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Sixteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points

Malta, 22-24 May 2023

Agenda item 6: Conservation of sites of particular ecological interest

6.1. Report by the Chair of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) on the group's works during the biennial period 2022-2023

Report of the Third Meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM) (Teleconference, 1 March 2022)

Note:

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SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (SPA/RAC)
Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM)
Third meeting
Teleconference, 1 March 2022

Report

1. The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) convened the third meeting of the Ad hoc group of experts for marine protected areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM), on 1 March 2022, 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.
4. The meeting aimed mainly at: (i) discussing and agreeing on the outputs of the working group on coherence (WG-Coherence); (ii) providing guidance on the implementation of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean - particularly the OECM strategic pillar - and on the development of its evaluation and monitoring framework; and (iii) discussing and agreeing on the programme of work of AGEM for the 2022-2023 period.

Agenda item 1 - Opening of the meeting

5. The meeting was opened at 9.00 a.m. UTC+1, on Tuesday 1 March 2022, by Ms. Souha EL ASMI, Programme Officer (SPAs) at SPA/RAC, who welcomed the participants on behalf of the SPA/RAC Director. She thanked them for their valuable input to the previous biennium (2020-2021) outcomes, which have been adopted by the 22nd ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 22, Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021), and wished for their continuous active involvement to the starting biennium (2022-2023) objectives and priorities.
6. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Robert TURK, Chair of AGEM. After a brief presentation of the agenda, he invited the meeting to adopt it on the basis of the submitted provisional agenda. The **meeting agenda** appears in **Annex II** to this report.

Agenda item 2 - Presentation of the results and outputs of WG-Coherence

7. Ms. Milena TEMPESTA, member of the WG-Coherence, presented, on behalf of the working group Coordinator, Ms. Emna LAMINE, the output of the WG-Coherence work, i.e. the document entitled "Coherence in Mediterranean MPAs: Conditions and recommendations" appearing in document SPA/RAC/AGEM/3/2.
8. This output is intended to provide a reflection on defining and measuring ecological coherence of marine protected areas (MPAs) networks. The document is based on a literature review and the working group's discussion. It includes (i) the criteria for an MPA system to be coherent and connected, (ii) the enabling conditions to ensure those criteria are met, and (iii) provides recommendations to decision makers.

9. The meeting welcomed the work of the WG-Coherence on such an uneasy topic and praised the quality, succinctness and reader-friendliness of the document.
10. A member, supported by another member, recommended to look again at the document in light of the adopted Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs, along with setting the document objective and target audience. She recommended to consider the whole MCPA-OECM system and look at the complementarity between MCPAs and OECMs in having a coherent and connected network.
11. She also pointed out that there is no need to have a fully or highly protected zone within every MPA, as presently set out in one of the document's recommendations. Different types of protected areas have different roles to play (including socio-economic objectives) and other kinds of protected areas (e.g. multiple use areas, migratory species protected areas) have proved having an effect on connectivity.
12. A member pointed out that the key takeaway point from the document is that there is a need for further scientific studies on connectivity and coherence considering different types of species (including fish) and habitats (including benthic habitats), as well as species genetics, in order to better define the different connectivity types.
13. He also highlighted that the role of OECMs as a connected system hosting MPAs should be considered, while trying to propose other relevant measures to enhance connectivity between MPAs according to their objectives (e.g. multipurpose MPAs, Natura 2000 sites, etc.).
14. Other members believe that the lack of areas of enhanced/stricter protection is a fact in the Mediterranean, and that without having enough of these (e.g. marine reserves with no-take zones), the region cannot have an efficient, connected and coherent MPA network. It was reported that the WG-Coherence members think that this should be the starting point for a coherent and connected network.
15. Another member indicated that it would be important to think about the feasibility of the recommendations in terms of capacity and financial means.
16. As a conclusion, it was agreed that the WG-Coherence members look again at the document, including its recommendations' part, in light of the discussions and views of the whole AGEM, and to submit it back again for consideration by the group, in view to its release to the SPA/BD Focal Points and other stakeholders.

