

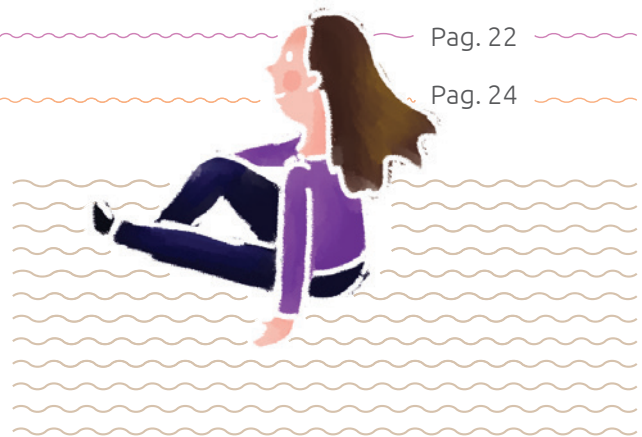
*Promoting multilevel governance
for tuning up biodiversity
protection in marine areas.*



Policy Toolkit for environmental contracts in
Marine Protected Areas planning and management processes.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------|
| 1. What is TUNE UP? | Pag. 2 |
| 2. What is the Environmental contract? | Pag. 4 |
| 3. How does it work? | Pag. 8 |
| • Preparatory Stage | Pag. 11 |
| • Development Stage | Pag. 17 |
| • Implementation Stage | Pag. 18 |
| 4. List of Regional policies. | Pag. 22 |
| 5. List of funding opportunities. | Pag. 24 |



Chapter 1.

What is Tune Up?

TUNE UP - Promoting multilevel governance for tuning up biodiversity protection in marine areas - is a multi-module project tackling the need for a strategic and collaborative approach to Mediterranean MPAs management and biodiversity protection, by testing and capitalizing a multi-stakeholder/multi-level governance tool based on River/Wetland Contracts experience tested by the INTERREG MED WETNET project. TUNE UP builds on WETNET results exploiting the flexibility and feasibility of the River/Wetland Contract methodology further developing it to MPAs management, assessing its effectiveness through the implementation of **10 MPA Contracts**.

The partnership involves different types of actors operating in MPAs management of several Mediterranean countries, so as to ensure high transferability of main outputs at regional scale. TUNE UP approach is based on vertical and horizontal subsidiarity, to achieve coordination among institutions at all involved levels, as well as to integrate funding, resources and plans. Indeed, the project aims to ensure higher coordination among stakeholders and decision

makers, **limit rising conflicts between preservation and economic issues, and to enhance the goal of biodiversity protection**. Thus, the project intends to achieve a stronger, coordinated and proactive involvement of key stakeholders for an improved effectiveness of MPAs management. By integrating multilevel governance tools into national and regional policy instruments, a more intensive transnational cooperation and networking between Mediterranean MPAs is envisaged.

WETNET Interreg Mediterranean Project tested and transferred "Wetlands Contracts" in 6 countries between 2017 and 2019, acting through broad participatory processes where users, private and public entities are committed in mainstreaming wetland conservation into their daily activities.

More info: <https://wetnet.interreg-med.eu/>

The Countries

TUNE UP brings together 12 partners from 7 countries:
Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Albania, Slovenia and Montenegro.



1. SEO/Birdlife • Spanis Ornithological Society
Spain • Albufera de Valencia

2. SEO/Birdlife • Spanis Ornithological Society
Spain • Albufera de Valencia

3. Tour du Valat Foundation
France Former Saltworks of Camargue

4. Medsea • Mediterranean Sea
Italy • Penisola del Sinis Isola di Mal di Ventre

5. University of Montenegro
Montenegro • Boka Kotorska Bay Sopot

6. Department of Architecture Roma 3 University • Italy • Isola di Ventotene e Santo Stefano

7. Albanian Ministry of Tourism Environment • Albania Karaburun Sazan

8. ZRC SAZU • Research Center of the slovenian Academy of Science and Art • Slovenia • Sečovlje Salina

9. Management Unit of Acheloos valley Amvrakikos Gulf Protected Areas-Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency (N.E.C.C.A.)

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Tune Up in figures!

Learn more about Tune Up
<https://tune-up.interreg-med.eu/>

12

Partners

7

Countries

10

Marine Protected Areas involved

32

Duration (in months)

3m

Project budget (euro)

2,8m

ERDF (euro)

197K

IPA

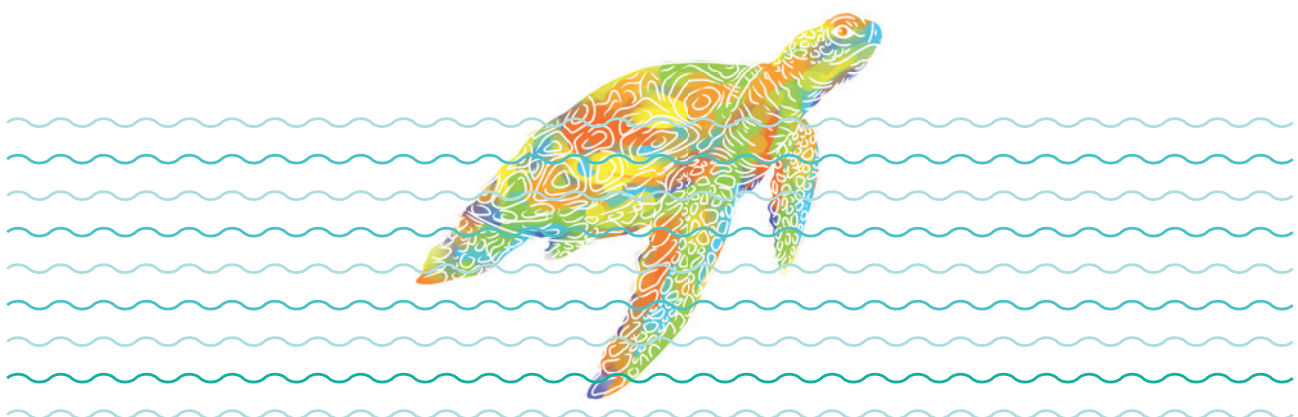
What is the Environmental contract?

The Environmental Contracts are **voluntary and negotiated agreements** between stakeholders for an **integrated, concerted and sustainable management** designed at a coherent hydrographic **scale** (Gusmaroli et al., 2020, in Palazzo et al., 2021). These **multi-stakeholder/multi-level governance tools** addressing both private and public bodies and taking shape through **inclusive and deliberative decision-making processes** are based on a **shared vision** of the **territory** that takes into account an **intersectoral** approach. In a coastal environment, this definition refers to the very principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (IZCM).

Environmental Contracts were born in France in the early 1980s to control levels of pollution and floods, manage hydraulic structures and raise awareness among stakeholders. Some of the activities of the Contracts are subsidized by the State, stimulating the commitment of local actors in the activities and management of water resources (Brun, 2014).

Once the stakeholders have developed a shared vision for the mid or long term future of the site, they then identify the activities, responsibilities and funding necessary to move towards this vision. With the Environmental Contract, the local stakeholders can voluntarily commit to implement different activities by directly realizing the actions or contributing through different support systems (Palazzo et al., 2021).

