

# Format for the Periodic Review of the SPAMIs

SPAMI Name : SP8 Medes Islands

## SECTION I: CRITERIA WHICH ARE MANDATORY FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN AREA IN THE SPAMI LIST

(Art. 8.2. of the Protocol and General Principles and C and D of Annex I)

In each question, crossed references to the Annotated Format (AF) are given.

### 1. CONSERVATION STATUS

**1.1. Does the SPAMI fulfill one of the criteria related to Mediterranean interest as presented in Protocol's (Annex I section B para. 2), strictly maintain the status of populations of its protected species (those in Annex II to the Protocol), the status of its habitats and no adverse significant changes in the functioning of its ecosystems? (Article 8.2.) (See 3.4. and 4 in the AF)**

In case of "no", indicate the reasons, that have motivated the deficiencies, their relative seriousness and, if possible, the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

YES

**1.2 If "yes", are the objectives, set out in the original SPAMI application for designation, actively pursued?**

YES

### 2. LEGAL STATUS

**2.1. Does the area maintains or has improved its legal protection status from the date of the previous report? (A-e and C-2, Annex I). See 7.1.2 in the AF**

YES

*2010 declaration of law allowing consortium*

**2.2. Does the legal declaration of this area consider the conservation of natural values as the primary objective? (A-a and D1 in Annex I). See 7.1.3 in the AF**

YES

**2.3. Are competencies and responsibilities clearly defined in the texts governing the area? (D4 Annex I). See 7.4.3 in the AF**

YES

**2.4. Are external influences/threats been taken into account in the legal framework of the SPAMI? Does the legal text clearly establish coordination means between land and sea authorities? (D4 Annex I, Art.7.4. in the Protocol).**

YES.

In case there is no sea within the SPAMI, this question would be non-applicant.  
See 7.4.3. in the AF

Indicate measures that have been adopted to address these influences/threats. In case of any "no" answer, indicate the reasons that have motivated the deficiencies and, if possible, the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

Specific regulations on the different economical activities that are allowed in the different protection level areas in the SPAMI, such as installing anchoring buoys for recreational boats, for diving centers and for particular divers; artisanal and sport fishing regulations.

The coordination between land and sea authorities is legally empowered by the Natural park declaration on 2010.

### **3. MANAGEMENT METHODS (General principles D Annex 1)**

**3.1. Does the area have the same or an improved management body/authority as when the SPAMI was established and/or last evaluated?**

Existence of a management body with sufficient powers (Art. 7.2.d, 7.2.f).  
D6 - Annex I: "To be included in the SPAMI List, a protected area must have a management body, endowed with sufficient powers as well as means and human resources to prevent and/or control activities likely to be contrary to the aims of the protected area". See 8.1. in the AF

YES *New manager in place since last year, and works well with the Council, which allows multi-stakeholder management*

**3.2. Is the management plan in force?**

Has the management plan been officially adopted? (D7 Annex I). See 8.2.1, 8.2.2. in the AF

YES

**3.3. Does the management plan address the requirements set out in**

## article 7 of the Protocol and Section 8.2.3 of the Annotated Format?

More details useful for the evaluation of the management plan are addressed in question 7.1 of this questionnaire.

YES

In case of any "no" answer, indicate the reasons that have motivated the deficiencies and, if possible, the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

### 4. AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

#### 4.1. Is there basic equipment, human and financial resources ensured to the management body?

*(Art. 7.2.d, 7.2.f. D6 in Annex I: "To be included in the SPAMI List, a protected area must have a management body, endowed with sufficient powers as well as means and human resources to prevent and/or control activities likely to be contrary to the aims of the protected area"). See 9.1, 9.2. in the AF*

NO – Too few staff, office too small, no visitor center even though demand exists

#### 4.2. Does the area have a monitoring program?

*(D8 - Annex I: "The program should include the identification and monitoring of a certain number of significant parameters for the area in question, in order to allow the assessment of the state and evolution of the area, as well as the effectiveness of protection and management measures implemented, so that they may be adapted if need be"). See 9.3.3. in the AF*

YES

If yes, what are the monitoring parameters and the management objectives being addressed by these parameters?

Knowledge of the conservation status of the interest elements defined as bioindicators, knowledge about the oceanographic parameters and knowledge about the relevance of economical activities in relation to the conservation status of the bioindicators or other aspects of ecological importance in the reserve.

The parameters are: temperature, acidification, sea level, Posidonia, macroalgae, gorgonians and red coral, fish communities, bryozoans,

The monitored activities are artisanal and recreational fishing and diving.

