# Egypt Bid to Host the 9th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles

Port Said Egypt | November 2029

**Date**: 8 November 2026

**To**: The Chair and Members of the Organizing Committee - Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles

**Subject**: Bid to host the 9th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles in Port Said Egypt

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection, we are honored to submit Egypt's bid to host the 9th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles in Port Said in November 2029. The bid is led by the Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection, operating under the umbrella of the League of Arab States, in cooperation with the Nature Conservation Sector of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA). Hosting the conference in the southern Mediterranean will strengthen cooperation between northern and southern conservation networks and support practical regional conservation action.

**1. Why Egypt**

The Egyptian Mediterranean coast and waters are among the most important foraging areas, migratory bottleneck corridors and nesting grounds for marine turtles in the southern Mediterranean. Hosting the conference here puts the delegates next to the habitats under discussion and next to the pressures that now define the basin: climate change, sea-level rise, rising salinity, marine pollution and fisheries interactions.

Egypt brings a record, not only a location:

- Integrated monitoring and management programmes under the Barcelona Convention framework, including MedMPANet, IMAP-MPA, EcAp MED II, EcAp MED III and SEMPA.
- Egypt's first specialized Marine Turtle Rescue Center, at Ashtoum El Gamil Protected Area in Port Said.
- Cooperation with national institutions, civil society and private-sector partners to support marine turtle conservation and rehabilitation.

## 2. Official endorsement and guarantees

The organizing team will seek written confirmation from the competent Egyptian authorities for the following arrangements before final submission:

- Facilitated entry visas for all registered delegates, with a dedicated visa-support desk
- Customs and permit facilitation for scientific equipment and samples
- Security and medical cover at all venues and during field visits
- Access for delegates to protected areas, rescue centers and nesting sites
- A named government focal point for the conference from the date of award to closing

## 3. Conference theme and programme

We propose the theme **Climate resilience, innovative solutions and sustainable financing for sea turtle conservation in the southern Mediterranean.** It links the northern and southern conservation networks and turns regional action plans into results on the ground.

The programme will include:

- A plenary and sessions on climate adaptation, fisheries interaction and pollution
- A dedicated session on financing mechanisms for conservation, with donors and private-sector partners
- Field visits to the Marine Turtle Rescue Center at Ashtoum El Gamil Protected Area in Port Said, alongside cultural activities showcasing Port Said's maritime heritage and its connection to the Suez Canal.
- Pre-conference regional workshops and a networking day for students and early-career researchers

## 4. Host organization and leadership

The conference will be delivered by the Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection together with the Nature Conservation Sector (NCS) of EEAA, combining institutional, research and field expertise.

| Role | Name | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| Conference Chair | Dr. Mohamed Said<br><br>General Manager of Biodiversity Economics, NCS-EEAA<br>National Focal Point for the SPA/BD Protocol | Overall organization and delivery |

| Role | Name | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| Vice-Chair and Head of Logistics | Dr. Luay Elsayed Ahmed Zonkle<br><br>Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors<br>Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection (AFWP)<br>Representative of the Federation | Deputy leadership and overall coordination of venues, accommodation, transport and local logistics |
| Scientific Chair | Dr. Imed Jribi<br><br>Associate Professor, Faculty of Sciences, University of Sfax, Tunisia<br>President, NASTNet<br>Regional Vice-Chair for the Mediterranean, IUCN-SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group | Scientific leadership and academic oversight |
| Local organizing committee | Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection (AFWP) | Venues, logistics, volunteers |

**Conference Chair: Dr Mohamed Said**

Dr. Mohamed Said is a Marine Ecologist and Biodiversity Policy Specialist with over 20 years of experience in marine conservation, protected area management and international cooperation. He serves as General Manager of Biodiversity Economics at EEAA and has been Egypt's National Focal Point for the SPA/BD Protocol since 2014. His work includes Egypt's National Action Plan for Marine Turtle Conservation, rescue, monitoring, tagging and stranding-response programmes, and cooperation with SPA/RAC and NASTNet. He has coordinated Mediterranean conservation projects and ACCOBAMS surveys, and contributed to the preparation and organization of CBD COP14 in Egypt. This experience supports his role as Conference Chair, representing the Nature Conservation Sector.