The voluntary nature of the Environmental Contract sets the ground for concerted efforts between policy makers, stakeholders and communities. Engaging in participative governance schemes improves conservation, restoration, mitigation and compensation, which are significant factors considering the increasing impacts of climate change (Vélez et al., 2018); however, **these tools are only effective if they are implemented, monitored and evaluated appropriately** (Moore & Rutherford, 2019). The objective of the Environmental Contracts is to promote a global and integrated vision which considers the various objectives and find solutions to make them coexist, assuming the environmental sustainability as a priority objective and strategy at the same time (MATTM-Sogesid, 2015).



The Environmental Contract in keywords!



Participative: the approach requires the active participation of a multitude of stakeholders which are asked to collectively build a vision for their territory and to commit themselves in its implementation through their adhesion to the « Contract ».



Shared: the governance model thus implemented through the “Environmental Contract” tool makes it possible to take into account a variety of points of view and interests and to make them converge towards a common, shared vision of the territory. This notion of pooling objectives and expectations requires negotiation, compromise and consensus.



Voluntary: the process is open to all interested stakeholders but does not entail any legal obligation.



Integrated: the holistic nature of the approach developed here is due both to the fact that all voices are heard, and thus all issues taken into account, but also to the spatio-temporal scale at which it is expressed.



Inclusive: the approach proposed here integrates all stakeholders, public and private, and takes into account their expectations and proposals.



Adaptative: the approach is based on the need to define objectives and actions that are consistent with the challenges of the territory and the needs identified. Thus, as the process is implemented, it is important to monitor and check the accomplishment of the tasks in order to reorient and readjust the process according to the results achieved and the evolution of the issues.



Flexible: in connection with the above characteristics, the flexible nature of the approach also stems from the fact that while the proposed method outlines the main stages of the process, the latter must be adapted to the territory in order to meet its specificities.

Why the Environmental Contract for Marine Protected Areas?

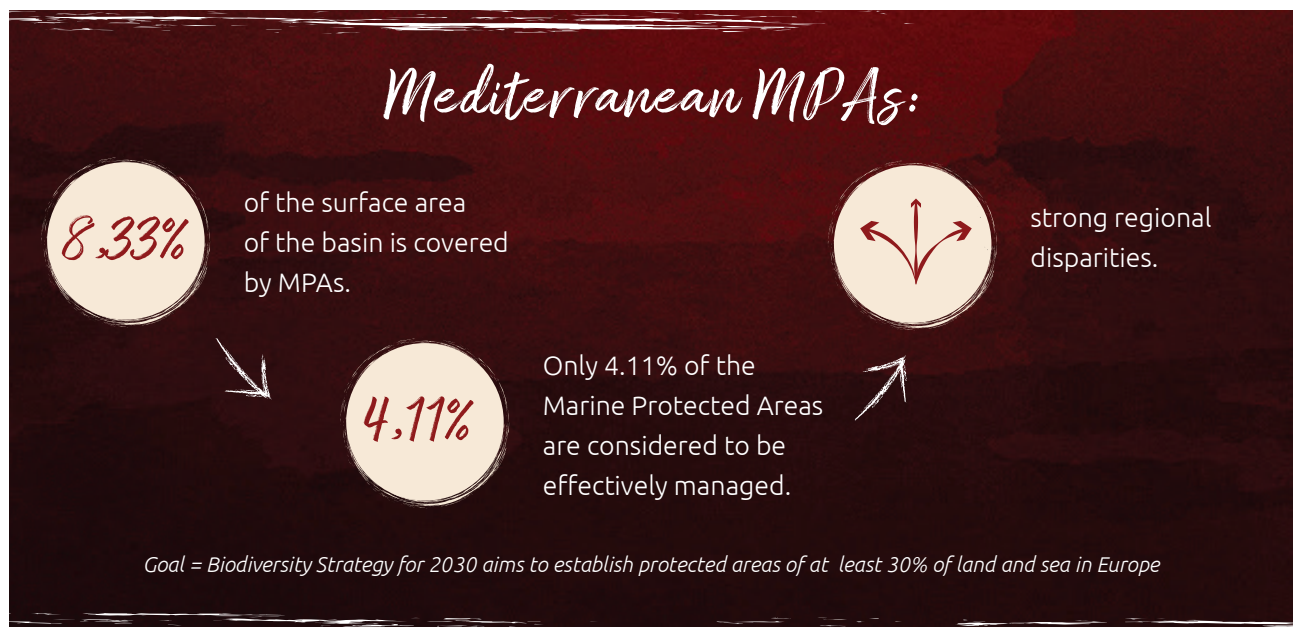
Translated from the text of Lisa Ernoul.

Human activities cause severe pressures and threats to coastal and marine ecosystems and the demand for resource management skills in these areas is expected to increase. Inadequate management activities and practices lead to environmental and social costs that are often not taken into account in decision-making processes (OECD, 2017). This comes down to the resilience of ecosystems and the services they provide. MPAs are one of the policy tools that can be used to try to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems. In the last decade, significant progress has been made in MPA governance, however, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, there is a need for further efforts to ensure their future sustainability (OECD, 2017).

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive and other

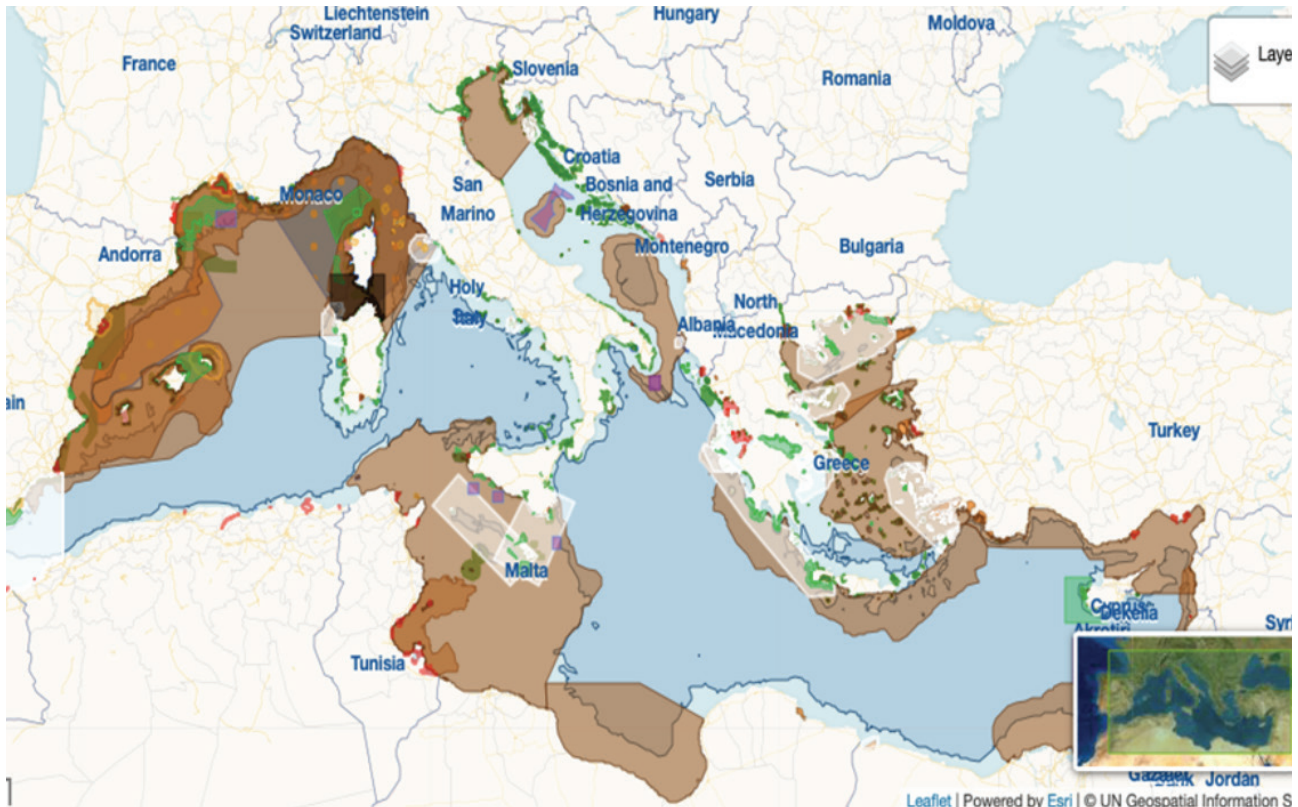
European directives, including the Water Framework Directive and various environmental directives (Habitats Directive, Floods Directive, etc.), require European countries to promote an integrated approach to management of MPAs and their surrounding wetlands, through the use of collaborative governance processes that know how to combine multi-objective, multi-level and multi-stakeholder decision-making processes. In particular, a participatory approach to decision-making is promoted as a prerequisite for the definition of integrated, sustainable and practicable strategies (Jager et al., 2016).

