



Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

MPA NETWORKS project

Support MPA effectiveness

through strong and connected networks in the Mediterranean

Project partners:



<https://mpa-networks.interreg-med.eu>

Priority Axis 3: Natural and cultural resources - Objective 3.2: Biodiversity protection

Output.5.1	Joint Governance Plan on the Forum Roadmap
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WP5 – Capitalising | Output 5.1 - Joint Governance Plan on the Forum Roadmap

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About the MPA NETWORKS project

Project partners:



MPA NETWORKS aims to promote the dynamics of cooperation between MPA managers at all levels in the Mediterranean. The MPA NETWORKS project has focused on providing sustainable solutions to challenges that require an approach that goes beyond the boundaries of MPAs. These challenges include the global issue of management effectiveness, and more specifically the management of small-scale fisheries in MPAs, the conservation of mobile species, and the development of sustainable financing mechanisms for MPAs. The project has also helped to strengthen networks of MPA managers at national, sub-regional and Mediterranean levels and to ensure capacity building and scaling up of good solutions and policy recommendations. [Map of location of the partners](#)

Context

Being an international biodiversity hotspot, the Mediterranean Sea hosts a unique share of the world's marine biodiversity. Representing only 0.82% of the ocean area, it shelters nearly 17,000 known marine species, an equivalent of about 7-9% of the global marine biodiversity. The history and culture of the Mediterranean region are intimately linked to the sea. The Mediterranean Sea, Mare Nostrum, is an historical and cultural cradle that is also of a high economic importance, generating an estimated annual value of US\$450 billion from sea-related activities and valuable services to people (Randone *et al.*, 2017).

However, the Mediterranean coastal and marine ecosystems are under intense pressure. The Mediterranean Sea hosts the largest portion of threatened marine habitats in Europe (32%), of which 21% are listed as vulnerable and 11% as endangered. Forty-eight percent of wetlands in the Mediterranean basin have disappeared since 1970, and the Mediterranean *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass meadows have decreased by 34%. Fifty-three percent of shark species are at risk of extinction and marine mammals' populations have decreased by 41%. Fish species, including commercial and non-commercial species, have declined by 34%, and nearly 80% of fish stocks are fished at biologically unsustainable levels. In terms of pollution, 229,000 tonnes of plastics are found in the sea every year. The region also experiences intense maritime traffic being the pathway for 15% of the world's global shipping. A total of 1,011 non-indigenous marine species have been recorded in the Mediterranean waters so far, of which 748 are currently considered established, making the overall establishment rate hit nearly 74% (UNEP/MAP, 2022).

The expanding anthropic footprint is placing the Mediterranean Sea very close to reaching alarming rates. Under these exacerbating pressures, the region is sending a "notable

warming” (IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC), 2019), that the situation is deteriorating 20% faster than the global average (MedECC, 2019).

Being a “hotspot for highly interconnected climate risks”, the Mediterranean basin is one of the two most vulnerable regions to the impacts of climate change worldwide. As reiterated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), mitigation options for climate change impacts on marine ecosystems and fisheries include improving and enlarging the regional network of marine protected areas, transnational management of marine food resources and sustainable fishery practices (IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report, 2022).

Considering the above-mentioned factors, an effective protection strategy for the Mediterranean sea is urgently needed. Governments from the 21 riparian States have taken important steps in this regard through the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) and the deployment of other marine conservation measures. MPAs are one of the most effective tools for biodiversity protection, and for increasing local opportunities for sustainable development. When effectively managed, they contribute to sustainable economic activities such as small-scale fisheries and can host more than twice the biomass of fish as compared to unprotected areas (Giakoumi *et al.*, 2017). They also have the capacity to generate revenue from fishing and scuba-diving that is 2.3 times higher than their management costs (Merino *et al.*, 2009).