Agenda item 3 - Overview on the 2020-2021 outputs and achievements with the contribution of AGEM

17. Under this agenda item, the secretariat presented a short overview on the outputs and achievements made with the contribution of AGEM during the 2020-2021 period. These include mainly the Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs and the Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs, which were adopted by the Barcelona Convention COP 22 (Decision IG.25/12); and the document concerning considerations on identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment, that was presented to the 15th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (Videoconference, 23-25 June 2021).
18. The secretariat also summarized the ensuing recommendations by the SPA/BD Focal Points meeting and decisions by COP 22, and their possible implication on the AGEM programme of work during the 2022-2023 period.
19. This overview is presented in **Table 1**: AGEM activities, deliverables and outcomes during 2021, and proposed follow-up actions, contained in **Annex III** to this report.

Agenda item 4 - Guidance on the development of the Evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean

20. The secretariat introduced this item by presenting the rationale behind the development of an evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs, and proposing a timeline and milestones for its development over the 2022-2023 period. The secretariat noted that the proposed timetable might be adjusted according to the progress of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

21. A member informed the meeting that while the resumed sessions of the CBD's 24th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-24) and the 3rd meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 GBF (WG2020-3) will take place on 14-29 March 2022, in Geneva, Switzerland, the CBD COP 15 will most probably be postponed to September-October 2022. The CBD meetings are expected to review and adopt the Post-2020 GBF along with a monitoring framework.

22. An AGEM member, supported by other members, noted that the terms of the mandate for the elaboration of the post-2020 strategy evaluation and monitoring framework are clear and request to use, to the extent possible, existing monitoring tools in the region, in particular those established under the United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) - Barcelona Convention as well as in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Post-2020 GBF and related target monitoring.

23. For that aim, a ground work by the secretariat is needed in order to prepare an overview about data and resources available, including reporting requirements, indicators and data in the framework of the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO), the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), the European Union (EU) Biodiversity strategy processes, the CBD reporting and ongoing Post-2020 GBF, SDGs, Regional Seas contribution to the Post-2020 GBF¹, the zero draft of the MCPA-OECM strategy indicators, and mid-term and final targets (drafted during the strategy elaboration process), etc.

24. Concerning the importance of aligning the evaluation and monitoring framework with other relevant processes, a member informed the meeting about the ongoing work on management effectiveness indicators in the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected areas. The work at EU level should be monitored in order to see how and to what extent its results could be extended to non-Natura 2000 protected areas.

25. A member stated that the evaluation and monitoring framework should be linked with financial and technical resources availability at national but also at regional level. He provided, as example, the position of Africa towards the Post-2020 GBF under negotiation during the forthcoming CBD meetings, that is "no GBF without budgeting."

26. The meeting recognized the importance of consulting and involving the SPA/BD Focal Points since the early stages of the development of the evaluation and monitoring framework.

27. It was also recommended to have the evaluation and monitoring framework focused on the minimum requirement of indicators to ensure that the strategy objectives and achievements are monitored.

28. Given the importance of this task, the meeting agreed to establish a dedicated working group on evaluation and monitoring (short named as "WG-E&M") formed by volunteer members, to focus on the development of the evaluation and monitoring framework, before discussing it within the whole group. During the meeting, six members volunteered to be part of the working group: Ms. Esra BASAK, Ms. Susan GALLON, Ms. Camille LOTH, Ms. Imen MELIANE, Mr. Leonardo TUNESI and Mr. Robert TURK. It

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/0c09/8814/cc8c0cd04f77b9a61240a33c/sbstta-24-inf-24-en.pdf>

was though decided to extend the invitation be email to all the members (including the excused members) after the meeting.

Agenda item 5 - Guidance on an implementing plan for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy

29. As an introduction to this agenda item, the secretariat explained that considering the role of AGEM in supporting the Barcelona Convention Secretariat and Contracting Parties to progress with the implementation of the “ambitious and transformational” Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs, and given that achieving these ambitious targets by the Contracting Parties and the region require transformative actions over the next decade, the AGEM advice is sought here on the way through which the Secretariat could support the Contracting Parties in having such a transformational shift, and following which approach and steps, especially for Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

Communicate with countries and guide them

30. Several members recommended to SPA/RAC to have a more intense and tighter communication with the countries to push forward the implementation of the MCPA & OECM Strategy. This could be achieved through expert visits and face-to-face meetings with governmental stakeholders (political and technical), to explain how to implement the strategy and what is required for its implementation.

