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16 May 2025  
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Seventeenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points

Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025

**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 2024-2025**

**Report of the Fifth meeting of the *Ad hoc* Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM)**

SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (SPA/RAC)  
*Ad hoc* Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM)  
Fifth meeting  
Teleconference, 15 April 2025

## **Meeting minutes of the Fifth AGEM meeting**

### **15 April 2025, teleconference**

#### **I. Context**

The 5<sup>th</sup> AGEM meeting focused on reviewing the draft of the guidance on Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) criteria, application, and identification, prepared by the SPA/RAC with the support of an external consultant.

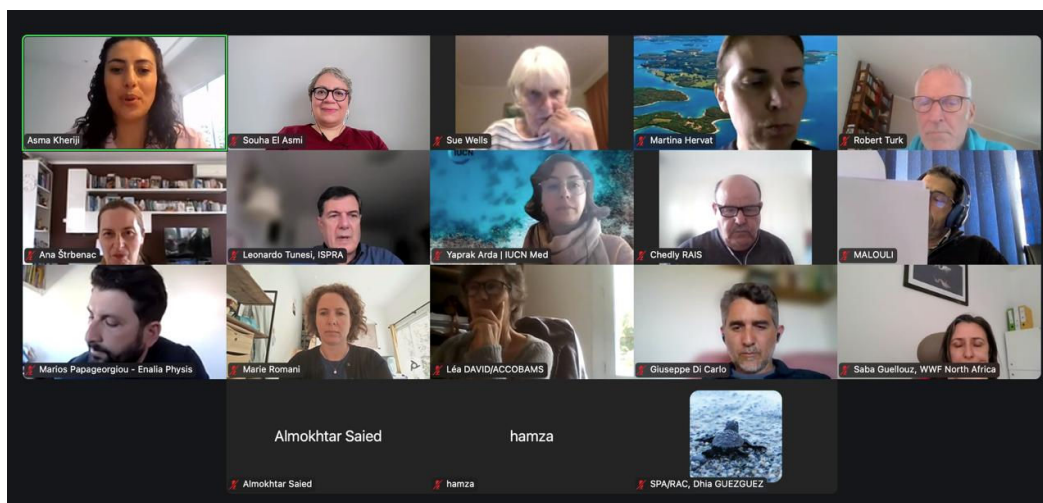
The document aims to facilitate the identification and reporting of OECMs, contributing to biodiversity conservation Targets. Key points included the need for clearer steps and processes, more specific Mediterranean information, and the inclusion of case studies.

The discussion emphasized the importance of focusing on marine and coastal OECMs, and the role of SPA/RAC in supporting national processes. The meeting concluded with plans to circulate the document to focal points for feedback and finalization.

#### **II. The Fifth AGEM meeting**

##### **Introduction**

1. The SPA/RAC convened the Fifth meeting of the *Ad hoc* group of experts for marine protected areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM), on 15 April 2025, 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.



**A group photo of the AGEM members participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting (14 April 2025)**

3. SPA/RAC acted as Secretariat to the meeting. The presentation support is available here: [PPT\\_AGEM 5th meeting 14 April 2025.pdf](#)

4. The meeting aimed mainly at presenting the OECMs Guidance and discussing it with the AGEM members in view of its submission to the SPA/BD Focal Points for review.

### **Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting**

5. The meeting was opened at 3.00 p.m. UTC+2, on Tuesday 15 April 2025, by Mr. Elyes HAMZA, SPA/RAC Director, who welcomed the participants and thanked them for their active involvement and valuable input 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 a key document to be submitted to the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD), to be held from 20 to 22 May 2025, in Istanbul, Türkiye.

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. Introduction**

7. The Chair recaps the previous (4<sup>th</sup>) meeting held on 21 March 2025 by teleconference, focusing on the Program of work of AGEM for 2025 and Key priorities for the biennium 2026-2027. He highlighted that the objective of the present meeting aims to review and discuss the draft Guidance on Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean, which objective is to facilitate the identification and reporting of OECMs, as additional tools for biodiversity conservation.