In 2010, the Aichi targets, adopted in the framework of the UN Biodiversity Convention, planned to have at least 10% of the sea and coast protected and effectively managed by 2020. In 2020, MPAs already covered 8.33% of the Mediterranean, but only 4.1% of them have fully or partially implemented management plans (MAPAMED; SPA/RAC & MedPAN, 2019). To date, only one out of five Mediterranean MPAs has a management plan (4% of the Sea area), and these are fully implemented in only 0.21% of the Mediterranean sea area (MedPAN, SPA/RAC & WWF, 2022). Seventeen percent of MPAs in non-EU countries report an adequate level of resources (MedPAN, 2021). Delivering on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework, the renewed European and Mediterranean regional commitment that includes a 30x30 target to protect 30% of the world's oceans and the Mediterranean Sea by 2030, will require much bigger progress.

The Post-2020 MPA Roadmap

The post-2020 MPA Roadmap process was coordinated jointly by MedPAN, SPA/RAC and WWF, together with several regional partners, as the result of a large participatory process including various stakeholders belonging to the Mediterranean MPA community. The post-2020 MPA Roadmap was drafted taking into account the commitments, provisions, targets and recommendations made at local, national, regional and global levels to improve MPAs. It aimed at boosting the implementation of the commitments taken under several international and regional conventions, agreements and policies. The post-2020 MPA Roadmap is not legally binding.

The post-2020 MPA roadmap is aligned with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Barcelona Convention's Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. The objectives of the roadmap focus on the means of implementation, and on actions related to MPAs that can help mobilise, align

and coordinate efforts of the various stakeholders to achieve the objectives stated in the frameworks and strategies listed above. In order to achieve the draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework protecting 30% of land and sea areas by 2030 (30x30 target), this roadmap refers to areas beyond MPAs including areas within and beyond national jurisdiction through other sectoral and spatial tools such as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) and Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), but does not focus on them.

Beyond its value as a stand-alone roadmap for Mediterranean MPAs, this document is also meant as a tool to be shared with and to support the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and policies of the European Union.

The vision for the post-2020 MPA Roadmap is :

'By 2030, Mediterranean marine protected areas will form a well established, well funded, connected, ecologically representative, effectively managed and monitored network that will provide greater benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem services and to the economic well-being of people and will be a model for resilience in the post-2020 and post-pandemic world.'

A large participatory process

The participatory process was started in 2020 during the Covid pandemic with the leadership of the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) of the United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) - Barcelona Convention, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Mediterranean Programme. A survey on limiting factors hindering the achievement of MPA targets was launched in October 2020, to which more than 360 responses were received. In November 2020, online working groups were convened to identify practical recommendations to overcome the limiting factors divided by thematic areas (Policy and Governance, Legislation and Enforcement, Management and Knowledge, Capacity and Awareness, and Sustainable Financing). These working groups included over 170 people from across the Mediterranean and beyond.

A two-part MPA Forum process was developed due to Covid-19 restrictions on travel. The first part, a multi-stakeholder consultation called the Virtual Forum Sessions, was held online from 2 to 4 June 2021 with 320 participants coming from 34 countries. These sessions added precision to a set of draft roadmap recommendations. This was supplemented by an online survey where respondents suggested specific strategies and actions to make draft recommendations attainable by 2030, identified responsible parties for achieving each recommendation, and identified indicators of success. Follow-up stakeholder consultations were held with MPA managers across the Mediterranean to ground-truth many of the recommendations developed that require the Virtual Forum Sessions resulted in a Zero Draft of the roadmap.

The second part of the Forum process was a hybrid event convened in Monaco and online from November 29 - December 1, 2021 where Mediterranean MPA achievements were announced, a roadmap vision adopted, refinements to actionable recommendations

developed, partnerships for roadmap implementation launched and a follow-up reporting and monitoring mechanism discussed.

Summary of roadmap strategic objectives

The overarching objective of the roadmap is to reinforce and support the implementation of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework in the Mediterranean region; in particular Target 3 calling for parties to the convention to take action to protect 30% of the planet.