Recent research has shown that gaps exist in MPA designation and management processes, notably highlighting the need for increased stakeholder participation and timely monitoring and evaluation (Álvarez-Fernández et al., 2020).



These objectives can be achieved through the instrument of the voluntary Environmental Contract, an agreement negotiated between stakeholders, which takes shape through inclusive and deliberative decision-making processes. These Contracts focus on the definition of a future and shared vision of the territory, elaborated and developed by the stakeholders

starting from an intersectoral approach and in which the activities, responsibilities and funding necessary to achieve it are identified. Through the Agreement, local stakeholders can voluntarily commit to the implementation of the various activities, directly carrying out the actions or contributing through various support systems.



Conditions for making the Environmental Contract work.

In order to guarantee the progressive and long lasting improvement of governance and local development and the socio-economic conditions of the area on which they insist, certain conditions need to be ensured:

- it should involve all stakeholders with a legitimate interest in protection and sustainable development of the target area, based on the principles of **bottom-up**, oriented towards empowering the actors involved;
- it should be based on a **structured and integrated analysis**, shared and updatable, describing the **state of the target area** (strengths/weaknesses from the point of environmental and socio-economic view) and the **related risks/opportunities**;
- **affecting it**, as well as on the framework of programmatic instruments (plans, programs, existing projects);
- it should be aimed at adapting not only the conditions environmental aspects of the area, but also of its governance and **related physical structures e social**, as well as the **economic base**;
- it should put in place a **comprehensive and integrated strategy** that addresses the problem solving in a balanced, orderly and positive way;
- it should ensure that the strategy and related implementation programs are **developed in a manner consistent** with the objectives of sustainable development.
- it should establish a **clear set of measures and actions** that should be quantified where possible;
- it should make the best **possible use of all available resources**, including natural, economic, cultural and human ones;
- it should measure the **progress of the strategy towards achieving the specific goals**, as well as monitor the changing nature and influence of forces, both internal and external, acting on the target area.

Chapter 3.

How does it work?

More than a programmatic tool, the Environmental Contract can be seen as a **governance model**, more than a tool it can be considered as a **process**. Referring to this approach, it is possible to highlight how the tool functions as a process aimed at establishing a **common working method** among the stakeholders, with the aim not only of sharing but, above all, of **making decisions together**.

It is possible to identify **three key characters** that make it possible to assimilate the Environmental Contract to a process:

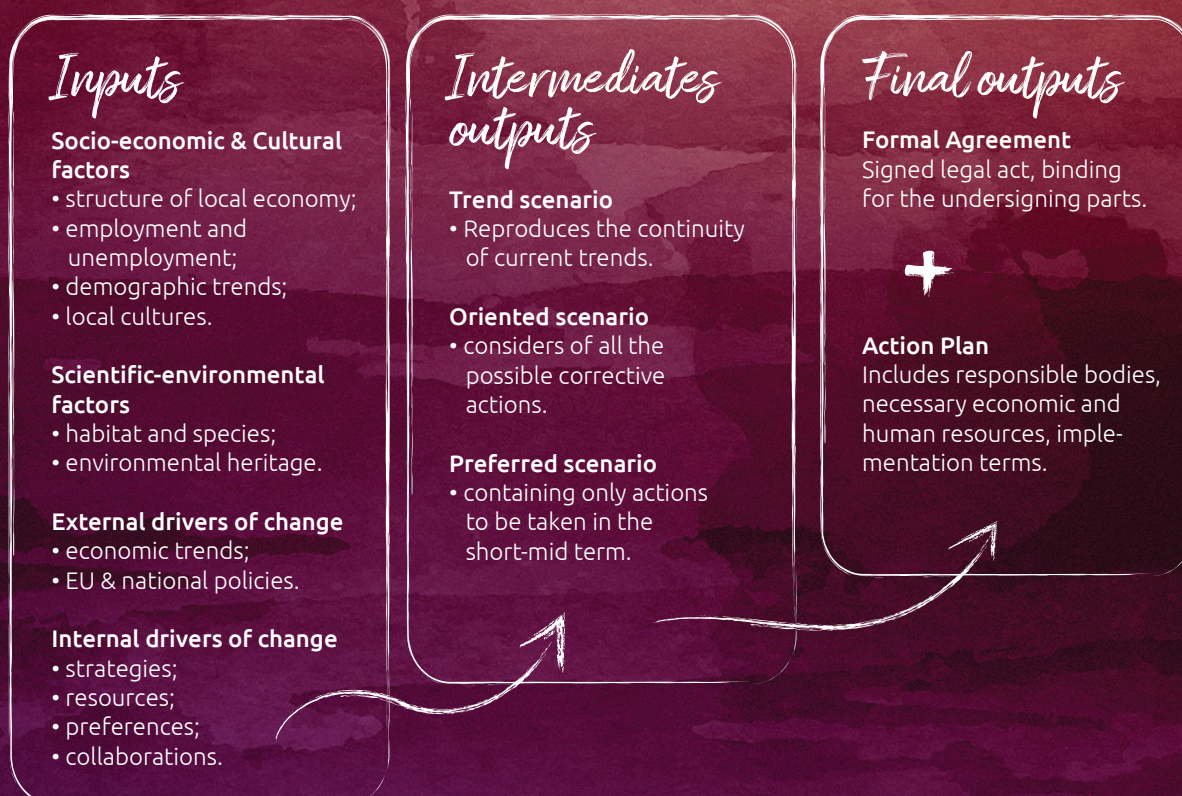
1. the first is **strategic** and concerns the construction, through shared scenarios, of an integrated vision and a common framework for territorial policies;
2. the second is **organizational** and occurs when a system of rules for governing the target area covered by the Environmental Contract is shared and clearly defined within the formal signing of the Agreement;
3. the third is the **operational** one and concerns the need to define a coherent Action Program.



