientific knowledge which may be gained from the point of view of nature conservation and other points of view. Such information should have an appropriate place in education programmes. The Parties shall also endeavour to promote the participation of their public and their conservation organisations in measures that are necessary for the protection of the areas and species concerned, including environmental impact assessments.

##### **Article 23 - Reports of the Parties**

The Parties shall submit to ordinary meetings of the Parties a report on the implementation of this Protocol, in particular on:

- (a) the status and the state of the areas included in the SPAMI list;
- (b) any changes in the delimitation or legal status of the SPAMIs and protected species;
- (c) possible exemptions allowed pursuant to Articles 12 and 18 of this Protocol.

#### **PART V - INSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS**

##### **Article 25 - Coordination**

1. The Organisation shall be responsible for coordinating the implementation of this Protocol. For this purpose, it shall receive the support of the Centre to which it may entrust the following functions:
  - (a) assisting the Parties, in cooperation with the competent international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, in:
    - o establishing and managing specially protected areas in the area to which this Protocol applies,
    - o conducting programmes of technical and scientific research as provided for in Article 20 of this Protocol,
    - o conducting the exchange of scientific and technical information among the Parties as provided for in Article 20 of this Protocol,
    - o preparing management plans for specially protected areas and species,

- o developing cooperative programmes pursuant to Article 21 of this Protocol,
- o preparing educational materials designed for various groups;
- (b) convening and organising the meetings of the National Focal Points and providing them with secretariat services;
- (c) formulating recommendations on guidelines and common criteria pursuant to Article 16 of this Protocol;
- (d) creating and updating databases of specially protected areas, protected species and other matters relevant to this Protocol;
- (e) preparing reports and technical studies that may be required for the implementation of this Protocol;

**Article 26 - Meetings of the Parties**

1. The ordinary meetings of the Parties to this Protocol shall be held in conjunction with the ordinary meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention held pursuant to Article 14 of the Convention. The Parties may also hold extraordinary meetings in conformity with that Article.
2. The meetings of the Parties to this Protocol are particularly aimed at:
  - (a) keeping under review the implementation of this Protocol;
  - (c) considering the efficacy of the measures adopted for the management and protection of areas and species, and examining the need for other measures, in particular in the form of Annexes and amendments to this Protocol or to its Annexes;
  - (d) adopting the guidelines and common criteria provided for in Article 16 of this Protocol;
  - (e) considering reports transmitted by the Parties under Article 23 of this Protocol, as well as any other pertinent information which the Parties transmit through the Centre;



**Appendix 3**  
**Background Document on OECM**

**1. Background on OECMs in the Convention on Biological Diversity:**

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 was adopted by Decision X/2 of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010 (CBD, 2010). The Plan consisted of five strategic goals developed through twenty targets (Aichi Biodiversity Targets; CBD, 2010). Aichi Target 11 (AT11) stated that “By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and **other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)** and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes”.

At their 14<sup>th</sup> Conference in November 2018, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity agreed a **definition, guiding principles, common characteristics and criteria for identification** of OECMs ([Decision 14/8](#)).

The OECM definition (para 2 of the Decision) is as follows: **“a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values”**.

Annex III of Decision 14/8 relates to “scientific and technical advice on other effective area-based conservation measures” and contains the criteria for identification of OECM (Section B) which is copied below.

<b>Criterion A: Area is not currently recognized as a protected area</b>	
<b>Not a protected area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area is not currently recognized or reported as a protected area or part of a protected area; it may have been established for another function.</li> </ul>
<b>Criterion B: Area is governed and managed</b>	
<b>Geographically defined space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size and area are described, including in three dimensions where necessary.</li> <li>• Boundaries are geographically delineated.</li> </ul>
<b>Legitimate governance authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance has legitimate authority -and is appropriate for achieving in situ conservation of biodiversity within the area;</li> <li>• Governance by indigenous peoples and local communities is self-identified in accordance with national legislation and applicable international obligations;</li> <li>• Governance reflects the equity considerations adopted in the Convention.</li> <li>• Governance may be by a single authority and/or organization or through collaboration among relevant authorities and provides the ability to address threats collectively.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Managed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained outcomes for the conservation of biological diversity.</li> <li>• Relevant authorities and stakeholders are identified and involved in management.</li> <li>• A management system is in place that contributes to sustaining the in-situ conservation of biodiversity.</li> <li>• Management is consistent with the ecosystem approach with the ability to adapt to achieve expected biodiversity conservation outcomes, including long-term outcomes, and including the ability to manage a new threat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criterion C: Achieves sustained and effective contribution to <i>in-situ</i> conservation of biodiversity</b></p>	
<p><b>Effective</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area achieves, or is expected to achieve, positive and sustained outcomes for the <i>in-situ</i> conservation of biodiversity.</li> <li>• Threats, existing or reasonably anticipated ones are addressed effectively by preventing, significantly reducing or eliminating them, and by restoring degraded ecosystems.</li> <li>• Mechanisms, such as policy frameworks and regulations, are in place to recognize and respond to new threats.</li> <li>• To the extent relevant and possible, management inside and outside the other effective area-based conservation measure is integrated.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustained over long term</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The other effective area-based conservation measures are in place for the long term or are likely to be.</li> <li>• “Sustained” pertains to the continuity of governance and management and “long term” pertains to the biodiversity outcome.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>In-situ</i> conservation of biological diversity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of other effective area-based conservation measures is expected to include the identification of the range of biodiversity attributes for which the site is considered important (e.g. communities of rare, threatened or endangered species, representative natural ecosystems, range restricted species, key biodiversity areas, areas providing critical ecosystem functions and services, areas for ecological connectivity).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information and monitoring</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of other effective area-based conservation measures should, to the extent possible, document the known biodiversity attributes, as well as, where relevant, cultural and/or spiritual values, of the area and the governance and management in place as a baseline for assessing effectiveness.</li> <li>• A monitoring system informs management on the effectiveness of measures with respect to biodiversity, including the health of ecosystems.</li> <li>• Processes should be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of governance and management, including with respect to equity.</li> <li>• General data of the area such as boundaries, aim and governance are available information.</li> </ul>

