



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 Financing
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WP5 – 1 | Output - Joint Governance Plan on Financing

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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

The estimated needs for the effective management of the existing MPAs in the Mediterranean are of around 800 M€/year. In comparison, this represents only 0.2 % of the economic output of the tourism sector (BlueSeeds, 2020) or 0.17% of the assets delivered by the marine resources in the Mediterranean (WWF, 2021) while the overall cost/benefit ratio of an effective programme to globally conserve wild nature has been estimated to be at least one to 100 (Balmford et al., 2002). Despite this advantageous ratio, MPA financing remains a recurring obstacle in all Mediterranean countries. National financial sources are largely irregular and insufficient, and regionally, less than 15% of the needs for MPAs are covered. MedPAN's management database shows that only 22% of respondents report having a budget that is considered suitable or acceptable for nationally designated MPAs, and 8% have no budget at all (MedPAN, 2021). In another survey, 36% of the reporting MPAs have a self-financing component, and just a few receive funds from NGOs, from international donors, or from the private sector (BlueSeeds, 2020). The general funding situation is even weaker and discontinuous within the non-EU Mediterranean countries.

The MedFund was established in 2015 with the commitment of several Mediterranean States and international environmental organizations, in support of the sustainable funding of Mediterranean MPAs. It has thus far mobilized over 8 million Euros for Mediterranean MPA

Pilot actions feedback

Natural capital accounting (NCA) is the focus of both Marilles and Portofino pilot actions (also on fisheries). A summary table of the pilot actions can be found in Annex 1.

NCA allows for the description of the benefits associated with the MPA (identification, quantification and valuation of natural assets and ecosystem services), providing managers with the means to better inform decision-makers, influence investments and funding, and help economic sectors to engage in marine conservation. NCA is therefore an approach to be promoted in MPAs in relation to issues of funding, commitment of public decision-makers and economic actors, and therefore also communication, and ultimately the evaluation of management effectiveness. **NCA is an operational translation of the frequent recommendation to demonstrate and communicate the ecological and socio-economic benefits of the MPA.** NCA methodology and tools (e.g. NC Balance Sheet developed by Marilles) may therefore be promoted in the managers' toolbox as a complement to the management plan, business plan, financing strategy, to enable MPAs to measure and communicate their ecological and socio-economic benefits.

Feedback from the two pilot actions identified enabling conditions and limitations to the implementation of NCA that can help answer this question:

- **NCA is a participatory process NOT a desktop study:** from the identification of ecosystem services to the collection of data to quantify them, NCA requires the active contribution of local stakeholders and their knowledge and experience of the area. The effort to collect, compile and analyse data from various sources is very significant and should be continued over time.
- The previous point implies the **need for good conditions for dialogue and collaboration with local stakeholders** (professional and recreational fishers, divers, boaters, tourism, etc.) in order to gain access to the required data and to build a common vision of the co-management of the territory, taking into account the conservation of its ecosystems and socio-economic development.
- To implement this participatory process, **it is essential that the MPA has sufficient staff available, with good communication skills, and trained in the methodology** (i.e. MPA managers have to be familiar also with the Corporate Natural Capital Accounts - CNCA).
- **A partnership with a research institute or expert in NCA and with knowledge of MPAs is a must.**

Interesting sources provided by Pierre Yves Hardy (WWF) on the conclusions of a workshop on Blue Finance: https://ico-solutions.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CR_Finance_VF.pdf and David Meyers with the website of Conservation Strategy Fund: www.numbersfornature.org that has a self paced course on environmental valuation.

MedPAN's Working Group feedback

MedPAN, the network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Area managers, organised an online meeting of its Mediterranean MPA managers' Financing Working Group (WG) on 11 March 2022. This meeting was organised to review the draft of a Policy Paper being developed for the MedPAN network within the framework of the MPA NETWORK project.

The question asked to the WG was the following: Is NCA the approach to be promoted to demonstrate and communicate the benefits of an MPA?

