



SPAMI Evaluation system

Evaluation sheets of the SPAMI: Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria

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GRAND TOTAL SCORE:

56

(max score: 66)

SECTION I:

CRITERIA WHICH ARE MANDATORY FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN AREA IN THE SPAMI LIST

Total score

1. MEDITERRANEAN VALUE OF THE SPAMI

6

(max score: 7)

Comments by the TAC:

The SPAMI Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria fulfils more than one of these criteria: • **UNIQUENESS:** This is a unique place due to its ecological characteristics as well as for the composition of the habitats clearly threatened in the Mediterranean. • **NATURAL REPRESENTATIVENESS:** The area presents various marine habitats of general interest in the Mediterranean that has its origin in the variety of sea bottoms that occur in the area. • **DIVERSITY:** The presence of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in a favourable conservation status enriches the community of species in the area. Presence of nesting events of *Caretta caretta*. • **PRESENCE OF HABITATS THAT ARE CRITICAL FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES:** Enormous development and extension of the *Posidonia oceanica* meadows. Further information on the management plan: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2016/08/11/pdfs/BOE-A-2016-7738.pdf> Mass mortality events of *Pinna nobilis* in the Western Mediterranean populations over the last two years, caused by a new species of haplosporidian parasite, which is found in digestive glands of infected individuals. The objectives set out in the original SPAMI application for designation are being actively persuaded, since they are included in its management plan. Management plan in place has the objective of achieving the objectives of the SPAMI. SPA does not have a management plan in place yet. Ministry is currently working a participatory process to elaborate the management plan that are expected to be approved in 2020.

Total score

2. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

5

(max score: 6)

Comments by the TAC:

The SPAMI has improved its legal status since the date of the previous evaluation report (2014 - 2015). The Site of Community Importance (SCI) approved in September 2006 has now a management plan (Ministerial Order AAA/1366 /2016). Part of its surface is also Special Protected Area (SPA) (Espacio marino de los islotes litorales de Almería y Murcia), which management plan is foreseen by 2020. The actual level of legal protection of the SPAMI Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria is: - Natura 2000 site (Special area of Conservation and Special Protection Area) In accordance with the Spanish law of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, the competent authority for managing the SAC "ES6110010 Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense" is the Ministry for the Ecological Transition (MITECO) (General Directorate for Sustainability of the Coast and the Sea -DGSCM), Monumento Natural of Isla Terceros e Isla Negra is managed by Junta de Andalucía Regarding the SAC "ES6110010 Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense", the management authority is the Ministry for Ecological Transition. 3 management officers are partially dedicated to the planning and management of the SPAMI. Within the management plan, approved in 2016, coordination means between other authorities are clearly established.

Total score

3. MANAGEMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

9

(max score: 12)

Comments by the TAC:

Yes, the management plan for the SAC "Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense" was approved by the Ministerial Order AAA/1366/2016 The management plan of the SAC "Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense" takes into account most of the objectives and requirements established in the article 7 of the Protocol and Section 8.2.3 of the Annotated Format: • It specifies the legal and institutional framework and the management and protection measures applicable. • It details management objectives. • It establishes regulation of uses and activities so that they are compatible with conservation objectives. • It details the continuous monitoring of ecological processes, habitats, landscapes, as well as the impact of the human activities. Regarding the Ministry for Ecological Transition, the human resources available are considered insufficient. Nevertheless mechanisms have been put in place in order to address it, such as to work on the adoption of a collaboration agreement that establish a collaborative framework between Junta de Andalucía and Ministry in order to ensure a proper allocation of human resources for the management of the SPAMI. The governance strategy for the Natura 2000 network elaborated in the framework of the Inlemares Project will contribute to this purpose. An specific budget dedicated to monitoring has been allocated. There is a need to assign specific budget to human resources, surveillance and enforcement. The Marine Strategies monitoring program are implemented in all Spanish marine waters and therefore covers the SPAMI area. In strong coordination with these monitoring programs, specific monitoring programs for MPA have been launched prioritizing the monitoring of MPA that already have a management plan, including this specific SPAMI where habitats 1110 and 1120 will be monitored. The parameters which will be used are: - Evolution of meadow limits - Beam density - % coverage - Population growth - Leaf and beam biometry - Leaf biomass, rhizome and roots - Leaf area with necrosis - Epiphytic density - Qualitative composition of epiphytic - Richness of opportunistic and invasive macro-algae - Richness and/ activity of macro - herbivores - Fish stock and composition - Richness of epibenthic macro-invertebrates - Habitat temperature (continuous recording) - Type of sediment - Degree of beams burial For the environmental description of meadows: - Nutrients and pollutants concentration - Chlorophyll a - Surface PAR radiance - Surface temperature - Hydrodynamics Yes, the management plan considers the relation between monitoring indicators and the revision of the legal document. In consequence, there are indeed mechanisms that link monitoring data and results with management and protection measures.