31. A member considered that the transformational shift needs to be first considered by SPA/RAC. In that respect, no country should be left behind, especially the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries: if they cannot join the movement, they can hit other targets under other umbrellas, like SDGs. Institutions accountability and partnership are also important. However, this would require financial and technical resources.

32. It was proposed to have a first discussion under the Chatham House Rule, so that people can speak openly and freely about the root causes for not moving forward. Some partners could facilitate such dialogue.

33. In that regard, a member informed the meeting about the policy dialogue happening in her country with a variety of stakeholders about the 30 by 30 target. She reported that the 30x30 target was not internalized and the OECM concept rather contested by governmental stakeholders.

Build on positive experiences from the less advanced countries

34. A member stressed out the importance of highlighting the advances and achievements of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, that are in many respects more advanced than Northern countries (e.g. proportion of management plans and strictly protected areas, experience in co-management), and let them build on the good examples.

Communicate with donors, implementing agencies and regional/international organizations

35. The meeting highlighted the importance of influencing donors (including private donors) and where these should be investing. It was pointed out that donors are, most of the time, influenced by Northern non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that do not know about the Mediterranean Southern and Eastern countries and that have very little interactions with stakeholders.

36. It was then recommended to have an informal and frank discussion meeting, in 2023, with key MPA operators in the Mediterranean, key donors and agencies (e.g. UNDP, World Bank and other GEF implementing agencies) and countries at high enough level, to discuss about what is needed to move forward towards the same direction. AGEM could provide some elements to inform the discussion.

Have a systemic thinking

37. A member, supported by other members, recommended that all involved actors should shift into a systemic thinking. So far, conservation has been approached on a project-by-project and site-by-site basis, with very little investment in institutional capacity and very little thinking on how to go from the bottom up.

38. The approach of The MedFund was brought as an innovative example in this very respect, as it identifies gaps and looks at the long-term viability of the sites, by complementing projects and working with local NGOs and authorities.

Provide simple and clear guidance

39. Several members highlighted the importance of providing guidance to the countries in implementing the strategy with enough details and without being prescriptive: help them to develop sorts of national implementation plan, considering their challenges and specificities. AGEM members could provide a technical support in guiding the countries.

40. Simple guidelines with detailed steps and milestones could be developed. Every country should be able to adapt them slightly according to its needs. The model of CBD's 2004 Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) has been acknowledged as a possible inspiration.

41. It was proposed to organize consultation meetings with some experts to explain the strategy and to see what are the needed actions in the concerned country.

Information about the development of a fundraising strategy for the Post-2020 SAPBIO and the Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs

42. The secretariat informed the meeting about the work that will be initiated by SPA/RAC during March 2022 and aiming at the development of a fundraising strategy for the Post-2020 SAPBIO and the Post-2020 Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs. This process will be culminated by the organization of a donor conference by the end of 2022 (tentative date: week of 21 November 2022).

43. A member called on SPA/RAC to pay particular attention to transboundary protected areas and OECMs, a category that is under developed in the Mediterranean, in the framework of the elaboration of the fundraising strategy. He informed the meeting the SPA/BD Protocol was conceived in order to enable States to establish transboundary MPAs in cases where boundaries already exist or in cases where boundaries have not yet been established, but also in case where there are disputes on marine boundaries. It is a kind of incentive to build confidence between States. For that reason, particular funding should be devoted to this kind of MPAs.

44. The meeting requested the secretariat to keep AGEM updated about the fundraising strategy and donor conference process, in order to find synergies (merging and inputting) with the current AGEM programme of work.

Agenda item 6 - Guidance on the OECM strategic pillar

45. The secretariat introduced this agenda item by presenting a number of actions that SPA/RAC and AGEM could lead to progress with the implementation of the OECM strategic pillar. These actions are based on the orientations provided by AGEM during 2021.

46. Many members reflected about the potential sectors that could be responsible for OECMs in the Mediterranean. They cited: fisheries, energy (oil, gas and wind farms), shipping/maritime transport, cultural heritage, and military navy areas. Concerning the latter, the meeting anticipated that most probably, cooperation would be very difficult in that area given the sensitivity of such kind of information.