The following summary list of roadmap strategic objectives was developed through an iterative process with numerous stakeholder inputs. The strategic objectives generally follow the themes that emerged from the online working groups and the survey on limiting factors that hinder the achievement of MPA targets (Policy and Governance, Legislation and Enforcement, Management and Knowledge, Capacity and Awareness, and Sustainable Financing). A number of additional cross-cutting recommendations that emerged from the Virtual and the Monaco Forum Sessions were also included at the end.

1. Further develop Mediterranean MPA policy and governance structures to be more equitable, incorporating local authorities, integrated with other sectors and responsive to local MPA conditions
2. Strengthen national legislation and ensure effective enforcement mechanisms to produce better outcomes for MPAs
3. Ensure MPA management structures are effective and well coordinated across government and stakeholders to improve knowledge and ensure proper management of MPAs
4. Build capacity of MPA managers, staff and stakeholders and communicate on MPA values to larger external audiences to raise their awareness
5. Provide support for the long-term financial sustainability of MPAs through capacity development and sustainable financing mechanisms including trust funds
6. Cross-cutting recommendations

Dissemination of recommendations

Some of the 32 Roadmap recommendations have been adapted and promoted at different levels and this will continue beyond the end of the MPA NETWORK project (See summary table for more details). At the local and national level, recommendations were presented and discussed by some project partners committing to contribute to the implementation of some actions (See Annex 1 for more details). In addition, some Roadmap recommendations have been included in both the White Paper and the Policy Paper developed within the framework of the MPA NETWORKS project.

Summary table of MPA NETWORKS dissemination activities organised between January 2022 and June 2022

DATE OF EVENT (2022)	LOCATION (City, Country)	EVENT TITLE	ORGANISED BY	SCALE OF THE EVENT	SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT
18 January	Online	Mediterranean Wetlands and MPAs Governance	MBPC-Tune UP	Regional	Exchanges on Mediterranean Wetlands and MPAs Governance experiences from TUNE UP and the MBPC – capitalizing best practices and building a stronger network
4 March	Online	experiences from TUNE UP and the MBPC – capitalizing	Strunjan NP	Regional	Presentation to EUSAIR of MPA NETWORKS project activities and results
23 March	La Rochelle	Life EU Platform	Life Marha project, the European Climate, Environment and Infrastructure Executive Agency and NEEMO EEIG	International	The goal of this gathering was to share local or national experiences regarding the implementation of strong protection zones in European Marine Protected Areas in view of fulfilling the objectives of 10% of strict protection at sea by 2030 set forth in the EU biodiversity strategy adopted by the European Commission in May 2020
29 March	Online	Roundtable on "National Parks in the Adriatic Ionian region as a driver of sustainable development"	EUSAIR	Regional	Debate on EU regional policies and strategies on PA

21 April	Strunjan	Slovenian Capitalisation event	Strunjan NP	National	National Capitalisation event
21 April	Cala Rajada - Mallorca	Joint commissions of marine fishing reserve	Marilles	Local	Local capitalisation of MPA NETWORKS in Spain
22 April	Andratx - Mallorca	Joint commissions of marine fishing reserve	Marilles	Local	Local capitalisation of MPA NETWORKS in Spain
22 avril	Torre del Cerrano	Project Networking: Interreg Italy-Croatia CASCADE, NET4mPLASTIC Interreg Mediterranean MPA NETWORKS, LIFE DELFI, CALLIOPE	Torre del Cerrano	Local	Exchange of lessons learned and recommendations from several projects
28 avril	Vlora, Albania & online	Local event Interreg mpa networks Albania	INCA	Local	The Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) in cooperation with RAPA Vlorë, organized an informative local meeting on the topic "MPAForum and post -2020 Roadmap for MPAs in the Mediterranean: Post-2020 challenges and solutions".
12 May	Online	European Marine cooperation in the	MedPAN & Ocean Governance	International	1st event of a series of 3 on MPA networks