SECTION II:

FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA

Total score

4. THREATS AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

21

(max score: 23)

Comments by the TAC:

Threats such as fisheries, marine water extraction, mineral and energy exploitation, were identified and addressed in the management plan.

According to the management plan, the main threats to habitats and species are: - Spills of industrial waters, waste waters and marine pipelines. - Presence of some species of exotic algae: *Caulerpa cylindracea*, *Lophocladia lallemandii*, *Asparagopsis taxiformis*. - Use of trammel nets and trawlers than affect to protected gastropod mollusc species *Charonia lampas* and echinoderm species *Centrostephanus longispinus*. Moreover, since 2016, the presence of the pathogen that has produced the mortality in *Pinna nobilis*, also present in a large part of the western Mediterranean. In order to address those threats a risk assessment is developed for each of the features of the SPAMI.

According to the management plan, coastal towns within the SPAMI have had an important increase in population during the last 10 years. Additionally, there is an important increase during summer season due to tourism. According to the management plan, there are no conflicts worth mentioning. In the management plan, the following uses and activities are regulated: - Fishing - Aquaculture - Access to genetic resources - Extractive uses and energetic exploitations - Navigation - Marine pollution prevention - Marine litter - Submarine cables and conductions - Leisure wildlife watching activities

The Mediterranean is an almost closed sea, with a little depth. In addition, its coasts are overcrowded. These conditions make it more vulnerable to problems of pollution and eutrophication, as a result of solid waste discharges, wastewater and fertilizers of agricultural origin. In addition, there is a high risk of receiving oil slicks due to navigation accidents or discharges in the high seas even if they occur far from the SPAMI area. In the management plan, pressures affecting the features were identified and addressed (through regulation measures), no matter whether they were occurring out of the boundaries of the area.

As stated in the Annotated Format, main impacts on landscape and on cultural values come from intensive agriculture and tourism. Future developments affecting the area will be conditioned by the regulation included in the management plan. In addition, according to Law 42/2007, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, plans, projects and programs affecting the SPAMI will require an appropriate assessment.

Threats identified in the elaboration of the management plan have been addressed. Law 2/2013, on Protection and Sustainable Use of the Coast. A CAMP project dedicated to the implementation of ICZM Protocol was developed some years (until 2011). Other plans addressing an integrated management: a spatial plan was developed in the subregion of Levante Almeriense or the Hydrographic management plan de las cuencas del Mediterráneo which also addresses coastal waters.

In order to address external threats, collaboration mechanisms with other governing bodies are sought.

Total score

5

(max score: 6)

5. ENFORCEMENT OF PROTECTION MEASURES

Comments by the TAC:

The ministry is in the process to reflect the area boundaries in the nautical charts. There is a collaborative framework between the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Army and the Maritime Service of the Civil Guard for the surveillance of MPA. State security forces and bodies are empowered to enforce regulations, including the specific regulations applying in the SPAMI. There is a system on infringements and penalties established, and sanctions are enough to dissuade citizens. The Ministry for the Ecological Transition, as well as State security forces, have capacity to fine those people that do not have authorisation, that commit environmental crimes or that do not follow the regulation established in the management plan of the SPAMI. Further information: <https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/costas/temas/proteccion-medio-marino/plan-ribera/default.aspx>

Total score

4

(max score: 6)

6. COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

Comments by the TAC:

Surveys are implemented by Regional Government. In addition, Spanish Oceanographic Institute (IEO) is responsible for implementing the monitoring program. The Ministry and the Junta de Andalucía are working on a collaboration agreement to coordinate issues related to marine biodiversity management. This agreement will be particularly helpful to coordinate actions between contiguous SPAMI, such as Cabo de Gata-Níjar.