**Vice Chair and Head of Logistics  Dr Luay Elsayed Ahmed Zonkle**

Dr. Luay Elsayed Ahmed Zonkle is a veterinarian and wildlife conservation specialist with 27 years of experience in Egypt since joining EEAA in 1999. He serves as Director of the Biosafety Department and Coordinator of the Wildlife Programme. His experience includes marine turtle conservation, rescue and rehabilitation, marine biodiversity monitoring in the Red Sea and Mediterranean, and assessment of marine litter impacts. Over his career, he has contributed to the rescue and rehabilitation of thousands of seabirds and dozens of marine turtles in Egypt, alongside other marine and terrestrial wildlife. He helped establish Egypt's marine turtle stranding response network and rescue centres and provides technical oversight of the Marine Turtle Rescue Center at Ashtoum El Gamil. He is Egypt's National Focal Point for the CMS IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU and the Dugong MoU. As Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection (AFWB), he represents the Federation and will serve as Conference Vice-Chair and Head of Logistics.

**Scientific Chair  Dr Imed Jribi**

Dr. Imed Jribi is an Associate Professor in Biological Sciences at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Sfax, Tunisia, specializing in marine ecology and conservation. Active in marine turtle research and conservation in Tunisia and the Mediterranean since 1997, he is President of the North African Sea Turtle Network (NASTNet) and one of the Regional Vice-Chairs for the Mediterranean of the IUCN-SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group. His experience includes developing national marine turtle conservation action plans for Tunisia and Egypt, monitoring nesting beaches in the Kuriat Islands, assessing and mitigating fisheries bycatch, satellite tracking, and training. His scientific expertise and regional cooperation experience will support his role as Scientific Chair of the conference.

## 5. Venues and logistics

Port Said is the proposed host city, with Port Said Misr Travel Hotel as the proposed main conference venue. The facilities and accommodation proposed by the local organising team are summarized below.

| Item | Port Said |
|---|---|
| Main venue and plenary capacity | Port Said Misr Travel Hotel - proposed plenary capacity: 350 seats |
| Breakout rooms and outdoor spaces | 4 rooms, accommodating 50-150 participants each, plus 3 outdoor spaces |
| Hotel accommodation | 290 rooms |
| Nearest airport and transfer time | Cairo International Airport (CAI) - approximately 1 hour 50 minutes by road, subject to traffic |

Cairo International Airport (CAI) is the proposed international gateway. The organising team estimates a road transfer of approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes to the venue, depending on traffic and road conditions. Coordinated airport transfers and local transport will be arranged for delegates.

## 6. Financing and inclusion

The host team will develop a resource mobilization campaign involving international conservation partners, national institutions and private-sector sponsors. The proposed supporting organizations and partners are listed below; the scope of each contribution and the status of supporting letters will be recorded before final submission.

**Supporting organizations and partners**

Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection; Evergreen shipping company; Gulf Badr shipping agency; Dolphina, International East; WWF NA; SPA/RAC; and IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN Med).

Partner participation, financial or in-kind contributions and logo placement will be finalised through the relevant supporting letters and agreements.

The budget will provide for travel grants and registration waivers for students and early-career researchers from underrepresented Mediterranean countries, subject to available funding. The number and value of grants will be determined following confirmation of sponsorship and adoption of the conference budget. Registration fees will be announced after budget approval, with reduced rates for students and early-career researchers.

**7. Legacy and closing**

We propose the following outcomes beyond the meeting itself:

- A conference declaration or roadmap on climate-resilient turtle conservation in the southern Mediterranean
- A financing outcome: a pipeline of fundable projects presented to donors on site
- A post-conference training and monitoring programme with North African partners
- A published summary of results following the conference

Egypt is ready to welcome the Mediterranean marine turtle community. We would be glad to present this bid in person, host a site inspection, and answer any question from the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Mohamed Said**

Conference Chair

General Manager of Biodiversity Economics

Representing the Nature Conservation Sector

Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)

**Dr. Luay Elsayed Ahmed Zonkle**

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors

Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection (AFWP)

Conference Vice-Chair and Head of Logistics

Representing the AFWP