**4.3 Is there a feedback mechanism that establishes an explicit link between the monitoring results and the management objectives, and which allows adaptation of protection and management measures?**

YES

In case of any "no" answer, indicate the reasons that have motivated the deficiencies, their relative seriousness, and the date in which they are expected to be overcome.

**SECTION II: FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA**  
(Section B4 of the Annex I, and other obligatory for a SPA (Art. 6 and 7 of the Protocol))

**5. THREATS AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT**

**5.1 Assess the level of threats within the site to the ecological, biological, aesthetic and cultural values of the area (B4.a Annex I).**  
See 5.1. consider also 3.5.2.b, 6.3 & 6.4. in the AF

**In particular:**

Unregulated exploitation of natural resources  
(e.g. sand mining, water, timber, living resources) See 5.1.1. in the AF  
**(SCORE: 0 means “very serious threats”; 3 means “no threats”)**

3

Serious threats to habitats and species (e.g. disturbance, desiccation, pollution, poaching, introduced alien species ...) See 5.1.2. in the AF  
**(SCORE: 0 means “very serious threats”; 3 means “no threats”)**

2

Increase of human presence (e.g. tourism, boats, building, immigration...) See 5.1.3. in AF  
**(SCORE: 0 means “very serious threats”; 3 means “no threats”)**

1

Historic and current conflicts between users or user groups See 5.1.4., 6.2. in the AF  
**(SCORE: 0 means “very serious threats”; 3 means “no threats”):**

1

Please include a prescriptive list of threats that are of concern and are evaluated individually

- Extractive activities in No Take area such as coral poaching and fish poaching, rare but occurs
- Invasive algae species
- Impacts to sessile communities due to poor diving practices (inadequate

sensibilisation) and high number of dives at many sites

- Artisanal fishing occasionally breaches legal rules (size limits, etc.)
- Recreational fishing in no take area occurs rarely

**5.2 Assess the level of external threats to the ecological, biological, aesthetic and cultural values of the area (B4.a of the Annex I). See 5.2. in the AF**

**In particular:**

Pollution problems from external sources including solid waste and those affecting waters up-current. See 5.2.1. in the AF  
(SCORE: 0 means "very serious threats"; 3 means "no threats")

2

Significant impacts on landscapes and on cultural values. See 5.2.2  
(SCORE: 0 means "very serious threats"; 3 means "no threats")

2

Expected development of threats upon the surrounding area See 6.1. in the AF  
(SCORE: 0 means "very serious threats"; 3 means "no threats")

2

Please include a prescriptive list of external threats that are of concern and are evaluated individually.

- Global climate change: temperature increase and acidification, eventual risk of introduced species, big marine storms.
- Hydrocarbon spill risk – but contingency plan in place and operating

**5.3. Is there an integrated coastal management plan or land-use laws in the area limiting or surrounding the SPAMI? (B4.e Annex I). See 5.2.3.**

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

0

**5.4. Does the management plan for the SPAMI have influence over the governance of the surrounding area? (D5-d Annex I). See 7.4.4. in the AF**

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

## 6. REGULATIONS

### 6.1. Assess the degree of legal regulations See 7.4.2. in the AF

#### In particular, within the national framework:

Regulations concerning the strengthening of the application of the other Protocols to the Barcelona Convention, particularly dumping, passage of ships and modification of the soil (*Art. 6b, 6c, 6e in the Protocol, D5-a Annex I*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Regulations on the introduction of any species not indigenous to the specially protected area in question, or of any genetically modified species, (*Art. 6 d in the Protocol, D5-b Annex I*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Regulations concerning the Environmental Impact Assessment for the activities and projects that could significantly affect the protected areas (*Art. 17 in the Protocol*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

#### In particular, within the SPAMI framework:

Regulations for fishing, hunting, taking of animals and harvesting of plants or their destruction, as well as trade with animals, parts of animals, plants, parts of plants, which originate in the area (*Art. 6 g in the Protocol, D5-c Annex I*)

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

## 7. MANAGEMENT

### 7.1. Assess the degree of detail of the management plan

(e.g. zoning, regulations for each zone, competencies and responsibilities, governing bodies, management programs as protection, natural resource management, tourism, public use, education, research, monitoring, maintenance, services and concessions....) See 8.2.3. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= No Management Plan / 1= Weak / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2 – SEE COMMENTS

### 7.2. Assess to what extent land ownership is well determined

(Undetermined land tenure regimes and registrations are a common source of conflicts in most protected areas world-wide)