47. Another member said that we tend to forget conservation sites that could qualify as OECMs. Among these, we could find Ramsar sites and Biosphere Reserves which, most of the time, don't have legal designations at national level. The coastal area (presently not considered in MAPAMED) should be also considered beyond the strict marine surface.

48. A member stated that the OECM assessment should start from existing measures and assess their compliance with CBD criteria. After this evaluation, other complementary measures could be identified.

49. A member confirmed the need of having a Mediterranean workshop involving the various stakeholders. GFCM have started such process, focused on the fisheries sector. The main objectives of the workshop should be to (i) reflect on what should constitute a biodiversity outcome for an OECM, and (ii) have a consistent and harmonious way of considering OECMs in the region. The SPA Criteria adopted by COP 22 could be helpful in providing guidance in that.

50. It was highlighted also that the SPA/BD Protocol Annexes II and III and the Barcelona Convention Reference List of Habitats could also be at the core of the minimum requirements for biodiversity outcomes.

51. Some members advised to follow the model of the GFCM and HELCOM workshops, that have looked at case studies, by making an initial assessment and going through the CBD criteria.

52. The opportunity of liaising and coordinating with a number of key sustainable blue economy initiatives was also proposed for the workshop.

53. The role of the SPA/BD Focal Points was raised. It has been agreed that the SPA/BD Focal Points should play a key role and a role of facilitation and coordination at national level (including providing the useful contacts of relevant sectors representatives and contact persons).

54. The secretariat was requested to develop a draft scoping questionnaire on OECMs and to circulate it for consideration by AGEM.

55. The meeting recommended to invite experts from the GFCM Secretariat and possibly from Plan Bleu, that were particularly interested in the OECM process.

56. In that respect, the secretariat informed the meeting about the recent exchange of correspondences between SPA/RAC (cc: UNEP/MAP) and the GFCM and the expected discussion about the OECM topic to avoid duplication and increase synergies. The secretariat will keep the AGEM informed about the outcomes of this discussion.

Agenda item 7 - Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023

57. Based on the previous items' discussions, the secretariat used the lunch break time to revise the draft programme of work contained in Table 2 "Proposed programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023" of document SPA/RAC/AGEM/3/3.

58. As an introduction to this agenda item, the secretariat presented the revised programme of work.

59. The meeting discussed and reviewed it.

60. The ensuing **programme of work** appears in **Table 2**: Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023 contained in **Annex III** to this report.

Agenda item 8 - Any other matters

61. No other question related to the topics of the meeting was raised by participants or by the secretariat.

Agenda item 9 - Wrap-up and closure of the meeting

62. The secretariat summarized briefly the main follow-up actions after the meeting, and thanked the Chair for his brilliant facilitation and all the members for their time and commitment.

63. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.40 p.m. UTC+1, on Tuesday, 1 March 2022.

Annex I: List of Participants

AGEM Members:

- 1) Ms. Esra BASAK
- 2) Ms. Emna BEN LAMINE
- 3) Ms. Léa DAVID (*ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee*)
- 4) Mr. Moustafa FOUDA
- 5) Ms. Susan GALLON (*on behalf of the MedPAN Scientific Committee*)
- 6) Ms. Camille LOTH (*WWF Mediterranean - marine conservation team*)
- 7) Ms. Imen MELIANE (*IUCN WCPA*), Vice-Chair of AGEM
- 8) Ms. Marta PASCUAL ALTARES
- 9) Mr. Romain RENOUX
- 10) Ms. Zeljka RAJKOVIC
- 11) Mr. Tullio SCOVAZZI
- 12) Ms. Milena TEMPESTA
- 13) Mr. Robert TURK, Chair of AGEM
- 14) Mr. Leonardo TUNESI

SPA/RAC Secretariat:

- 15) Ms. Souha EL ASMI, Programme Officer (SPAs)
- 16) Ms. Asma KHERIJI, MPA Associate Project Officer
- 17) Ms. Saba GUELLOUZ, Programme Officer (Species conservation)
- 18) Ms. Lobna BEN NAKHLA, Project Officer (SPAMI Twinning Programme)
- 19) Mr. Issam ACHOUR, Data management Assistant