8. The Draft Guidance was shared with the AGEM members for review and comments prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

9. The Secretariat recalled the context of the Guidance elaboration, which is:

- Activity of the AGEM programme of work for 2025 (deliverable D1)

- Activity recommended by the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean / Strategic Pillar 3: OECMs / Activity A.3.1.6
  - Activity planned within the SPA/RAC PoW 2024-2025 / Activity 2.2.1.a)
10. The Secretariat has also shared the timeline for the preparation of the Guidance, as follow:
- Discuss the document during the 5th meeting of the AGEM (15 April 2025)
  - Consult with the SPA/BD Focal Points (from 21 April to 2nd May 2025)
  - Final draft by the consultant, submitted to the FP meeting: 6 May 2025
  - Discussion of the OECMs guidance during the FP meeting: 20-22 May 2025
  - Amend the document following to the FP meeting: June 2025

### **Agenda item 3. OECM Guidance document**

11. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Consultant and AGEM member, Ms. Sue WELLS, presented the draft guidance document emphasizing the importance of OECMs as a label for area-based management. The document aims to provide clear steps and processes for identifying and reporting OECMs in the Mediterranean. PPT presentation used is available here: [PPT\\_Med OECM guidance\\_AGEM.pdf](#).

12. AGEM members acknowledged the quality of the work and the thorough preparation of the OECMs guidance document, highlighting its relevance and comprehensiveness.

13. Several participants discussed the structure and content of the document, emphasizing the need for some adjustments in some parts, and highlighted the need for more information specific to the Mediterranean and suggested additional case studies.

14. A member suggested including a critical analysis of already CBD-recognized OECMs from other regions, as well as the processes started in some Mediterranean countries (such as Morocco, Algeria and Italy) in order to further clarify the process to the Mediterranean countries.

15. Several members advised focusing on marine and coastal OECMs and not including terrestrial part and avoiding the term "indigenous peoples" in the Mediterranean context and replace it by "local communities".

16. The SPA/RAC Director and AGEM Chair proposed not to focus on potential OECMs in ABNJ, a suggestion that was supported by other AGEM members.

17. Several members highlighted the crucial role of SPA/RAC in supporting national OECMs processes, acknowledging that the SPA/BD National Focal Points, in particular in the North and East of the Mediterranean, would appreciate this direct support, and stressed the need for collaboration with other organizations such as FAO, GFCM and IUCN.

### **Agenda item 4. Next steps and closure of the meeting**

18. The meeting concludes with a plan to integrate the comments raised during the AGEM 5th meeting, and to circulate the reviewed document to the Focal Points for comments and further revisions.

19. The Chair recalled the need to form a specific Working Group on enhanced protection (WG-EP), to lead the elaboration of the "Deliverable 2: Impact of MCPAs with Enhanced Protection", as scheduled in the AGEM Programme of Work for 2025. The Secretariat will circulate a call to form the WG-EP by volunteer members.

SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (SPA/RAC)  
Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM)  
Fourth meeting  
Teleconference, 15 April 2025

CENTRE D'ACTIVITES REGIONALES POUR LES AIRES SPECIALEMENT PROTEGEES (SPA/RAC)  
Groupe ad hoc d'experts pour les aires marines protégées en Méditerranée (AGEM)  
Quatrième réunion  
Téléconférence, 15 April 2025

## List of participants *List des participants*

Independent experts / <i>Experts indépendants</i>	
<b>MPA management</b> <b><i>Gestion des AMP</i></b>	<p><b>Mr Robert TURK</b> Senior Nature Conservation Consultant – <i>Consultant senior en conservation de la nature</i> Slovenia/ Slovénie</p> <p><b>Ms Sue WELLS</b> Senior Marine and Coastal Conservation Consultant – <i>Consultante senior en conservation marine et côtière</i> UK/Royame-Uni</p>
<b>MPA planning</b> <b><i>Planification des AMP</i></b>	<p><b>Ms Souha EL ASMI</b> Senior Marine environment and policy expert – Founder and Managing Director of Ecoverse Environmental Consulting – <i>Experte senior en environnement marin et en politique, Fondatrice et</i> <i>Directrice générale d'Ecoverse Environmental Consulting</i> Tunisia/Tunisie</p> <p><b>Mr Chedly RAIS</b> Senior Marine Environmentalist - CEO of OKIANOS – <i>Spécialiste senior de l'environnement marin – PDG d'OKIANOS</i> Tunisia/Tunisie</p>
<b>Marine biology/ecology</b> <b><i>Biologie/Écologie marine</i></b>	<p><b>Mr Leonardo TUNESI</b> Head of the Unit "Marine biodiversity, habitat and species Protection", ISPRA – <i>Chef de l'unité "Biodiversité marine, protection des habitats et des</i> <i>espèces", ISPRA</i> Italy/Italie</p>