The WG underlined the following points:

- NCA is the operational translation of socio-economic benefits of MPAs. It could be part of the management toolbox of MPA managers. It is however a very specific topic that requires expertise.
- It is important to be clear about what we are speaking about. NCA is a deep analysis process. Environmental accounting is something that can already provide good and useful information to MPA managers in quantifying in numbers some of the ES.
- To get the most useful support for the MPA managers, the researchers should be experts in this field. However the presence and inputs from MPA staff is necessary to get information from the field.
- Calibration between MPA needs and researchers is important to have useful results. It is important to find indeed a balanced approach between an exhaustive assessment of total economic value (TEV) and a practical one that could be reassessed regularly.
- To empower and enable MPA managers to be able to undertake environmental valuation a new dedicated training will be key to explain the terminology and the methodologies currently available. It is important to understand the language, how economic value is assessed and the benefits coming from the implementation of NCA and environmental valuation. Methodologies should be "easy" enough to be replicated and used broadly by MPA managers. There are a lot of ES provided by marine ecosystems (use value vs non-use value, services that can be economically assessed vs services that cannot, etc.), it is suggested to "select" main ecosystem services to be assessed (depending on localizations of sites, type of ecosystems protected, etc.). MPA Staff would easily manage some pre-evaluated indicators. Basic data can be also very useful to collect such as the number of fishermen benefiting from the MPA food provision services and relying on the good management of the MPA.
- The involvement of local stakeholders is very important in the process as the aim is to understand the key ecosystem services keeping in mind the targeted policies.
- It is important to implement ecosystem services evaluations at all levels, not only those oriented to evaluate MPAs effectiveness. It has proven to be useful to have local studies. The manual developed by Marilles can provide good support. Comparison can be possible for communication and benefit transfer using info from comparable MPAs.
- From the Portofino experience, it is important to work at the local level and to target and to influence decision-makers and to share what is at stake locally. In this regard it is very important to know how to use and translate the results.

- There are in fact several levels of information to take into account. At the national regional level the value of ES is useful and at the local level it is useful to show the additional value of the MPA and the effectiveness of its management to maintain or even increase the ES and prevent negative changes. To sum up, environmental valuation can be valuable to demonstrate overtime the positive impact of the MPA.
- Natural Accounting is a useful tool at several stages, like a compass it helps to assess if the conservation efforts are in the right direction and their added-value.
- From a funding point of view, it is important to pay attention to the legal aspect and the existing legal frameworks to collect incomes to give capacities to collect money from visitors, concessions. Thinking about financing mechanisms, it is indeed important to have the right legal prerequisites and frameworks to allow MPAs to collect funds and/or collect money for MPAs.

MedPAN's Policy Paper

Mediterranean recommendations to support policy-making have been developed through a unique policy paper (coordinated by MedPAN with inputs from PPs and Associated Partners):

- On the feedback / lessons learnt from pilot sites of the project MPA NETWORKS + projet Mava et FFEM
- On the project key topics with contribution from thematic working groups.
- On MPA management effectiveness needs and networks of MPA managers added value thanks to joint contribution from all national/sub-regional networks and coordination by MedPAN.
- The project's recommendations are also based on the 2020 evaluation of the Mediterranean MPA situation (2020 Mediterranean MPA Status Report) and the post-2020 Mediterranean MPA Forum Roadmap.
- Elements related to climate change come from the MPA-Engage project.

The Policy paper highlights 14 key recommendations of the Mediterranean MPA community on the key topic of Financing and conveys messages to be integrated into local, national, European, sub-regional, Mediterranean and International policies.

At the national & local level

1 Conduct funding needs assessment of MPAs and the national system of MPAs, including needs for adequate human resources, to have a clear view of these funding needs, the legal adjustments and what is expected from national sources and what the private funders could contribute to.

2 Support business planning and fundraising strategy at individual level for all MPAs.

3 Back-up the national strategy for marine ecosystems and MPAs with a sustainable funding plan based on a combination of funding solutions at national and local levels that includes activities of regional and international cooperation, and diversify income generation opportunities beyond tourism, to ensure greater resilience to the financial impacts of future pandemics, human-made risks or natural hazards.

4 Further support basic data collation to enable natural capital accounting in MPAs and fundraising efforts.

5 Develop finance mechanisms that support government revenue generation from ecosystem related elements - such as polluter pays (Green taxes, etc.).

6 Elaborate enabling national regulatory frameworks for fees, including user fees, to be captured by the MPA at the local level and the possibility to allocate the generated income to the different needs for effective management.

At Mediterranean level

7 Promote/Support the need of economic analysis of the entire Mediterranean MPA network that consolidates the economic value of marine conservation efforts to address the policy makers, economic sectors in highlighting the additionality of marine protection efforts in addition to the existing economic value of the ecosystem.

8 Support the MedFund in exploring opportunities for international revenue capture, such as shipping fees (a % of) port fees, aquarium fees, tourism fees (i.e.cruise, etc.), to further support MPAs through the MedFund.

9 Support alliances of donors where the different funding support can be implemented in synergy both for public and private funding, core management, including surveillance and more targeted activities.

10 Support a review of best practice on governance and implementation of Conservation Trust Funds and assess feasibility of national conservation trust funds in Mediterranean countries dedicated to marine conservation.