Interpreters:

- 20) Ms. Hanem ATTIA
- 21) Mr. Mondher KALAI
- 22) Ms. Nejet MCHALA

Zoom technical support:

- 23) Ms. Catherine PICHETTE (Kubidez)

Excused AGEM members:

- 1) Mr. Saïd Caouki CHAKOUR
- 2) Mr. Joachim CLAUDET (*MedPAN Scientific Committee*)
- 3) Mr. Alaa EL-HAWEET (*GFCM SAC*)
- 4) Ms. Pantelina EMMANOUILIDOU
- 5) Mr. Othman JARBOUI
- 6) Mr. Lovrenc LIPEJ
- 7) Ms. Nadia RAMDANE
- 8) Ms. Sandra RUNDE-CARIOU

Annex II: Agenda

Time (UTC+1)	Agenda item	Responsible
8.50 - 9.00	Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All participants ▪ SPA/RAC logistical support
9.00 - 9.15	Agenda item 1 - Opening of the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome and opening ▪ Adoption of the agenda and organization of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPA/RAC ▪ AGEM Chair
9.15 - 10.00	Agenda item 2 - Presentation of the results and outputs of WG-Coherence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation by the WG-Coherence Coordinator ▪ Feedback and discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WG Coordinator ▪ AGEM members
10.00 - 10.15	Agenda item 3 - Overview on the 2020-2021 outputs and achievements with the contribution of AGEM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation ▪ Questions/Answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPA/RAC ▪ AGEM members
10.15 - 10.30	<i>Comfort break</i>	
10.30 - 11.15	Agenda item 4 - Guidance on the development of the Evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief introduction ▪ Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPA/RAC ▪ AGEM members
11.15 - 12.15	Agenda item 5 - Guidance on an implementing plan for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief introduction ▪ Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPA/RAC ▪ AGEM members
12.15 - 13.30	<i>Lunch break</i>	
13.30 - 14.15	Agenda item 6 - Guidance on the OECM strategic pillar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief introduction ▪ Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPA/RAC ▪ AGEM members
14.15 - 14.45	Agenda item 7 - Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief introduction ▪ Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPA/RAC ▪ AGEM members
14.45 - 15.00	<i>Comfort break</i>	
15.00 - 15.30	Agenda item 7 - Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023 (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AGEM members
15.30 - 15.45	Agenda item 8 - Any other matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AGEM members
15.45 - 16.00	Agenda item 9 - Wrap-up and closure of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPA/RAC ▪ AGEM Chair

Annex III: Programme of work of AGEM for the biennial period 2022-2023

1. Introduction

1. The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention decided, at their 21st 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 MPA 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](#)).
2. AGEM was set up by the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) in consultation with the SPA/BD Focal Points during 2020.
3. AGEM had two major meetings, organized by teleconference, during the 2020-2021 period: the first meeting on 8 December 2020, and the second meeting on 3-4 May 2021.
4. AGEM elected a Chair and a Vice-chair during its first meeting; and SPA/RAC is acting as secretariat to the group.
5. The programme of work of AGEM for 2021, included several priority activities. These are presented in Table 1 along with their deliverables and outcomes and proposed follow-up actions.
6. The AGEM Chair and Vice-chair participated to the 15th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (Videoconference, 23-25 June 2021) and informed the meeting about the AGEM activities and outputs, since the first meeting (8 December 2020), as of 21 May 2021 (Report by the Chair and Vice-Chair of AGEM on the group's works during the period 2020-2021: [UNEP/MED WG.502/9](#)). The focal points meeting recommendations to AGEM are summarized in Table 1.
7. Relevant AGEM deliverables and recommendations were forwarded to the Barcelona Convention COP 22 (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021). COP 22 expressed its appreciation to the support provided by AGEM to the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties during the 2020-2021 biennium. The ensuing COP 22 decisions are summarized in Table 1.