		Mediterranean region and beyond			
14 May	Online	La pesca professionale nell'AMP Portofino	Portofino MPA	Local	Web Conference focused on one of the topic of the project (small scale fishery)
15 May	Online	joint commissions of marine fishing reserves	Marilles	National	Directed to MPA Managers, discussion of the MPANetworks Policy paper
31st May - 1st June	Dubrovnik, Croatia	Transboundary governance in the South Adriatic Ionian Straight Ecologically or Biologically Significant Area (SAIS-EBSA) and contiguous regions: from the identification of an area to biodiversity conservation'	MBPC	Regional	The workshop will be the first official event of the SAIS-EBSA Conservation Community (SECC).
1&2 June	Zagreb, Croatia	MPA networks capitalisation Days in Croatia	Brijuni NP	Regional	National and Adriatic capitalisation event of MPA NETWORKS
3 - 4th of June	Online	Green week event	MedPAN	International	EU Green week
22 June	Port-Cros & online	Meeting of the economic, social and	Port-Cros	Local	Meeting of the economic, social and cultural council to present the

		cultural council			main results of the MPA Networks project
23 June	Tirana, Albania & online	"Toward a sustainable marine environment"	INCA	National	A National hybrid round table meeting with the theme "Toward a sustainable marine environment" was organized in two days, combined in a national meeting held in Tirana on 23/06/2022 and a field trip organized on 25/06/2022 in the MPA of Sazan Karaburun, Vlore. This event marked in the meantime the closing of the project "MPA Networks" in Albania.
27th June - 1st July	Lisbon, Portugal	UN Ocean Governance	UN	International	UN SDG 14 conference

Finally, a Mediterranean capitalisation workshop was organized as a hybrid event where Mediterranean Marine Protected Area practitioners discussed and brought important recommendations to the attention of policy makers. Mid June in Spain, from Palma de Mallorca, to Barcelona and Roses, Marine Protected Area (MPA) practitioners and policy makers discussed the most important measures that must be put in place to empower MPA networks and their stakeholders to tackle climate change consequences and biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean.

The objectives of the week's event were two-fold: ensure the technical and political uptake of the solutions identified in the MPA NETWORKS project at a Mediterranean level and discuss key recommendations for decision-makers concerned with climate change and biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean.

To support MPAs in their crucial role to safeguard our marine environment, and to reach the international and regional ambitions of 30% of marine protection by 2030, efforts must be boosted on several complementary fronts:

- **Collaborative governance and co-management** in the Mediterranean Sea must be encouraged to ensure that all stakeholders contribute to the sound management of our marine environment
- As a pillar of Mediterranean culture for centuries, **small scale fishers** must participate in MPA management and be supported with adequate measures to curb illegal activities or destructive practices

- As sentinel sites in an ocean severely impacted by **climate change**, MPAs must be empowered to continue their contribution to marine resilience through improved and harmonised monitoring as well as with the elaboration of science-based climate change adaptation and mitigation action plans
- To ensure that the key role of MPAs to safeguard our marine environment is recognised, the assessment of the **economic value of marine conservation** must be continued throughout the network of Mediterranean MPAs and appropriate sustainable financing mechanisms must be developed
- Because the conservation of our marine environment is everyone's business, **networking and marine cooperation at all levels** and between all marine practitioners, from MPA managers, municipalities, regions, State services, scientists, NGOs, economic actors to prosecutors must be encouraged and supported.

These key recommendations for policy makers, in line with the 2020 MPA Roadmap and emanating from a region already recognised for its dynamism on marine conservation issues, were brought to the UN Ocean Conference, one of the most important event on the international ocean agenda, that took place at the end of June 2022 in Lisbon, Portugal.