11 Expand capacity-building activities on MPA business planning and financial strategies with innovative funding mechanisms and support experience sharing.

At the EU level

12 Promote the launch a new BLUELivingMED initiative that translates a clear Blue European ambition for the Mediterranean Sea, and expands, in the Mediterranean region, the EU efforts of the “More than...” series for Africa, Latin America and Asia and the EU NaturAfrica initiative. Such an initiative would highly support a tangible implementation of the UfM 2030 GreenerMed Agenda and the 2021 UfM Declaration on Blue economy with an innovative people-centred approach of marine conservation.

13 Further enhance synergies between EU Interreg programmes and other European Union funds aligning them to the extent possible to address the needs of the Mediterranean region to enhance marine and coastal ecosystems protection.

At the international level

14 Support the Global alliance for marine protection and its objective to create a global learning community of practice related to sustainable financing and effective management of MPAs to act as a global mechanism to support the 30x30 implementation on the ground.

Dissemination of key lessons learned and recommendations

Lessons learned and recommendations have been adapted and promoted at different levels and this will continue beyond the end of the MPA NETWORK project:

- By each PP at both national and local levels (7 countries). At local and national level, each partner developed advocacy material and organized events to disseminate those recommendations.
- With the support of the Associated Partners (APs) for integration in territorial strategies (national fisheries policies, local maritime spatial planning etc.).
- With support from national and sub-regional networks to target national and sub-regional levels,
- They have been promoted towards European, Mediterranean and international strategies (GFCM, Union for the Mediterranean GreenerMed Agenda 2030, Barcelona Convention post 2020 strategic documents for MPAs and SAP-BIO, EU new programming period, CBD post 2020) thanks to joint contribution from MedPAN, APs, key Mediterranean partners (including partners from MBPC and MPA-Engage projects), and other networks of MPA managers beyond the Med (through the EU Ocean Governance project / twinning between networks at Transatlantic level).
- They have been promoted during key Mediterranean and international events (IUCN WCC in 2021, CBD SBSTTA in 2021 and 2022, UN SDG14 Ocean Conference in 2022, Monaco Blue Initiative, Barcelona Convention COP in 2021) and will be promoted (IMPAC 5 in 2023, CBD COP 15 in 2022)

Summary table of MPA NETWORKS dissemination activities 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	EUSAIR	Regional	Debate on EU regional policies and strategies on PA

		sustainable development"			
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 Mediterranean region and beyond	MedPAN & Ocean Governance	International	1st event of a series of 3 on MPA networks
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)
31 May	Online	4th Webinar to give impulse to the approval of the Master Plan of the spanish MPA Network RAMPE	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 cultural council	Port-Cros	Local	Meeting of the economic, social and cultural council to present the 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

In addition, 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. The key recommendation on Financing for that event was '*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*'.

The road ahead

Recommendations will continue to be promoted on the topic of MPA financing 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)

References

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Annex 1 -

Summary table of MPA NETWORKS pilot actions

	PORTOFINO	MARILLES
Scope and objective of the pilot action	<p>Natural Capital assessment of the annual fishing harvest from small scale fishery and evaluation of fish fauna stock in Portofino MPA. The intrinsic value of the considered good or service (fish subtracted and stocked) was assessed as both biophysical and monetary value.</p> <p>The Emery accounting method used to evaluate the Natural Capital allowed to convert the biomass value into a monetary one, in order to better convey the importance of NC to policy makers and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) applied to the marine reserve Llevant de Mallorca to estimate and visualise the flows of benefits that the natural capital delivers to society, with the biological/physical component (natural assets) and the economic component (valuing the flow of services provided such as fish, recreation, etc). By describing the benefits associated with the MPA, the intent was to empower MPA managers to better inform decision-making, influence investments and financing and help economic sectors to engage in marine conservation.</p>
Methodo	<p>FishMPABlue2 standardised protocols and results of the GIREPAM project (as a consequence of the EAMPA project). The method used for Natural Capital assessment is based on the emery analysis, an environmental accounting method introduced by Odum (Odum 1988, 1996) that follows an ecocentric approach aimed at assessing the environmental performance and sustainability of processes and systems on the global biosphere scale (Vassallo et al. 2017).</p>	<p>Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) approach (SEEA-EEA - System of Environmental Economics Accounting-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting) to Balearic MPA inspired by the outputs of previous similar approaches including the GIREPAM project.</p>
Enabling conditions	<p>It is critical that the MPA has enough staff time and that staff is available and is sensitised with the methodology to implement the assessment.</p>	<p>NCA requires specific, verified, and updated information. To obtain a sound accounting, it is critical to have access to specific and verified information on the study area. It is important to have access to robust data on the extraction of marine resources in the targeted MPA.</p>
	<p>A good collaboration and at least open dialogue with the local community, especially the fishing sector, is critical to collect data and information on fishers activity and possible impact on MPA habitats, as well as to define common strategies to achieve co-management goals. A genuine engagement of the local community and stakeholders, professional and recreational fishers, divers, boaters, etc.) is essential to build a common vision regarding socio economic growth and nature conservation and to jointly manage the territory. Good communication skills for the MPA staff working with the fishers are fundamental.</p>	<p>The best possible collaboration with professional fishers is needed.</p> <p>Satellite monitoring system (green boxes) in the artisanal professional fleet operating in the MPA is very useful.</p> <p>A reliable system to determine the effort and performance of recreational fishing in the MPA is also needed.</p> <p>It is key to have enough staff time to implement this assessment.</p>
	<p>A partnership with a research organisation skilled in NC is a must. The support of researchers and students can definitively increase the opportunity to collect data from fishing activity, it is</p>	<p>MPA managers have to be familiar also with the Corporate Natural Capital Accounts (CNCA). The CNCAs, developed for the UK Natural Capital Committee in 2015 (eftec, RSPB</p>