2. Review of the AGEM deliverables and outcomes during 2021

8. AGEM activities, deliverables and outcomes during 2021, and possible follow-up actions for the period 2022-2023 are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: AGEM activities, deliverables and outcomes during 2021, and proposed follow-up actions

Activity	Deliverable / Outcomes 2020-2021	Proposed follow-up actions 2022-2023
<p>A 1: Support SPA/RAC in the elaboration of the Post-2020 regional strategy for marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean</p>	<p>The “Post-2020 regional strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean” was adopted by the Barcelona Convention COP 22 (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021) Decision IG.25/12 (Annex I to the decision).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ COP 22 “Call[ed] upon the Contracting Parties to take effective measures to implement the Post-2020 Regional Strategy, thus enhancing the implementation of the SPA/BD Protocol in the Mediterranean region” (Decision IG.25/12). ⇒ COP 22 “Request[ed] the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) in coordination with other regional and international organizations, to support the Contracting Parties with technical and, where possible, financial assistance to undertake the activities indicated in the Post-2020 Regional Strategy with the aim to effectively achieve its strategic outcomes and targets” (Decision IG.25/12). 	<p>COP 22 “Request[ed] the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to develop an evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy, with the technical support of the Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, using to the extent possible existing monitoring tools in the region in particular those established under UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention as well as in the framework of SDG, Post-2020 Biodiversity and related target monitoring” (Decision IG.25/12).</p> <p>AGEM could support SPA/RAC in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing the evaluation and monitoring framework for the Strategy (March 2022-March 2023); and - outlining an implementation plan for the Strategy (March-April 2022).
<p>A 2: Elaborate Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs</p>	<p>The “Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs” were adopted by the Barcelona Convention COP 22 (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021) Decision IG.25/12 (Annex III to the decision).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ COP 22 “Adopt[ed] the Criteria [...] including the associated updates in the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS)” (Decision IG.25/12). ⇒ COP 22 “Call[ed] upon the Contracting Parties to report on the Specially Protected Areas to the Directory of Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas based on the adopted Criteria, at the time of submitting their national implementation reports under Article 26 of the Barcelona Convention, starting with the national implementation reports for the biennium 2020-2021 to be submitted by December 2022” (Decision IG.25/12). ⇒ COP 22 “also encourage[ed] the Contracting Parties to report on other effective area-based conservation measures” (Decision IG.25/12). ⇒ COP 22 “Request[ed] the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to: a) provide an analysis of 	<p>No follow-up actions involving AGEM.</p> <p>SPA/RAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and monitor the associated updates in the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), made under the lead of UNEP/MAP; - Provide an analysis of the reports on SPAs, and as appropriate OECMs at every meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points; - Maximize synergies and foster closer cooperation with relevant regional and international organizations to assess potential OECMs under their mandate.

	<p>the reports on Specially Protected Areas and as appropriate on other effective area-based conservation measures, at every meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points, and b) maximize synergies and foster closer cooperation with relevant regional and international organizations to assess potential other effective area-based conservation measures under their mandate” (Decision IG.25/12).</p>	
<p>A 3: Elaborate guidance on identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment</p>	<p>A document entitled “Considerations on identifying and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment” (UNEP/MED WG.502/11) was elaborated and presented to the 15th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (Videoconference, 23-25 June 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ The 15th Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points requested the Secretariat to (i) include a section on OECMs in MAPAMED, (ii) assist the Contracting Parties in identifying and reporting OECMs and (iii) provide guidance on application of the criteria of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to the Mediterranean setting, particularly to ensure that a coherent threshold of biodiversity be maintained (Report of the Fifteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points: UNEP/MED WG.502/19). ⇒ COP 22 “also encourage[ed] the Contracting Parties to report on other effective area-based conservation measures” (Decision IG.25/12). ⇒ COP 22 “Request[ed] the Secretariat (SPA/RAC) to: a) provide an analysis of the reports on Specially Protected Areas and as appropriate on other effective area-based conservation measures, at every meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points, and b) maximize synergies and foster closer cooperation with relevant regional and international organizations to assess potential other effective area-based conservation measures under their mandate” (Decision IG.25/12). ⇒ The Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs included a Strategic Pillar 3 on OECMs, and its related Strategic Outcome 3 “Marine and coastal OECMs in the Mediterranean are identified, recognized and reported towards post-2020 global and regional targets” (Decision IG.25/12; Annex I to the decision). This pillar aims at reaching the following four outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Output 3.1: Awareness in Contracting Parties and stakeholders on OECMs enhanced and guidance for the application of OECM criteria provided; - Output 3.2: OECMs identified, recognized and reported to regional and 	<p>AGEM agreed to provide support for the implementation of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs, and its actions on OECMs (March 2022-December 2023).</p> <p>Specifically, AGEM should undertake the following actions (UNEP/MED WG.502/11):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) 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); (ii) Document types of marine and coastal areas already subject to specific management measures that can be potential OECMs and develop case studies of existing/potential marine and coastal OECMs in the Mediterranean; (iii) Enhance intersectoral dialogue and invite additional experts from other secretariats to AGEM OECM related discussions (particularly GFCM); (iv) Provide guidance to the Contracting Parties on the application of the criteria (CBD) at the Mediterranean level, particularly to ensure maintaining a coherent threshold on biodiversity outcomes; (v) Support reporting marine and coastal