Implementing an Environmental contract is like an **input-output** process where socio-economic, cultural, scientific-environmental **factors**, as well as external or internal **drivers of change** are entered as primary inputs and initiate the process itself in the preparatory phase. **These inputs, delivered into the process, along with progression of the process's workflow (Development stage), get gradually converted into "intermediate" outputs, consisting in the scenario planning (see below).** The final output of the environmental contract is an administrative agreement with legal value ("**Formal**

Agreement"). With its request, the parties formally undertake to carry out the shared actions in the process; it is binding on the signatory parties and must be defined according to national legislation on public-private partnerships. Another main output of the process is the **Action Plan** (to be attached to the formal Agreement), which goes structured according to the objectives that emerged during the process. It produces the priority actions, its roles and methods of implementing the strategy, as well as the procedures for monitoring the actual implementation (Implementation Stage).

Input-output process diagram.



Source: author's elaboration adapted from Roberts, P. (2008).

The Governance Structure

The first pivotal task to accomplish when starting an Environmental Contract process is the identification of the **coordinator/promotor**, who has the task to coordinate the overall implementation of the process and promote it to competent public administrations and local stakeholders. For this reason, it is important that it is a locally empowered and committed body (can be public or private) widely recognized as a credit-worthy figure. In this way its voice will be perceived as authoritative, and its communication effort will be effective. It is essential to not underestimate the profile of the Contract coordinator/promotor.

Besides this figure, the Environmental Contract holds a governance structure mainly composed by three bodies with different roles and tasks:

- The **Forum/Assembly** is the organ of public participation extended to the entire community of the target area, in which all public bodies, private subjects and local associations can participate. It has the task of contributing to the construction of knowledge, the identification of problems, the definition of possible solutions and the approval of choices. It can meet in plenary sessions or in the form of thematic and/or territorial tables according to the specific needs and phases of the process.
- The **Management Board** is the institutional body composed of public authorities adhering to the Contract. This body undertakes to direct, instruct and validate the work of the MPA Assembly and the Technical Secretariat. It has political-decision making functions as well as the task to promote the initiative in the target area by identifying and informing interested stakeholders, guaranteeing the official communication among the actors of the process, promoting, and organizing the Contract process' activities. It carries out its activities through plenary meetings and it is supported by the Technical Secretariat.
- The **Technical Secretariat** is the operative body of the Contract governance structure, with the task to support the Management Board and the MPA Assembly. It carries out all the technical steps for the construction of the decision-making framework, which includes the collection of data, information, assessments, the development of technical analysis, plans and projects, the adoption of diagnostic and monitoring tools. It has the task of designing the participation strategy and of conducting the process, as well as the communication activities. It should be composed of technical experts from different backgrounds, with proven experience in matters of importance for the specific context of reference.

These experts, together with competent stakeholders, could set up **thematic working groups** investigating specific issues for pursuing Contract's goals. By establishing a proper governance structure for the Contract coordination, the involved stakeholders declare the **common objectives** to be focused on.

If applicable or necessary (as in the Italian context), this step can be officially formalized by signing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**.



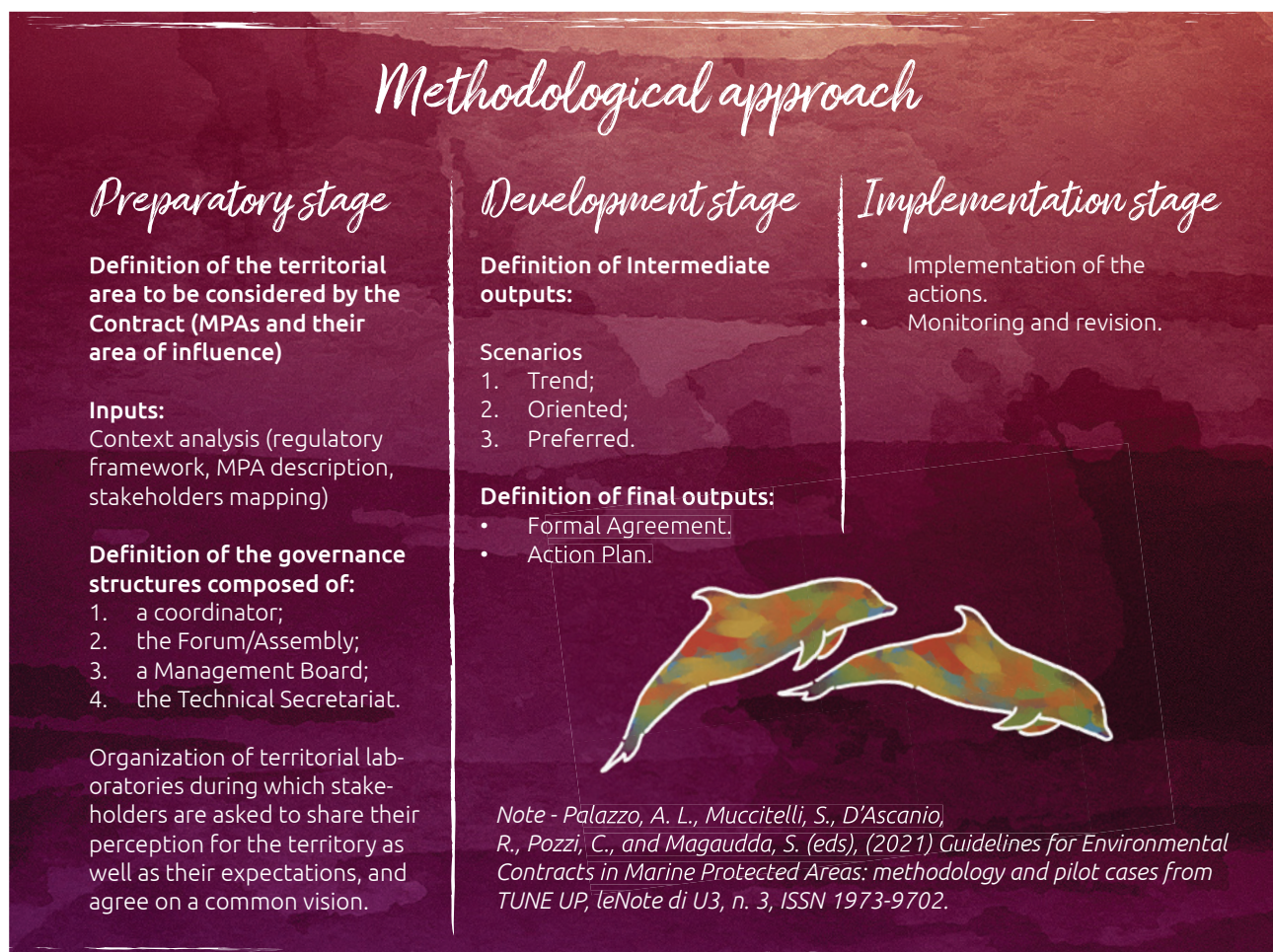
Basic Contents of a Memorandum of Understanding

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Values and criticalities of the area. | 5. Governance structure: promoters, members and roles. |
| 2. Regulatory framework. | 6. Timing and duration. |
| 3. Main general objectives to be pursued. | 7. Roles and responsibilities of the signatories. |
| 4. Activities and steps to be implemented. | |

Learn from the Joint transnational methodology.

The Methodological approach for the implementation of the Environmental Contract consists of three main stages:

- During the **Preparatory stage** the MPAs target area get identified, most important informations get acquired as inputs (regulatory framework, MPA description, stakeholders mapping...) as well as the governance structure starts to be identified, followed by some territorial/participatory process laboratoires where stakeholders share their perception for the territory and the vision for its future.
- During the **development stage**, some intermediate results from the inputs phase get produced as “outputs” (e.g. Scenarios) determining the final outputs (e.g. Formal Agreement and Action Plan).
- Last but not least, the **implementation stage** where the actions get implemented, monitored and revised.