SECTION III:

FOLLOW-UP OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION(S)

Total score

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

6

(max score: 6)

(if applicable)

Comments by the TAC:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE EVALUATION:

- improve the collaboration with the SPAMI Cabo de Gata-Níjar given the continuity of some ecosystems
- finalise the MoU between Junta de Andalucía and the Ministry in order to ensure more human resources on site for the management of the SPAMI

SECTION I:

CRITERIA WHICH ARE MANDATORY FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN AREA IN THE SPAMI LIST

1. MEDITERRANEAN VALUE OF THE SPAMI

Score

1.1. The SPAMI still fulfils at least one of the criteria related to the regional Mediterranean value as presented in the SPAVBD Protocol's Annex I.

yes=1

Score justification:

The SPAMI Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria fulfils more than one of these criteria:

- **UNIQUENESS:** This is a unique place due to its ecological characteristics as well as for the composition of the habitats clearly threatened in the Mediterranean.
- **NATURAL REPRESENTATIVENESS:** The area presents various marine habitats of general interest in the Mediterranean that has its origin in the variety of sea bottoms that occur in the area.

Score

1.2. Level of adverse changes occurred during the evaluation period for the habitats and species considered as natural features in the SPAMI presentation report submitted for the inclusion of the area in the SPAMI List.

2= Slight changes

Score justification:

Mass mortality events of *Pinna nobilis* in the Western Mediterranean populations over the last two years, caused by a new species of haplosporidian parasite, which is found in digestive glands of infected individuals.

Score

1.3. Are the objectives, set out in the original SPAMI application for designation, actively pursued?

3= Yes for all of them

Score justification:

The objectives set out in the original SPAMI application for designation are being actively pursued, since they are included in its management plan.

Management plan in place has the objective of achieving the objectives of the SPAMI. SPA does not have a management plan in place yet. Ministry is currently working a participatory process to elaborate the management plan that are expected to be approved in 2020.

SECTION I:

CRITERIA WHICH ARE MANDATORY FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN AREA IN THE SPAMI LIST

2. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Score

2.1. The legal status of the SPAMI (with reference to its legal status at the date of the previous evaluation report).

2 = The SPAMI has maintained or improve

Score justification:

The SPAMI has improved its legal status since the date of the previous evaluation report (2014 - 2015).

The Site of Community Importance (SCI) approved in September 2006 has now a management plan (Ministerial Order AAA/1366/2016).

Part of its surface is also Special Protected Area (SPA) (Espacio marino de los islotes litorales de Almería y Murcia), which management plan is foreseen by 2020.

Score

2.2. Are competencies and responsibilities clearly defined in the texts governing the area?

2 = The SPAMI has clearly define

Score justification:

In accordance with the Spanish law of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, the competent authority for managing the SAC "ES6110010 Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense" is the Ministry for the Ecological Transition (MITECO) (General Directorate for Sustainability of the Coast and the Sea -DGSCM).

Monumento Natural of Isla Terrereros = Isla Negra is managed by Junta de Andalucía

Score

2.3. Does the area have a management body, endowed with sufficient powers?

1 = The management body is not

Score justification:

Regarding the SAC "ES6110010 Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense", the management authority is the Ministry for Ecological Transition. 3 management officers are partially dedicated to the planning and management of the SPAMI.

Within the management plan, approved in 2016, coordination means between other authorities are clearly established.

SECTION I:

CRITERIA WHICH ARE MANDATORY FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN AREA IN THE SPAMI LIST

3. MANAGEMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

Score

3.1. Does the SPAMI have a management plan?

2 = The management plan is officially adop

Score justification:

Yes, the management plan for the SAC "Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense" was approved by the Ministerial Order AAA/1366/2016

Score

3.2. Assess the adequacy of the management plan taking into account the SPAMI objectives and the requirements set out in Article 7 of the SPA/BD Protocol and Section 8.2.3 of the Annotated Format (AF)

2 = Excellent

Score justification:

The management plan of the SAC "Fondos Marinos del Levante Almeriense" takes into account most of the objectives and requirements established in the article 7 of the Protocol and Section 8.2.3 of the Annotated Format:

- It specifies the legal and institutional framework and the management and protection measures applicable.
- It details management objectives.
- It establishes regulation of uses and activities so that they are compatible with conservation

Score

3.3. Assess the adequacy of the human resources available to the SPAMI

1 = Fair

Score justification:

Regarding the Ministry for Ecological Transition, the human resources available are considered insufficient. Nevertheless mechanisms have been put in place in order to address it, such as to work on the adoption of a collaboration agreement that establish a collaborative framework between Junta de Andalucia and Ministry in order to ensure a proper allocation of human resources for the management of the SPAMI.
The governance strategy for the Natura 2000 network elaborated in the framework of the Intamares Project will contribute to this purpose.