	<p>global databases by Contracting Parties and regional organizations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Output 3.3: Effectiveness of identified OECMs is enhanced, including through prioritization in cross-sectoral marine spatial planning; and - Output 3.4: New OECMs are established and recognized OECMs expanded. 	<p>OECMs to the Database of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MAPAMED);</p> <p>(vi) 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.).</p>
<p>A 4: 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 document entitled "Coherence in Mediterranean MPAs: Conditions and recommendations" was elaborated by WG-Coherence and reviewed by email by all AGEM members.</p>	<p>SPA/RAC: Edit the document and circulate it to the SPA/BD Focal Points, partner organizations, MPA planners and managers, and other target groups (March-June 2022).</p>

3. Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023

9. Based on the follow-up actions presented in Table 1 above and the discussions of the third meeting of AGEM (1 March 2022), the following programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023 presented in Table 2 below, was agreed upon:

Table 2: Programme of work of AGEM for the period 2022-2023

Activity	Responsible	Expected deliverable	Timeline of implementation 2022-2023
<p>A 1: Develop an evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs, using to the extent possible existing monitoring tools in the region in particular those established under UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention as well as in the framework of SDG, Post-2020 Biodiversity and related target monitoring</p>	<p>WG-E&M, AGEM, Secretariat (SPA/RAC)</p>	<p>D 1: An evaluation and monitoring framework for the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 2022: AGEM third meeting: setting-up a working group (volunteer members). ▪ March 2022: setting up of a work/meeting schedule. ▪ March-April 2022: Secretariat prepares an overview about data and resources available, including reporting requirements, data, indicators (Post-2020 SAPBIO, IMAP, Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), CBD reporting, SDGs, ongoing CBD GBF, EU Biodiversity strategy processes, Regional Seas contribution to GBF, ...) ▪ April-September 2022: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Preparation of an outline/format in consultation with SPA/BD Focal Points; 2) preparation of a draft evaluation and monitoring framework. <p><i>*Important milestones: SBSTTA 24: Geneva, 14-29 March 2022; CBD COP 15: September-October 2022 (TBC)</i></p> ▪ October 2022: discussion and review of the draft evaluation and monitoring framework at the AGEM fourth meeting (October 2022). ▪ November 2022-January 2023: online consultation with SPA/BD Focal Points. ▪ February-March 2023: finalization of the draft evaluation and monitoring framework. ▪ May 2023: submission of the draft evaluation and monitoring framework to the 16th meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (May 2023). ▪ September 2023: submission of the draft evaluation and monitoring framework to the MAP Focal Points meeting, as reviewed by the SPA/BD Focal Points. ▪ December 2023: submission of the draft evaluation and monitoring framework to the Barcelona Convention COP 23, as reviewed by MAP Focal Points.