See 7.3. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Undetermined / 1= Weak / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

3

7.3. Is there a body representing the public, professional and non-governmental sector and the scientific community linked to the management body? (B4b, B4c of the Annex I). See 8.1.2. & 8.1.3

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

7.4. Assess the quality of the involvement by the public, and particularly of local communities, in the planning and management of the area (B4.b of the Annex I)

(e.g. adequate planning involves local stakeholders and accommodates within appropriate management regimes a spectrum of possible multiple uses and regulated human activities, within the primary objective of conservation of marine and coastal environments) See 8.1.4. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= No involvement / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

3

7.5. Is the management plan binding for other national/local administrations with competencies in the area? See 8.2.2 in the AF

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1



## 8. PROTECTION MEASURES

### 8.1. Assess the degree of enforcement of the protection measures

#### In particular:

Are the area boundaries adequately marked on land and, if applicable, adequately marked on the sea? See 8.3.1. in the AF  
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1 – SPAMI outer boundary of marine park is clearly marked, marine park is not fully marked yet (but bigger area is not part of SPAMI)

Is there any collaboration from other authorities in the protection and surveillance of the area and, if applicable, is there a coastguard service contributing to the marine protection? See 8.3.2. 8.3.3. in AF  
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Are third party agencies also empowered to enforce regulations relating to the SPAMI protective measures ?  
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1 – police and coast guard are involved with surveillance and enforcement

Are there adequate penalties and powers for effective enforcement of regulations and is the field staff empowered to impose sanctions? See 8.3.4. in the AF  
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Has the area established a contingency plan to face accidental pollution or other serious emergencies? (Art. 7.3. in the Protocol, *Recom. 13<sup>th</sup> Parties Meeting*)  
(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1- Contingency plan for whole of Catalonia exists and is operating well.

## 9. HUMAN RESOURCES

**9.1. Adequacy of the human resources available to the management body** (Art.7.2-f in the Protocol, D6 in Annex I) (e.g. enough number of employees to ensure adequate management and protection of the area)  
See 9.1.1. in the AF

Is there a permanent field administrator of the area?  
See 9.1.2. in the AF

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1

Are there other permanent staffs in the field?

(e.g. technicians, wardens, guides, ...) See 9.1.2. in the AF

(SCORE : 0 = No / 1 = Yes)

1 How many? 1 BIOLOGIST, 2 ½ ADMIN, 1 DIRECTOR, 2 BOAT CAPTAINS FOR PATROLS, 1 BIOLOGIST YEAR AROUND YEAR TO YEAR (2 ADDITIONAL CAPTAINS AND 1 RECEPTIONIST SEASONAL)

**9.2. Assess the adequacy of the training level of available staff**

(Art.7.2-f in the Protocol, D6 in Annex I) (e.g. enough training level to ensure protection of the area). See 9.1.2. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2 – The training of existing staff is adequate – excellent in fact. But additional staff are needed with specific capacity to improve management (this cannot be well-reflected in the current reporting format)

**10. FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL MEANS**

**10.1. Assess the degree of adequacy of the financial means**

Sufficient resources for the development and implementation of the management plan, including e.g. interpretation, education, training, research, surveillance and enforcement of regulations. See 9.2.1. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

1 -- 250,000 euro annual budget (approximate) – but compared to other SPAMIs, this is moderate level of funding

**10.2. Assess the basic infrastructure (Art.7.2-f in the Protocol)**

Administrative premises in the site, visitors' facilities (reception centre, trails, signs...), specific information, education and awareness materials

(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

**10.3. Assess the equipment.**

Guard posts and signs on the main accesses, means to respond to emergencies, marine and terrestrial vehicles, radio and communications equipment. See 9.2.3. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

## 11. INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

**11.1. Assess the extent of knowledge about the area and its surrounding zones.** (*D3 - Annex I: Considering at least specific maps, habitat distribution, species inventories, and socio-economical factors*)

See 9.3.1. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Very Insufficient / 1= Low / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

**11.2. Assess the adequacy of the program for data collection and the monitoring program.**

See 9.3.2. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= Inexistent / 1= Insufficient / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

3

## 12. COOPÉRATION AND NETWORKING

**12.1. Are other national or international organizations collaborating with human or financial resources?** (*e.g. researchers, experts, volunteers..*).