Preparatory stage.

During the preparatory stage the targeted area gets identified, as well as context analysis, the governance structure and the territorial laboratories start to take place.

How to identify your Target Area?

The perimeter of the Contract (Target area) must be considered a functional area that overcomes administrative borders and can include all the related issues (natural, cultural, local development...) and not only the environmental ones. This step is often complex, since the Contract must consider different territorial, sectoral and socio-economical dimensions that are intertwined and cannot, by themselves, embed and exhaust all the issues at stake.

“Environmental Contracts are not new plans but are tools that should bring the existing plans together, in order to enhance their effectiveness”.

The **Target area description** collects the available information and diagnosis related to environmental, cultural, socio-economic aspects. It aims to better identify the **values and criticalities** of the target area to focus the objectives to be developed in the Contract implementation stage according to the local challenges and priorities.



Here are some tips on how to identify the target Area:

1. **Perimeter coinciding with the target area administrative boundary.**
The perimeter of the MPA Contract coincides with the limits of the regulated MPA, in order to circumscribe the criticalities and enhance the possibilities of sea protection.
2. **Influence area selecting specific areas subject to environmental protection measures.**
The perimeter of the MPA Contract is extended to the adjoining wider Natura 2000 site, in order to respect the environmental and ecological continuity.
3. **Influence area considering a wider protected area system.**
When the MPA is part of a wider protected areas system, the influence area of the MPA Contract considers the whole system of the wetland or national park, in order to hold together all the positive and negative influences and side effects; moreover, when those protected areas share the same managing authority, the MPA Contract can represent the starting point of a more extensive Protected Area Contract.
4. **Influence area selecting municipal/intermunicipal administrative boundaries.**
The perimeter of the MPA Contract considers the intermunicipal scale of the Municipalities concerned by the MPA as its reference unit, in order to prioritize the socio-economic influence.
5. **Perimeter coinciding with an island and the surrounding MPA.**
When the MPA falls within an island with protected mainland, the protection on land and sea is considered into the perimeter of the Contract, recognizing the two ecosystems as integrated and in connection with local economies. The case of the islands, based on their proximity or distance from the coasts, allows them to undertake a Protected Areas Contract, an Islands Contracts or even a Coast Contract.

The target area description can include:

- Socio-demographic and territorial overview.
- Description of the zoning of the protected area (if any) and its main features.
- Habitat and species abacus.
- Main threats and impacts for the biodiversity.
- Heritage values (Environmental heritage, Archaeological heritage, Historical heritage, Architectonic heritage, Ethnological heritage, Landscape heritage).
- Main threats and impacts for the heritage and landscape.
- Furthermore, a mapping of local initiatives can be added in order to identify the main drivers to possibly frame potential strategies for sustainable local development and to promote the voluntary governance process of the Environmental Contract.

Content analysis

One of the first stages of the process consists in drafting the **Context analysis**, to be addressed in a comprehensive document. The analysis explores the target area's features under the environmental, social, cultural, and economic point of views, and supports the identification of the perimeter of the Contract as well as the influence area.

Specifically, it investigates the **Regulatory framework** and the territorial and landscape planning and policies consisting in:

1 Conduct an accurate analysis to understand whether the tool is regulated at national and regional level.

At EU level the Environmental Contract tool can be listed among the "supplementary measures with the aim of achieving the environmental objectives" established by the Water Framework Directive, as a "negotiated environmental agreement", it is important to understand whether the Negotiated Programme is regulated and if it is appropriate to formalize the Environmental Contract.

2 Describe the national regulatory framework for the target area management and governance.

In the case of MPAs the analysis will refer to the national regulatory framework for the protection, management and governance of MPAs, management plans of MPAs foreseen at national level and specifying which international/ European/national protection levels and rules are applied or applicable for the target area.

3 Deepen the specific objectives and the scopes already foreseen by the sectoral plans, programs and strategies for the management of the target areas (e.g. Protected Area Management Plan, Natura 2000 management plan, Landscape Plan, ICZM strategy, plan or programme...).

The Regulatory framework aims at analyzing:

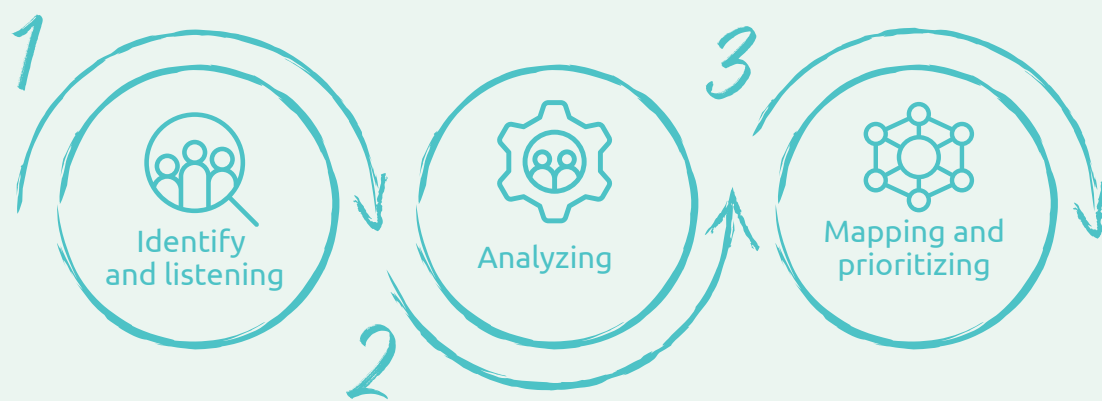
- the legal framework related to Environmental Contracts;
- the legal framework related to the target area and focused issues (environment and protection schemes);
- different level planning tools framework related to the target area.

Stakeholder analysis

The **Stakeholder analysis** identifies all the key stakeholders to be involved in the Environmental Contract participatory process (those who will participate in the Territorial Labs and those who will eventually subscribe the Contract) by framing them in different categories.

To analyze the stakeholders, the best method is to proceed with the **Stakeholder mapping** which draws from multiple perspectives to determine a list of key stakeholders across the entire stakeholder spectrum.

Stakeholders mapping can be developed in three main phases:



1 IDENTIFYING and LISTING relevant groups, organizations, and people, and classifying them in 3 macro categories:

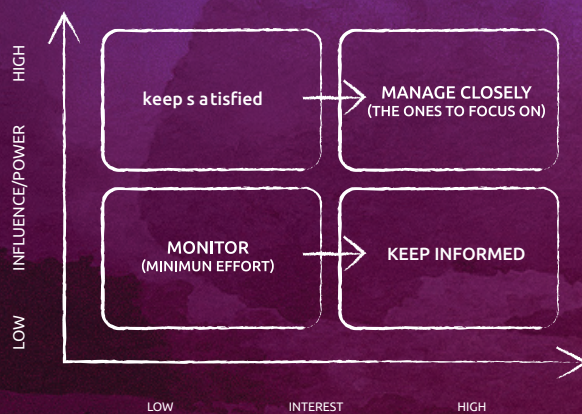
- **PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS;**
- **STRUCTURED ORGANIZATIONS AND INTEREST GROUPS** (chamber of commerce, trade unions, environmental groups on a national or regional non-governmental organizations, professional associations, resident associations, groups of fishermen, farmers, canoeists, associations and consortiums category local and industry consortia);
- **UNSTRUCTURED LOCAL ACTORS** (landowners, individual residents, people who may be interested by the implementation of some actions resulting from the process, and opinion leaders, usually belong to the local level).