3.4. Assess the adequacy of the financial and material means available to the SPAMI.

Score

1 = Fair

Score justification:

An specific budget dedicated to monitoring has been allocated. There is a need to assign specific budget to human resources, surveillance and enforcement.

3.5. Does the area have a monitoring programme?

Score

1 = The monitoring programme ne

Score justification:

The Marine Strategies monitoring program are implemented in all Spanish marine waters and therefore covers the SPAMI area. In strong coordination with these monitoring programs, specific monitoring programs for MPA have been launched prioritizing the monitoring of MPA that already have a management plan, including this specific SPAMI where habitats 1110 and 1120 will be monitored.

The parameters which will be used are:

- Evolution of meadow limits
- Beam density

In case of Score = 1, this section should also include the list of the parameters to include and the related rationale.

3.6. 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?

Score

2 = The SPAMI has an adequate

Score justification:

Yes, the management plan considers the relation between monitoring indicators and the revision of the legal document. In consequence, there are indeed mechanisms that link monitoring data and results with management and protection measures.

In case of Score =1, this section should also include concrete recommendations to improve the existing feedback mechanism.

SECTION II:

FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA

4. THREATS AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

4.1. Assess the level of threats within the site to the ecological, biological, aesthetic and cultural values of the area (B4.a of Annex I). In particular:

Score

Unregulated exploitation of natural resources (e.g. sand mining, water, timber, living resources). See 5.1.1. in AF. 3

Score justification:

Threats such as fisheries, marine water extraction, mineral and energy exploitation, were identified and addressed in the management plan.

Threats to habitats and species (e.g. disturbance, desiccation, pollution, poaching, introduced alien species...). See 5.1.2. in AF. 3

Score justification:

- According to the management plan, the main threats to habitats and species are:
- Spills of industrial waters, waste waters and marine pipelines.
 - Presence of some species of exotic algae: *Caulerpa cylindracea*, *Lophocladia lallemandii*, *Asparagopsis taxiformis*.
 - Use of trammel nets and trawlers than affect to protected gastropod mollusc species *Charonia lampas* and echinoderm species *Centrostephanus longispinus*.

Moreover, since 2016, the presence of the pathogen that has produced the mortality in *Pinna*

Increase of human impact (e.g. tourism, boats, building, immigration...). See 5.1.3. in AF. 2

Score justification:

According to the management plan, coastal towns within the SPAMI have had an important increase in population during the last 10 years. Additionally, there is an important increase during summer season due to tourism.

Conflicts between users or user groups. See 5.1.4. and 6.2. in AF. 3

Score justification:

According to the management plan, there are no conflicts worth mentioning.

Please include here a prescriptive list of threats that are of concern and are evaluated individually
 In the management plan, the following uses and activities are regulated:

- Fishing
- Aquaculture
- Access to genetic resources
- Extractive uses and energetic exploitations
- Navigation
- Marine pollution prevention

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

Score

Pollution problems from external sources including solid waste and those affecting waters up-current. See 5.2.1. in AF. ³

Score justification:

The Mediterranean is an almost closed sea, with a little depth. In addition, its coasts are overcrowded. These conditions make it more vulnerable to problems of pollution and eutrophication, as a result of solid waste discharges, wastewater and fertilizers of agricultural origin.

In addition, there is a high risk of receiving oil slicks due to navigation accidents or discharges in the high seas even if they occur far from the SPAMI area.

In the management plan, pressures affecting the features were identified and addressed (through Significant impacts on landscapes and on cultural values. See 5.2.2. in AF. ²

Score justification:

As stated in the Annotated Format, main impacts on landscape and on cultural values come from intensive agriculture and tourism.

Expected development of threats upon the surrounding area. See 6.1. in AF. ³

Score justification:

Future developments affecting the area will be conditioned by the regulation included in the management plan. In addition, according to Law 42/2007, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, plans, projects and programs affecting the SPAMI will require an appropriate assessment.