<b>Law and regulation</b> <b>Droit et réglementation</b>	<p><b>Ms Saba GUELLOUZ</b>  Conservation Manager, WWF North Africa Office –  <i>Responsable de la conservation, Bureau WWF Afrique du Nord</i>  Tunisia/Tunisie</p> <p><b>Ms Ana STREBENAC</b>  Owner and Director at Stenella consulting, Environmental Protection specialist –  <i>Propriétaire et Directrice de Stenella Consulting, spécialiste de la protection de l'environnement</i>  Croatia/Croatie</p>
<b>Socio-economics</b> <b>Socio-économie</b>	<p><b>Mr. Almokhtar SAID</b>  Head of Marine and Wildlife section, Nature Conservation Department, Ministry of Environment –  <i>Responsable de la section Marine et Faune sauvage, Département de la conservation de la nature, Ministère de l'Environnement</i>  Libya/Libye</p>
<b>Fisheries</b> <b>Pêche</b>	<p><b>Mr Marios PAPAGEORGIOU</b>  Director, Head of Fisheries Research - Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre –  <i>Directeur, Responsable de la recherche halieutique – Centre de recherche environnementale Enalia Physis</i>  Cyprus/Chypre</p>
<b>Nature-based tourism</b> <b>Tourisme de nature</b>	<p><b>Ms Martina HERVAT</b>  Senior Expert Advisor for Nature Conservation –  <i>Conseillère principale en conservation de la nature</i>  Croatia/Croatie</p>
<b>MPA Financing</b> <b>Financement des AMP</b>	<p><b>Mr Giuseppe DI CARLO</b>  Senior ocean science and conservation Consultant –  <i>Consultant senior en sciences océaniques et conservation</i>  Italy/Italie</p> <p><b>Ms Marie ROMANI</b>  Biodiversity policies, partnerships and fundraising Specialist –  <i>Spécialiste des politiques de biodiversité, des partenariats et de la collecte de fonds</i>  France/France</p>
<p align="center"><b>Representatives of partner organization scientific bodies</b>  <b>Représentants des organes scientifiques d'organisations partenaires</b></p>	
<b>Scientific Committee of ACCOBAMS</b> <b>Comité scientifique de l'ACCOBAMS</b>	<p><b>Ms Léa David</b>  Scientific Committee Task Manager –  <i>Responsable du Comité scientifique</i>  Monaco</p>
<b>Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of GFCM</b> <b>Comité scientifique consultatif (CSC) de la CGPM</b>	<p><b>Mr. Mohamed Malouli IDRISI</b>  Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries –  <i>Président du Comité Scientifique consultatif des pêches</i>  Italy/Italie</p>

<b>WCPA-marine of IUCN</b> <b>WCPA-marine de l'IUCN</b>	<b>Ms Yaprak ARDA</b> Marine Programme Officer – <i>Chargée de programme marin</i> Spain/Espagne
<b>SPA/RAC</b>	
	<b>Mahmoud Elyes HAMZA</b> Director <i>Directeur</i>
	<b>Asma KHERIJI</b> SPA Programme Officer - <i>Chargée du programme ASP</i>
	<b>Dhia GUZEGUEZ</b> Data Management & Computing Officer <i>Responsable de la gestion des données et de l'informatique</i>

SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (SPA/RAC)  
Ad hoc Group of Experts for Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (AGEM)  
Fifth meeting  
Teleconference, 15 April 2025

## Agenda

*Time is indicated in Central European Time (CET) / UTC+2.*

*Participants are kindly requested to convert to their respective time zones, if different from CET.*

Time (UTC+2)	Agenda item	Responsible
14.55-15.00	Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants</li> <li>Logistics support responsible from SPA/RAC</li> </ul>
15.00-15.05	<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> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPA/RAC Director</li> </ul>
15.05-15.15	<b>Agenda item 2. Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective of the meeting</li> <li>Brief reminder of the context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AGEM Chair</li> <li>SPA/RAC</li> </ul>
15.15-16.25	<b>Agenda item 3. OECM Guidance document</b> <p><b>3.1. Draft OECM Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of the OECM Guidance integrating AGEM members feedback</li> </ul> <p><b>3.2. questions and discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion on the OECM Guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPA/RAC Consultant</li> <li>AGEM Chair</li> <li>AGEM members</li> </ul>
16.20-16.25	<b>Agenda item 4. Next steps and closure of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting up milestones and next steps</li> <li>Closure of the meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPA/RAC Director</li> <li>AGEM Chair</li> </ul>