2 ANALYZING. Understanding stakeholders' perspectives and interests by observing the following elements:

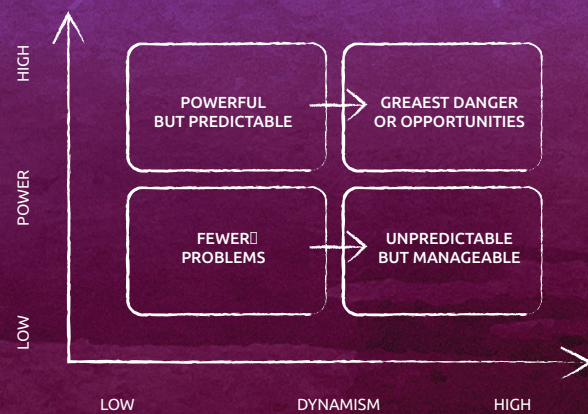
- **CONTRIBUTION** - does the stakeholder have formal competencies, information, counsel, or expertise on the issue that could be helpful to the process?;
- **LEGITIMACY** - how legitimate is the stakeholder's claim for engagement?;
- **WILLINGNESS** to engage - how willing is the stakeholder to engage?;
- **TO ENGAGE** - how willing is the stakeholder to engage?;
- **INFLUENCE** - how much influence does the stakeholder have? Whom does he influence (e.g., other companies, NGOs, consumers, investors, etc.)?;
- **NECESSITY OF INVOLVEMENT** - is this someone who could derail or delegitimize the process if they were not included in the engagement?

3 MAPPING AND PRIORITIZING. Understanding the stakeholder commitment (informed, consulted, involved), considering his level of involvement, power and availability in the different phases of the process.

Matrix or grids can help classifying stakeholders in relation to: power and influence; influence and impact; power and legitimacy; power and interest – to indicate the nature of the relationship which should be adopted with each group; power and dynamism – to indicate where political effort should be made before instigating change.



Stakeholders' engagement process: matrix "power and interest". Source: Johnson and Scholes, 1999



Stakeholders' engagement process: matrix "power and dynamism". Source: Gardner et al (1986)



Context Analysis Highlights

The Context analysis should be a synthetic and clear document to be shared with local stakeholders.

1. The **Context analysis** should be a synthetic and clear document to be shared with local stakeholders.
2. The **Regulatory framework** collects all the existing plans, strategies, laws, rules regarding the target area management at national and local level.
3. The **Target Area description** collect all the existing knowledge (environmental, economic, cultural aspects) about the target area.
4. The **Stakeholders analysis** helps to create a list with all the stakeholders engaged in the target area and to select those to be involved (most relevant) and those to be informed.
5. Make sure to map both public and private key stakeholders. Carefully identify the conflicts among the selected stakeholders and be inclusive.

Participatory Process

A stakeholder participation strategy has become a way to form a “decision making body” (voluntary or statutory) comprising different stakeholders who perceive the same resource management problems, realize their independence for solving it, and come together to agree on action strategies for solving the problem. It is like a roundtable, where different actors are gathered with very different perspectives.

Once people see the sense of involving multiple voices, it is felt, they will be broadly accepted as the way forward in dealing with complexity management of marine areas.

In order to get necessary information and answer to the different needs and achieve interactive approaches in stakeholder meetings, various participatory techniques can be used and implemented. The most used are **brainstorming, focus groups and world cafe**, which focuses on the process and the relationships and aiming at building a creative group of stakeholders



6 steps to plan your stakeholders meeting

1 MEETING PREPARATION AND INVITATIONS:

- determine objective of meeting and desired outcome;
- utilize assets within the community;
- identify potential participants and organize invitations;
- send a personal email to the potential stakeholders and other key players with the purpose and the date of the meeting; if needed call them personally;
- set meeting date and draft Agenda with stakeholders' input;
- follow up with invitees and track responses, assure Attendance by Key Stakeholders;
- prepare materials for use prior to and during the meeting;
- determine expectations of participants and facility representatives.

2 DETERMINE ROLES FOR CONDUCTING THE MEETING:

- designate a person to facilitate the meeting;
- determine which facility employee(s) should participate in the meeting;
- designate a person to take notes and/or record stakeholders' input, which may be useful for determining which stakeholder feedback to include in your report.

3 HOLD A STAKEHOLDER MEETING

- Once the meeting is held ensure appropriate roles and expectations are agreed upon, and that stakeholders value the process.

•

4 WELCOME STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS:

- set up a sign-in sheet;
- review expectations of participants and facility representatives, including engagement process and roles during the meeting;
- consider an icebreaker to orient new and old stakeholders to the group process.

5 REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE MEETING:

- Review the impacts and planned activities or other content-related information;
- consider giving an overview of key information (including future goals) in a brief presentation;
- let stakeholders know the importance of this meeting;
- allot time for question and answers. Meeting wrap-up:
- determine if your meeting has achieved its desired outcome;
- discuss how the project manager plans to review and respond to feedback received; review next steps, including reporting process and timeline;
- invite additional feedback and engagement going forward;
- thank participants for their time.

6 REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE MEETING:

After the meeting the evaluation of the task should be done, and report prepared. The organizer of the meeting should answer the following questions, which should be incorporate in the report as well:

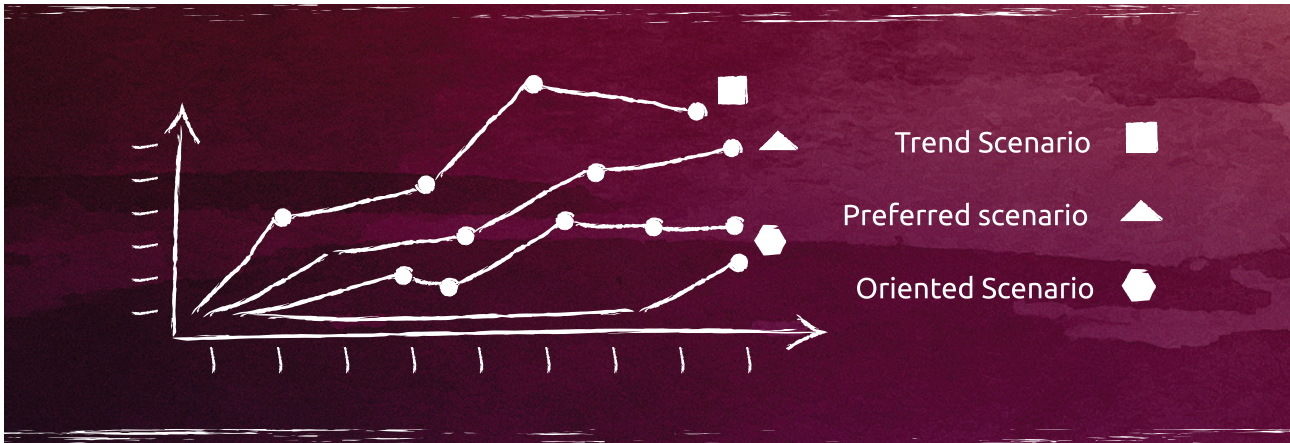
- Who participated in the stakeholder meeting?
- What was the main aim of the meeting?
- How did you set up the meeting? What did you present and what were the main topics of the meeting?
- Which participatory techniques did you use, how did you encourage the participant to take an active part in discussions and did you have any problems with the used technics? Did you use other forms of group discussion and to encourage inter-personal learning and discussion?
- Which topics/problems/ solutions were most discussed/most popular? ...