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

Please include the list of threats that were of concern and were eliminated or solved.

Threats identified in the elaboration of the management plan have been addressed.

Score

4.3. Is there an integrated coastal management plan or land-use laws in the area bordering or surrounding the SPAMI? (B4.e of Annex I). See 5.2.3. in AF.

Yes=1

Score justification:

Law 2/2013, on Protection and Sustainable Use of the Coast. A CAMP project dedicated to the implementation of ICZM Protocol was developed some years (until 2011). Other plans addressing an integrated management: a spatial plan was developed in the subregion of Levante Almeriense or the Hidrographic management plan de las cuencas del Mediterráneo which also addresses coastal waters.

Score

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

Yes=1

Score justification:

In order to address external threats, collaboration mechanisms with other governing bodies are sought.

**SECTION II:
 FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA
 5. ENFORCEMENT OF PROTECTION MEASURES**

5.1. Assess the degree of enforcement of the protection measures. In particular: Score
 Are the area boundaries adequately marked on land and, if applicable, adequately marked on the sea? No=0
 See 8.3.1. in AF.

Score justification:
 The ministry is in the process to reflect the area boundaries in the nautical charts.

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? Yes=1
 See 8.3.2. and 8.3.3. in AF.

Score justification:
 There is a collaborative framework between the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Army and the Maritime Service of the Civil Guard for the surveillance of MPA

Are third party agencies also empowered to enforce regulations relating to the SPAMI protective measures? Yes=1

Score justification:
 State security forces and bodies are empowered to enforce regulations, including the specific regulations applying in the SPAMI

Are there adequate penalties and powers for effective enforcement? Yes=1
 See 8.3.4. in AF.

Score justification:
 There is a system on infringements and penalties established, and sanctions are enough to dissuade citizens.

Is the field staff empowered to impose sanctions? Yes=1
 See 8.3.4. in AF.

Score justification:
 The Ministry for the Ecological Transition, as well as State security forces, have capacity to fine those people that do not have authorisation, that commit environmental crimes or that do not follow the regulation established in the management plan of the SPAMI.

Has the area established a contingency plan to face accidental pollution or other serious emergencies? Yes=1
 (Art. 7.3. of the Protocol, Recommendation of 13th Meeting of Contracting Parties).

Score justification:
 Further information:
<https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/costas/temas/proteccion-medio-marino/plan-ribera/default.aspx>

**SECTION II:
 FEATURES PROVIDING A VALUE-ADDED TO THE AREA
 6. COOPERATION AND NETWORKING**

Are other national or international organizations collaborating to provide human or financial resources? Score
 (e.g. researchers, experts, volunteers...). See 9.1.3. in AF. 3= Excellent

Score justification:
 Surveys are implemented by Regional Government. In addition, Spanish Oceanographic Institute (IEO) is responsible for implementing the monitoring program.

Assess the level of cooperation and exchange with other SPAMIs (especially in other nations) Score
 (Art. 8, Art. 21.1, Art. 22.1. and Art. 22.3 of the Protocol, A.d in Annex I). 1= Insufficient

Score justification:
 The Ministry and the Junta de Andalucía are working on a collaboration agreement to coordinate issues related to marine biodiversity management. This agreement will be particularly helpful to coordinate actions between contiguous SPAMI, such as Cabo de Gata-Níjar.

SECTION III: FOLLOW-UP OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION(S)**7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS**

7.1. Assess to what extent the recommendations possibly made by the previous evaluations were implemented: Recommendations made by the TAC(s) and/or approved by the Focal Points for SPAs regarding Section I. 3 = "Yes" for all of them

7.2. Assess to what extent the recommendations possibly made by the previous evaluations were implemented: Recommendations made by the TAC(s) and/or approved by the Focal Points for SPAs regarding Section II. 3 = "Yes" for all of them

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE EVALUATIONS

Please insert here the Recommendations of the TAC for the future evaluations of the SPAMI.

- improve the collaboration with the SPAMI Cabo de Gata-Níjar given the continuity of some ecosystems
- finalise the MoU between Junta de Andalucía and the Ministry in order to ensure more human resources on site for the management of the SPAMI

SIGNATURE

Date:

Names and Signatures:

National Focal Point:

Independent Experts:

SPAMI manager(s):