See 9.1.3. in the AF

(SCORE: 0= No / 1= Weakly / 2= Satisfactory / 3= Excellent)

1 WORKING ON A MOU WITH UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA, FOR BRINGING MASTERS STUDENTS, REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH A CAMPING PLACE TO OFFER ALMOST FREE ACCOMMODATION, ALSO SPEAKING TO TOWN COUNCIL ABOUT NEW LIBRARY TO CREATE A LAB IN ONE OF THE ROOMS

VOLUNTEERS LIMITED THANKS TO INSURANCE SITUATION, TIME INTENSIVE

CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL PRIMRY SCHOOL

LA CAIXA BANK FUNDING CONSERVATION (BUT DIFFICULT FOR MARINE PARKS)

ONE LOCAL NGO IS ON THE COUNCIL

CREATE A "FRIENDS OF MEDES ISLANDS"?

**12.2. Assess the level of cooperation and exchange with other SPAMIs** (especially in other nations) (*Art. 8, Art. 21.1, Art. 22.1., Art. 22.3, A.d in Annex I*)

(SCORE: 0= No / 1= Insufficient / 2= Adequate / 3= Excellent)

2

## **COMMENTS by the Technical Advisory Commission**

The evaluation form does not provide sufficient means to assess and communicate an important potential value of SPAMIs: that of serving as sites for furthering knowledge. In the case of Medes Islands, the various forms of protection over the last 35 years has allowed for a steady stream of applied and basic research in ecology, oceanography, and marine management. The Park has made every effort to encourage and support scientific research, and has a good system to ensure data will be available to support management: one condition of issuing permits for scientific research is a requirement that researchers share data with the park. Providing not only a managed and secure site for research, but also logistical support, has increased scientific understanding of the area's ecology, and the impacts of human use / efficacy of management. The park also enhances knowledge and understanding through its public outreach, and in particular its link to local primary schools. Medes staff and researchers who use the park also interact fully with other SPAMIs, and across MedPAN's MPAs. However, with no funds for a visitor centre, and limited staff to interact with visitors and users, the important function of expanding knowledge is not being realized to its full potential. Imagine the spread of knowledge if the scientific effort had a platform for broad public outreach through a visitor centre, creation of awareness-raising apps, and a well-managed, comprehensive website!

## **CONCLUSION**

Medes Islands is well known throughout the Mediterranean, a site of immense value as a living lab, and one of the best examples of how protection can increase biomass in a no-take area. The fish populations are healthy, and although some damage to biota occurs through the intense diver usage (and despite some occasional poaching of red corals), the park is well managed. Improvements are underway to reconsider carrying capacity and lessen the pressure on corals exerted by dive tourism. A new system for allocating dive spots to dive operators is being put into place, which will allow annual quotas at each dive site to be respected. Additionally, the work of a multi-institutional council to discuss management, will not only improve management but may also lead to identification of new means to generate revenues for badly needed capital investments and additional staff. The Medes Islands continues to meet the criteria for SPAMI listing and deserves continuing SPAMI designation, in the view of the evaluators.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Medes should continue to investigate the issue of carrying capacity for dive tourism, and develop a set of options for limiting impacts on ecological communities, including rotating closures for some sites, mandatory training of divers through required eco-briefings, opening up new sites (even in adjacent areas) for diving while keeping a core area diver-free, in order to monitor and understand carrying capacity, and establishing an award program for responsible dive operations.
- 2) A vehicle for generating additional investment in infrastructure and more staff is badly needed. The Director has some good ideas in this regard, and the Council may be able to catalyse some other public-private partnerships.
- 3) There is a need to assess the terrestrial portion of the park, and to think of ways to lessen the pressure on marine areas, possibly by expanding the portfolio of nature-based activities that visitors could undertake on land as well. An integrated plan should be developed for the land/sea area.
- 4) Medes should be recognized for its contribution to scientific study and public understanding. At the same time, more could be made of this aspect by investing in a visitor center and additional park staff to work on outreach (including through the use of social media and smartphone / tablet apps).

## SIGNATURES

### National Focal Point



### Independent Experts

M. TUNDI ACARDI

cheadly RAIS

### SPAMI Manager(s)



Ricard Guàrdia

**(ADDITIONAL PAGES MAY BE ADDED FOR EACH MEMBER'S COMMENTS)**

## SPAMI VALUE-ADDED

Questions		Score obtained	Maximum
5	Threats and surrounding context	14	23
6	Regulations	4	4
7	Management	10	11
8	Protection measures	5	5
9	Human resources	4	5
10	Financial and material means	5	9
11	Information and knowledge	5	6
12	Cooperation and networkings	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>69</b>