The road ahead

Recommendations from the Post-2020 MPA Roadmap will continue to be promoted and the Mediterranean joint governance plan will continue to be developed through:

- The Mediterranean MPA Roadmap and Forum process, (MPA Networks Project Partners and Associated Partners are associated with this process)
- The MedPAN 2019-2023 and beyond strategy (almost all MPA Networks Project Partners and Associated Partners are members or partners of MedPAN)

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Commenté [1]: reference to be updated after validation of the roadmap doc

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Annex 1 -

Commitments from the Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) to support the implementation of the Post-2020 Mediterranean MPA Roadmap

The Road to 2030

Post-2020 Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Roadmap

The Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) is committing to support the implementation of the following actions stated in the Roadmap Recommendations:

Strategic Objective	Recommendation	INCA commitment
Strategic Objective 1: Further develop Mediterranean MPA policy and governance structures to be more equitable, integrated with other sectors and responsive to local MPA conditions	1.1 Ensure, in each Mediterranean country, national government commitment in preparing, implementing and updating a national strategy and an operational national action plan in order to achieve international targets related to MPAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake activities to strengthen national institutional capacities in strategic planning and monitoring at the national level Help National governments to develop and declare a precise timetable for the implementation of international commitments which they ratify or to which they subscribe
	1.2 Ensure legal and institutional reforms, that commit governments to take urgent action to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity (by all relevant means and tools including MPAs), as a political priority for the resilience of nature and the benefit of coastal communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support in planning high-level meetings at national level to raise awareness of the need for legal and institutional reforms Support organization of workshops with government and experts to identify reforms
	1.4 Ensure that MPA needs are taken into account and integrated in coastal and marine spatial planning to reduce conservation and development conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize capacity building workshops and trainings Work on amending national MPA strategies to require the full participation of MPA managers in marine spatial planning Ensure the private sector is included in all marine spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management processes
	1.5 Empower MPA managers through legal and other mechanisms to apply a decentralized governance system that features participatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop national government legislation that empowers MPA managers in decision making Develop national government legislation that requires

	processes and co-management approaches and be more responsive to local conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participatory planning and co-management with relevant economic sectors and local populations Develop capacity and training for MPA managers and stakeholders in participatory approaches and co-management Develop MPA Steering Committees or Advisory Committees at the local level that include all stakeholder groups and can link science, management and policies
Strategic Objective 2 Strengthen national legislation and ensure effective enforcement mechanisms to produce better outcomes for MPAs	2.1 Increase the number and coverage of MPAs with enhanced protection levels (e.g. no-take, no-access, strictly protected), to contribute to the recovery of marine ecosystems, based on scientific data and community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Development of standards for establishing enhanced protection levels in MPAs Promote best practices in establishing enhanced protection levels in MPAs Develop and deliver capacity building and training in establishing enhanced protection levels in MPAs Support organization of high-level policy forums on enhanced protection levels in MPAs
	2.2 Enact, in each country, a law and policy on protected areas with specific reference to MPAs that describes the process to create, manage, enforce MPA regulations and monitor their conservation objectives and define an appropriate timeline for developing, updating and implementing management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help on compiling and promoting case studies and best practices on MPA legislation and policies Support development of a national multi-stakeholder task force to advise on the development of MPA legislation and policy Develop and deliver capacity building on MPA legislation, comparative law and policy
	2.3 Ensure that regional and international commitments/obligations on biodiversity and related sectoral legislation are reflected in national legislation for marine protected areas and a governance model is adopted to avoid conflicting legislation issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure national biodiversity strategies should describe process and timeline for adoption of legislation that ensures conformity between regional and international commitments and national legislation on MPAs with clear provisions on conflicting legislation Contribute to the development and adoption of national legislation that ensures conformity with regional and international commitments on MPAs with clear provisions on conflicting legislation Implement awareness raising activities on regional and international MPA commitments with legislators and other stakeholders