<p>A 2: Provide support for SPA/RAC actions on OECMs:</p> <p>A 2-1: Develop a questionnaire to scope progress on OECMs in countries and document their experiences and challenges</p> <p>A 2-2: Organize an introductory webinar to raise awareness and explain the OECM concept to Mediterranean stakeholders (present the results of the scoping questionnaire)</p> <p>A 2-3: Assess objectives and complementarities among different area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean, and develop recommendations for new designations and measures (including OECMs) to enhance connectivity and effectiveness</p> <p>A 2-4: Organize a workshop on OECMs in the Mediterranean (late 2022) involving SPA/BD Focal Points and other stakeholders</p> <p>A 2-5: Prepare a simplified factsheet illustrated by key best practices on OECMs and disseminate it widely (website (a dedicated page), social media, meetings, conferences, etc.)</p> <p>A 2-6: Support SPA/RAC in providing guidance to the Contracting Parties on the application of the OECM criteria particularly to ensure maintaining a coherent threshold on biodiversity outcomes</p> <p>A 2-7: Enhance intersectoral dialogue and invite additional experts from other secretariats to AGEM OECM related discussions (particularly GFCM)</p> <p>A 2-8: 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.)</p>	<p>AGEM, Secretariat (SPA/RAC)</p>	<p>D 2-1: A questionnaire on OECMs to countries and an analysis of the results of the questionnaire</p> <p>D 2-2: Introductory webinar organized</p> <p>A 2-3: Objectives and complementarities among different area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean assessed and recommendations for new designations and measures (including OECMs) developed</p> <p>D 2-4: Workshop organized and recommendations on the way forward issued</p> <p>A 2-5: Factsheet prepared and disseminated</p> <p>A 2-6: Guidance provided to the Contracting Parties</p> <p>A 2-7: GFCM Secretariat and other relevant organizations invited to AGEM OECM related discussions/meetings</p> <p>A 2-8: Collaboration with other processes and fora maintained and feedback provided to the Mediterranean region</p>	<p>A 2-1 Questionnaire to SPA/BD FPs: March-April 2022 (requesting information on potential OECM involved sectors and related governmental departments/contact persons).</p> <p>A 2-2 AGEM members propose potential OECM case studies in their countries/countries they know about: March-April 2022</p> <p>Webinar (half-day): May-June 2022 (involve sectors other than fisheries; find ways to maximize the participation of targeted stakeholders; present examples, not in-depth case studies).</p> <p>A 2-2' Questionnaire to all stakeholders: June-September 2022 (in-depth, procedure in countries). Relevance of this questionnaire is to be confirmed during the process.</p> <p>A 2-3 Assessing objectives and complementarities among different area-based conservation measures (study): May 2022-March 2023 (discuss its objectives with AGEM) have it finalized after the workshop, to include effectiveness aspects.</p> <p>A 2-4 Workshop on OECMs: December 2022 (involve sectors, including governmental representatives and individual experts; have case studies; link with other experiences, e.g. sustainable blue economy initiatives, discuss the minimum requirements on biodiversity outcomes)</p> <p>A 2-5 Factsheet on best practices: January-March 2023 (after the workshop)</p> <p>A 2-6 Providing guidance to the Contracting Parties: January-December 2023 (based on the results of the regional workshop)</p> <p>A 2-7 Enhance intersectoral dialogue: March 2022-December 2023 (all through the process)</p> <p>A 2-8 collaboration with other processes: January 2022-December 2023 (all through the process)</p>
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<p>A 3: Provide guidance to SPA/RAC in order to have a systemic, efficient and timely implementation of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs</p> <p>A 3-1: Provide directions resulting in outlining an implementation plan for the Strategy</p>	<p>AGEM, Secretariat (SPA/RAC)</p>	<p>D 3-1: An implementation plan outlines and directions set up for SPA/RAC action</p>	<p>A 3-1: March 2022-December 2023.</p> <p>At national level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate and have discussions with individual countries; Plan expert visits and meetings with individual countries (decision-makers, technical staff and other stakeholders, including donors). ▪ Search for root causes. ▪ Shift towards a system thinking. ▪ Link the implementation to available means (institutional, legal, capacities, financial, etc.). ▪ Provide guidance for setting up national implementation plans (with milestones and objectives). <p>At regional level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Find opportunities to inform and influence donors and other regional/international organizations. ▪ Have a regional consultation meeting on the Strategy details. ▪ AGEM: Input to the funding strategy, provide key priority for donors' investment to enhance means of implementation. <p>Main outputs:</p> <p>1- <u>Regional level</u>: means of implementation/input for the funding strategy: orientation key priorities for donors' investment in the Mediterranean.</p> <p>2- <u>National level</u>: develop a guidance document for implementation at national level.</p>
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