<b>Criterion D: Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values</b>	
<b>Ecosystem functions and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystem functions and services are supported, including those of importance to indigenous peoples and local communities, for other effective area-based conservation measures concerning their territories, taking into account interactions and trade-offs among ecosystem functions and services, with a view to ensuring positive biodiversity outcomes and equity.</li> <li>• Management to enhance one particular ecosystem function or service does not impact negatively on the sites overall biological diversity.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and management measures identify, respect and uphold the cultural, spiritual, socioeconomic, and other locally relevant values of the area, where such values exist.</li> <li>• Governance and management measures respect and uphold the knowledge, practices and institutions that are fundamental for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity.</li> </ul>

It is important to highlight that the decision notes that “the guiding principles and common characteristics and criteria for identification of other effective area-based conservation measures **are applicable across all ecosystems currently or potentially important for biodiversity and should be applied in a flexible way and on a case-by-case basis”.**

The adoption of the definition and criteria of OECMs opens new opportunities for Governments, State agencies, private entities, civil society organizations and local communities to assess the extent of potential OECMs and to begin to recognize and report them. This is particularly relevant and pressing in the Mediterranean region as many countries did not achieve the 10% conservation objective under the Aichi Target 11 for the marine environment, and as the potential successor to the Target 11 under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is likely to aim toward 30% coverage of both protected areas and OECMs.

## **2. National and Regional Experiences to date:**

- In February 2020, IUCN Med and WCPA organized a workshop on OECMS in North Africa. Below are two important points from the workshop that can be helpful for AGEM to consider:
  - One of the main questions that participants (and government officials) had was if an area needed to meet all the OECM criteria and sub-criteria or if there are critical criteria that needed to be met and others that can be optional. Should thresholds be established for a site to qualify as OECM? It was unclear how to interpret the “flexibility” allowed by the CBD decision and maintaining coherence between the reported OECMs.
  - There is no clarity in the CBD decision as to who is responsible for deciding whether an area is an OECM or not and ultimately reporting it to CBD/WCMC, and whether or not there would/should be a validation process to confirm that the OECM complies with the CBD criteria. (While participants recognized the need and possibility for other governmental sectors and other actors (civil society, etc) to start an OECM process, there was a consensus in the room that it would be preferable that this proposition is subjected to consultation at the national level, as this can help legitimize the site and avoid potential conflict with other sectors and other users. Participants also agreed that coordination on reporting on OECM is needed and that such coordination role should probably be best played by the CBD focal points as they can help explain the details about OECMs.)
- So far only two countries have reported OECMs to the CBD through the World Database on OECMs managed by WCMC. These are Canada (including marine OECMs) and Algeria (Terrestrial Cultural Parks). Few experiences exist to document national processes for identifying, recognizing and reporting OECMs.

- The EU is starting a process to look at OECMs within the EU Strategy for Biodiversity.
- In March 2021, an ICES meeting will examine OECMs in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean with the cooperation of the relevant regional fisheries management organizations, NAFO, NEAFC and GFCM.
- IUCN Med is planning to organize a workshop on marine and coastal OECM in the Med in May 2021 to address the following issues:
  - Concept and potential case examples of marine OECMs
  - Regional Approach to Mediterranean OECMs
  - Process for coastal and marine OECMs identification

**3. Suggestions for WG discussion:**

- The different types of areas that could qualify as OECMs in the region
- Understanding the OECM criteria and discussing how to guide countries on applying the “flexibility” to maintain a coherent threshold
- How should the post 2020 Mediterranean MPA/OECM strategy advance OECMs?
- What guidance/best practices may be needed to advance OECMs in the region (including future actions by AGEM and indicative process at national/regional level)