	2.5 Encourage and promote civil society stakeholders to be involved in watching, vigilance, and informing about MPA violations and infringement and work together with authorities to curb them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize MPA awareness and vigilance campaigns targeting civil society Organize awareness raising campaigns about MPA regulations and potential violations developed by the civil society and targeting the general public
Strategic Objective 3 Ensure MPA management structures are effective and well coordinated across government and stakeholders to improve knowledge and ensure proper management of MPAs	3.1 Develop or update management plans for each MPA that includes at least: SMART objectives; integrated and site-specific management measures, with a zoning plan (where applicable); monitoring plan with well-defined indicators for the conservation actions; business/financial plans including feasibility assessments; stakeholder engagement strategies; strategies to manage, mitigate and adapt to supra-MPA challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure MPA management and business plans should be updated between 5 and 10 years of their creation Develop and deliver capacity building and training in MPA management plan, stakeholder engagement and business plan development as well as skills to address supra-MPA challenges
	3.3 Promote and implement initiatives to strengthen MPA and stakeholder engagement (including fishers and local communities) to improve knowledge via citizen science, facilitate bottom-up management, and increase stakeholder acceptance and compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of stakeholder engagement training and plan for MPA managers and staff Develop training for local communities (e.g. species identification contests) Develop citizen science actions (e.g. photo contests) Support development of volunteer programmes (e.g. junior ranger programmes)
	3.5 Improve collaboration among researchers and MPA staff to develop or update management plans and assess MPA management effectiveness, based on an interdisciplinary scientific understanding (socio-ecological systems) of the MPA and its objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure researchers collaborate with managers through co-management committees (See Recommendation 1.5) Support compilation and dissemination of best practices in the application of science to MPA management planning
Strategic Objective 4 Build capacity of MPA managers, staff and stakeholders and communicate on MPA values to larger external audiences to raise their awareness	4.1 Provide communication toolkits (translated in different languages) that MPA managers can customise and adapt to local contexts, to promote the value of MPAs for ecosystem services, local livelihoods and biodiversity conservation efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver capacity building and training on the use of communication toolkits for MPAs
	4.2 Develop and implement a public relations strategy, aligned with each MPA management plan, that translates ecological, social, and economic roles and benefits of the MPA into the appropriate language to be understood and accepted by non-technical stakeholder communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development and dissemination of a generic public relations strategy that could be adopted and changed for local circumstances
	4.6 Train MPA managers, staff, and local stakeholders on conflict management and resolution, stakeholder engagement, and communication with the support of expert advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of training materials on conflict management and stakeholder engagement Help in testing training materials in pilot countries and MPAs Support sharing the material at Mediterranean level Organize trainings
Strategic Objective 5: Provide support for the long-term financial sustainability of MPAs through capacity development and sustainable financing mechanisms including trust funds	5.1 Review gaps and options for MPA funding for national biodiversity/MPA strategies and action plans within each country through their national resource mobilization strategy, for example under the Convention on Biological Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support compiling available resource mobilization strategies Help in mapping potential funding partners Provide expert facilitation in partnership building, business planning, fundraising etc.
	5.2 Create and/or support sustainable financing mechanisms dedicated to MPAs at national level, and continue to support "The MedFund."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help in conducting a feasibility assessment on national sustainable financing mechanisms in Albania, for its Mediterranean waters
	5.4 Build capacity of local and national MPA staff and administrations in fundraising, financing mechanisms, and funds management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver capacity building and training for fundraising, financing mechanisms and funds management
Cross-cutting Recommendations	6.1 Support networking of MPA managers and other stakeholders at regional, sub-regional, and national levels and on key topics to enable scaling-up of good practices, sharing of experience, mutual understanding, and to establish permanent connections between MPA stakeholders at all levels and bring the voice from the field into decision-making processes. Connect with the rest of the world to amplify the impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support continuation of Regional MPA Working groups on small scale fisheries, mobile species, and sustainable financing, Posidonia and set-up of new groups on new topics if needed Support Continuation of MedPAN network activities as permanent regional platform for MPA managers