The Development stage, drawing future scenarios.

The Environmental Contract process foresees, as a main step of the development stage, the creation of **three different scenarios**. From these scenarios, the actions and projects of the **Action Plan** will easily be pulled out as “actions which need to be taken to change the trend to a preferred scenario (mutually agreed)”.

Concepts and knowledge are elicited and structured around three strategic areas: governance; environment; economic and social development.

1. The first scenario is the **Trend scenario**, which seeks to reproduce the continuity of current trends (positive and negative) and to evaluate how this would affect the target area given the case no corrective measures or sustainable projects were to be implemented.
2. The **Oriented scenario** takes into consideration all possible corrective actions which would balance out the unsustainable tendencies of the actual processes taking place in the target area, addressing the same strategic areas as the trend scenario. It relies upon the maximization of the environment protection actions, the collaborative governance promotion and the economic and social development plans.
3. This is where the participatory activities of the territorial laboratories become fundamental for the process of generating the third scenario, the **Preferred scenario**. It combines aspects of the Trend scenario and the Oriented scenario that are considered as the most relevant to the members of the community and engaged stakeholders.



Implementation stage

After collecting requests and sharing proposals among stakeholders, the final outputs consist of the **formal Agreement** to be subscribed by key stakeholders, and the **Action Plan** a group of integrated actions to be implemented in a short-medium term.

Action plan

The Action Plan, the priority annex of the formal Agreement, is constituted by a list of **identified actions**. Each action must specify the type of intervention (concrete, research, data collection, ...), the area of implementation, the objectives and expected results, the responsible bodies and other stakeholders involved, the necessary financial and human resources (both available and to be allocated), the implementation lifespan and the related monitoring activities.

Besides the Action Plan, it is important to consider that all relevant documents prepared during the decision-making process (i.e. Context analysis, Scenarios, ...) should be added as annexes to the Agreement.

The Action Plan should be articulated into:

- a **synoptic table**, reporting in a synthetic way all the foreseen actions and their main features (i.e. responsible party, total budget, implementation lifespan, consistency with regulatory framework and/or Contract objectives);
- a **detailed abacus of actions**, containing the following set of records for each action (all necessary information for the actions to be implemented effectively). It is recommendable that each is detailed into operational activities, as generic commitment typically doesn't lead to action.



Recommended minimum contents of the Action Plan

| RECOMMENDED FIELDS | | RECOMMENDED (MINIMUM) CONTENTS |
|--------------------|--|---|
| FORWARDS | REGULATORY FRAMEWORK REFERENCES | A comprehensive mention to the relevant regulations (laws, plans, agreements, guidelines, etc.) should be provided, including references both to target area regulation and Environmental Contract regulation (including Public-Private Partnership and/or any other similar participated/negotiated agreement tool) at international, national, regional, local level. |
| | RATIONALE | An outlook to motivation, scope and general objectives of the Environmental Contract should be reported, including any background information useful to feature the environmental and socio-economic context in which the governance process takes place. |
| | RESUME OF THE PROCESS MILESTONES | An accounting of the governance path that led to the Agreement subscription should be detailed, including methodological references, event/meeting citation and key outputs/outcomes reached along the process. |
| ARTICLES | REFERENCE AREA | The area to be considered by the Environmental Contract, as target area must be defined and the reasons for considering a functional area that overcomes administrative borders must be described. |
| | SCOPE AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES | A detailed description of the Environmental Contract scope and a list of its specific objectives, as much quantitative as possible, should be provided, possibly ranking governance targets in terms of relevance for the target area management and the stakeholder satisfaction. |
| | DURATION | The lifespan of the Environmental Contract should be declared (typically between 3 and 5 years starting from the signature), drawing any relevant procedure for establishing an advanced termination or a time extension. |
| | IMPLEMENTING BODIES & OPERATIONAL GOVERNANCE | Governance requires explicit roles and clear responsibilities in order to be effectively managed, thus requiring the activation of dedicated bodies for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation phase, the continuation of the participatory process and the establishment of a transparent/collaborative decision-making arena (with clear rules). A comprehensive map and description of Agreement signers' tasks and organizational arrangements should be provided. |
| | ACTION PLAN | The structure of the Action Plan should be described, including the meaning of each content. |

| RECOMMENDED FIELDS | | RECOMMENDED (MINIMUM) CONTENTS |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| ARTICLES | COMMITMENT FOR SUBSCRIBERS | Signing the Agreement entails subscribers with responsibilities. A clear description of which commitment is implied with the signature should be reported, with specific reference to general burdens (i.e. commitment to be actively engaged and to support the governance of the implementation phase) and specific burdens (i.e. commitment to action within any action/activity included in the plan of measures). |
| | MONITORING | A clear description of Environmental Contract performance monitoring should be provided, including an appropriate methodological and operational framework for responsibilities, deadlines, reporting and consequent correction actions. |
| | MODIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT | In case of Agreement amendment (i.e. admission of any new stakeholder, withdrawal of any current subscriber, modification of the articles and/or of any annexed document, etc.), a clear rule has to be set (in connection with what has been set in terms of implementing bodies, operational governance and commitment for subscribers). |
| | ANNEXES | A list of annexes should be provided, possibly including a short description of the main contents of each of them. |

The formal agreement

The formal Agreement takes place among both private and public actors (public-private partnership). The formal Agreement is voluntary but binding in terms of liability, financing, and timing.

As far as possible, budget estimation and financial coverage must be detailed in order to enable the Contract to be consistent and attractive for funding. Even a rough estimation could be fine, given that during the implementation of the Contract an appropriate accounting should be put in place.

Monitoring should be action specific (output and outcomes indicators for each action, with deadlines and responsibilities) and contract specific (outcomes indicators for each objective, with deadlines and responsibilities). Reporting should be clearly included in the articles of the Environmental Contract, in order to provide the subscribers (and the larger public) with evidence of the implementation progress and to enable them to take any corrective action that might be useful for effectively achieving the Contract's objectives.

The process of the Environmental Contract does not conclude with the subscription of the Agreement, which **determines only the opening of the implementation phase**. Therefore, it is pivotal not only to consistently target the signature, but also to ensure that the process proceeds effectively and efficiently. For these reasons, it is recommended to establish **clear responsibilities and to allocate sufficient human and financial resources** to continue the process after the signature and to monitor the effectiveness of the process and, if necessary, to modify and adjust its goals based on specific outcome indicators.