	<p>necessary to be in contact with research teams specialised in the study of Natural Capital, with track-record in this field. MPA staff generally lack the knowledge and time to conduct such a natural capital analysis, so the role of the MPA staff is mainly to provide the data to researchers, and to use, to translate the results obtained from the assessment and share them with the stakeholders. In this regard, good science communication is very important.</p>	<p>and PwC, 2015), are the most widely used model and are intended to support companies, owners, managers and policy makers in understanding the risks and opportunities associated with the deterioration of natural capital. This framework, which enables organisations to collect information on natural capital in a consistent and comparable format, to help them make informed decisions about natural capital management, has already been widely tested. The CNCA integrates and considers so-called maintenance costs, which refer to the expenses necessary to maintain natural assets and the ecosystem services that they provide.</p>
		<p>A partnership with a research organisation or experts skilled in NCA is a must to conduct the NCA.</p> <p>Regarding Technological infrastructure needs and requirements:</p> <p>1 The NC Balance Sheet (Excel) developed in this project is ready for immediate use and application in any MPA, so there is no required technological development in that sense. Nevertheless, a visual and user-friendly web platform could be constructed from the tool developed. In the latter case, the corresponding programming and technical skills, as well as the corresponding (internal or external) cost for its development, would be needed.</p> <p>2. Training/scientific support: Basic knowledge in natural capital accounting is needed to use the tool.</p> <p>3. Regarding fieldwork, If the acquisition of new fieldwork is not necessary, because the already available data is sufficient, no special technological infrastructure is required. The participation of experts in marine ecology and fisheries biology is required but, above all, the participation of people who have a deep knowledge of the area, the populations and the local customs is essential.</p> <p>NCA should be a participatory process NOT a desktop study. It is considered essential to carry out workshops for the pre-identification, identification and ranking of ecosystem services during the first phases with local actors, with the aim of benefiting from local knowledge and experience that cannot be found through other methods such as bibliographic reviews. Likewise, it is highly recommended that participants in the workshops intervene and are involved throughout the accounting process. Analysis of the general population's perception of the performance of the MPA and other confluent protection is important.</p>
<p>Difficulties / limitations</p>	<p>Substantial staff effort is required. To tackle this limitation, indirect monitoring activity taking data from fishermen logbooks could be carried out every year, while the landings monitoring and some experimental fishing trips could be realised every two years. In addition, the support of students and researchers of the University could also increase the opportunity and workforce to collect data from fishing activity in the future keeping in mind that they need to be introduced to the fishermen and "trained" to work in real conditions with socio-economic professionals. The human factor is again</p>	<p>Setting up a NCA involves a remarkable effort of data compilation and analysis of very diverse origin and location. Possibly, if the organisation, operation and management of an MPA integrated the concepts related to the NCA the efforts would be reduced and the reliability would increase.</p>

	very important.	
	Big challenge is to make the monitoring of small-scale fisheries sustainable over time (replicable and uninterrupted), making fishers aware regarding the importance of data collection, and also engaging them in decision-making processes. To solve the difficulty of data collection, log-books or other similar tools could be useful to collect information. A valid support could be represented by the technology application and a trained fisherman, that helps to collect data without MPA staff to reach in person the landing place. The team of researchers specialised in Natural Capital analysis has to be experienced with tangible track-record work with MPAs.	To be useful the NCA is not a one shot process but has to be updated as a valuable monitoring tool of the MPA effectiveness.