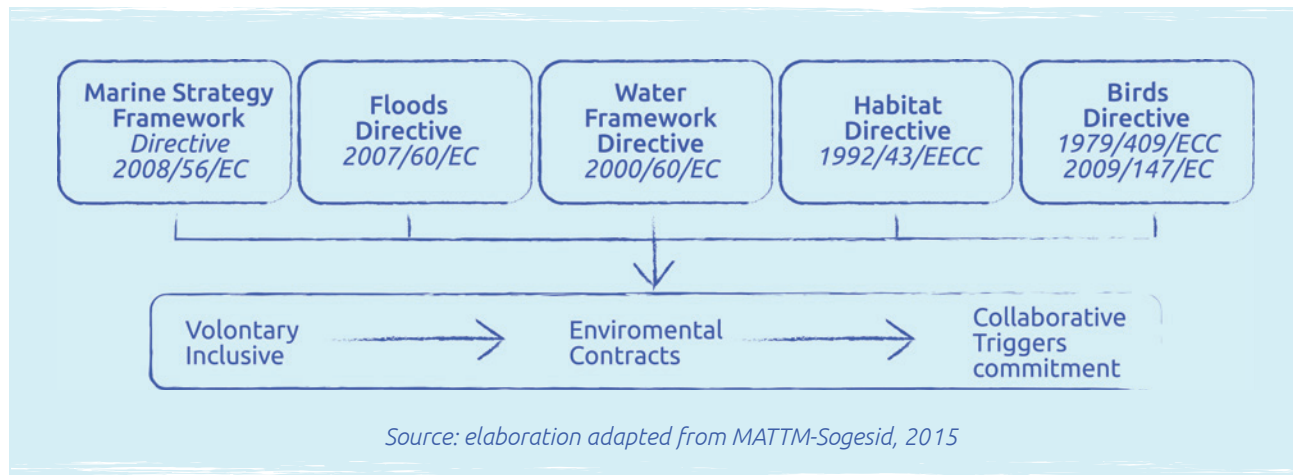
Recommended minimum contents for the formal agreement

| RECOMMENDED FIELDS | | RECOMMENDED (MINIMUM) CONTENTS |
|--------------------|--|--|
| WHAT | CODE, TITLE AND DESCRIPTION | Highlighting motivations that led the actions to be conceived (i.e. to overcome a problem, to deepen knowledge, to set premises for cooperation amongst stakeholders, etc.). |
| | MOTIVATION | Highlighting motivations that led the actions to be conceived (i.e. to overcome a problem, to deepen knowledge, to set premises for cooperation amongst stakeholders, etc.). |
| WHY | OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES | A clear (and possibly quantitative) target should be set for each action, both in term of effectiveness (output) and effectivity (outcome). Outcomes should be linked to the specific contribution that any single action is expected to provide to the overall objectives of the Environmental Contract. |
| | CONSISTENCY (REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES) | Each action should be clearly linked to the target objectives of the Environmental Contract, both general (i.e. SGDs) and local (i.e. Regional Plans). |
| WHO | ROLES OF PARTNERS | Each action should have a single Agreement subscriber in charge of coordination (responsible party), a variable number of Agreement subscribers engaged for implementation (involved parties) and an extra number of other subjects (not Agreement subscribers) identified as “to be engaged” during the implementing phase. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly described in the articles of the Environmental Contract. |
| WHEN | TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION | Each action should have a starting and ending date (month/year) within the lifespan of the Environmental Contract. |
| WHERE | AREA OF INTERVENTION | A geographic (extensive or site-specific) area of intervention (the whole Environmental Contract reference area or part of) should be assigned to each action. |
| HOW | FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT | A clear (and possibly quantitative) target should be set for each action, both in term of effectiveness (output) and effectivity (outcome). Outcomes should be linked to the specific contribution that any single action is expected to provide to the overall objectives of the Environmental Contract. |
| | FINANCIAL COVERAGE | When available, the financial coverage should be made explicit. The coverage might be granted by any of the Agreement subscribers and/or by any outsource (i.e. public and/ or private funding). If the information is not available, one or more general funding channels should be identified (i.e. European, national, regional, local funding). |
| | OPERATIONAL GOVERNANCE | If the implementation of the action requires any governance setting (i.e. establishment of a negotiation table or coordination board, or the signature of a specific MoU), any relevant detail and consequent commitment should be reported. |
| | MONITORING INDICATORS | Each action should be monitored along the whole Environmental Contract lifespan, both in terms of outputs and outcomes achieved. If possible, indicators, deadlines and responsibilities should be made explicit. |

Chapter 4.

List of regional policies

Severeral directives influence the Environmental Contract tool and its voluntary and negotiated character. Here the main ones:



Here a list of international and regional policies:

INTERNATIONAL REFERENCES:

- UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 4 (Montego Bay, 1982)
- Convention on Biological Diversity 5 (CBD) (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and related Aichi Biodiversity targets 6 (ABT).
- Convention on Wetlands of international importance 7 (Ramsar, 1971).
- UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 8 (Paris, 1972).
- UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage 9 (Paris, 2001).
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn, 1979).
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora 11 (CITES) (Washington D.C., 1973).
- UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 12 (2015) adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

EU DIRECTIVES AND CONVENTIONS:

- Marine Strategy Framework Directive 13 (MSFD).
- Marine Spatial Planning Directive 14 (MSPD).
- Birds 15 (2009/147/EC) and Habitats 16 (92/43/CEE) Directives.
- Water Framework Directive 17 (2000/60/CE).
- European Landscape Convention 18 (Florence, 2000).
- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats 19 (Bern, 1979).
- Blue Growth Strategy supports the growth of the maritime sector in a sustainable way.
- Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 aims to establish protected areas of at least 30% of land and sea in Europe, to restore degraded ecosystems by increasing sustainable agriculture, halting the decline of pollinators, restoring at least 25,000 km of EU rivers to a free-flowing state, reducing the use and risk of pesticides by 50% and planting 3 billion trees by 2030.
- Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013) highlights the importance of maintaining and restoring functional ecosystems as a foundation for a sustainable Europe.

**EU POLICIES:**

- Common Fisheries Policy provides a set of rules for sustainably managing European fishing fleets and conserving fish stocks.
- Integrated Maritime Policy aims at strengthening the so-called blue economy, encompassing all sea-based economic activities.

MEDITERRANEAN REFERENCES:

- Mediterranean Action Plan (1975) is a fundamental European platform of cooperation and multilateral environmental agreement under the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) that put the basis for the enactment of the subsequent Barcelona Convention (1976).
- Barcelona Convention (1976) aims are the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean. The treaty is composed of 7 protocols, of which two are strictly related to the Marine Protected Areas field of interest.
- Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans (ACCOBAMS) (Monaco, 1996) provides each signatory with a regulatory, socio-economic and scientific commitment to eliminate or minimize the effects of anthropogenic activities on the survival of cetaceans.
- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) (1949) is a regional marine fisheries organization and aims to ensure the conservation and the sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea.

Chapter 5.

List of funding opportunities

The most important financial tools from European and national resources are (not exhaustive list):

- Sectoral Operational Programmes of Partnership Agreement (PA) 2014-2020, extended until 2023.
- Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development OP (ERDF, Cohesion Fund, National resources).
- Maritime and Fisheries OP (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, National resources).
- Rural Development Programme (EAFRD, National resources).
- Regional Operational Programmes of PA 2014-2020, extended until 2023 (one ROP per region) (ERDF, European Social Fund, National resources).
- 5 cross-border and 6 transnational European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (ERDF, National resources).
- EU LIFE Programme.
- Green Fund supervised by the Ministry of Environment.
- European Economic Area.
- Natural Capital Financing Facility (European Investment Bank).
- National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" (Recovery and Durability Fund).
- Other funding opportunities (Corporate Social Responsibility, NGOs).
- Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia. Política palanca II. Infraestructuras y ecosistemas resilientes. Componente 4. Conservación y restauración de ecosistemas y su biodiversidad. (Next Generation EU 2021-27).
- Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia. Política palanca II. Infraestructuras y ecosistemas resilientes.
- Componente 5. Preservación del espacio litoral y los recursos hídricos. (Next Generation EU 2021-27).

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*"Finché si avranno passioni
non si cesserà di scoprire il mondo."*

Cesare Pavese

