



CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY AND PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY AS WELL AS CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN THROUGH MCPAs AND OECS

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The Mediterranean is a biodiversity hotspot experiencing considerable threats to its biodiversity and loss of natural sites – with a clear need for increased and improved protection. Marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECS) provide a key mechanism, when managed effectively, to protecting biodiversity, mitigating climate change impacts,

supporting, and safeguarding livelihoods and aiding countries in their commitment to post-2020 regional and global targets.

Project 1 will support a set of conservation measures to reverse biodiversity loss and promote a sustainable blue economy, increasing the coverage and protection of MCPAs and OECS, and ensuring connectivity between biodiversity and people.



Issues

Despite important achievements by the Contracting Parties under the Barcelona Convention Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD), gaps persist in geographical distribution, ecological representativeness, connectivity, and effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). **Most Mediterranean countries require substantial technical and financial support to fill these gaps** ensuring the identification, establishment, development and

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sustainability of an effective network of MCPAs and OECS and recognising their critical role in the post-2020 agenda.



Solutions

MCPAs and OECMs are recognised as **effective tools for preserving natural sites and they play a significant role in preserving biodiversity as well as promoting a sustainable blue economy and climate change mitigation and adaptation** in the Mediterranean. To boost their role in the Mediterranean, this project will be divided into **three workstreams** (as described below) implemented over 3 years. The total implementation cost of the project is estimated at **USD 4.790 million**, with a breakdown per activity as indicated in *italic* below. This cost includes expected co-funding from countries and implementing partners of 775K, and expected funding from donors of 4015K.

1 | EXPANDING THE MCPA NETWORK

The coverage of MCPAs will be increased and national and regional strategies for sound protection will be developed. This will also support actions under Target 3 to effectively conserve and manage at least 30% of terrestrial and inland water, and coastal and marine areas by 2030 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Post-2020 SAPBIO target 1.4 on effective systems of MCPAs and OECMs. Workstream 1 will:

- a. Identify national areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, including vulnerable ecosystem areas located in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (**ABNJ**). *Estimated cost in USD - Total cost: 255K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 60K, expected funding from donors: 195K.*
- b. Establish (and animate) well-connected and ecologically representative, soundly designated, and effective MCPA national networks whilst facilitating collaboration between neighbouring countries to develop regional plans for establishing appropriate protection regimes to protect hotspots of biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems located in ABNJ. *Estimated cost in USD - Total cost: 635K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 85K, expected funding from donors: 550K.*

2 | PROMOTING THE UNDERSTANDING OF OECMs

The understanding of Contracting Parties in OECMs will be built through harmonised approaches and their ability to identify, designate and report OECMs increased. This will be achieved through learning and adapting experience from terrestrial OECMs (as there are no marine OECMs in the Mediterranean to date), highlighting their role in regional and global commitments and processes, which will include establishing multi-stakeholder platforms and capacity-building programmes.

Estimated cost in USD - Total cost: 550K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 100K, expected funding from donors: 450K.

3 | EFFECTIVE MCPA MANAGEMENT

All MCPAs will hold management plans with integrated conservation measures, with improved long-term capacity of managers, demonstrable value within social and economic contexts and enhanced resilience to climate change. Workstream 3 will:

- a. Assess the status of **MCPA management plans** and assist countries to develop/update management plans to integrate conservation measures and establish regional and national capacity-building programmes for MCPA staff. *Estimated cost (in USD) - Total cost: 1435K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 265K, expected funding from donors: 1170K.*
- b. Through pilot actions, promote the **integration of a sustainable blue economy in the management plans of MCPAs** (mainly small-scale sustainable fishing and nature-based tourism). *Estimated cost (in USD) - Total cost: 570K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 70K, expected funding from donors: 500K.*
- c. Assist target countries in using MCPAs and OECMs as nature-based solutions to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation - promoting their inclusion in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other climate-related programmes. *Estimated cost (in USD) - Total cost: 760K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 60K, expected funding from donors: 700K.*



Implementation

This project will **focus on the following countries**: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Türkiye.

It will be coordinated and managed by **SPA/RAC in collaboration with the project partners** and the

guidance of a **Steering Committee** composed of representatives of the participating countries, the project partners and donor(s).

Estimated cost of the project coordination in USD (included in the total implementation cost, indicated above) - Total cost: 585K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 135K, expected funding from donors: 450K.



The activities of the project cover the following actions of the Post-2020 SAPBIO

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SPATIAL PLANNING

Support countries for the development of systematic conservation planning considering ICZM, land use/marine use planning and management aspects in the context of MSP

13

CLIMATE CHANGE

Increase climate change impacts monitoring and contributions to mitigation and adaptation, particularly to warming, acidification, and to disaster risk reduction, through nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based

15

MCPAs and OECMs

Assist countries in the implementation of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs

23

SMALL SCALE FISHERIES

Promote the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small Scale Fisheries (VGSSF) and co-management practices in professional small-scale fisheries, advised by traditional ecological knowledge and the best available science

25

TOURISM

Develop a framework of specific indicators for assessing the impact of marine and coastal tourism on destinations and for promoting ecotourism

40

EMPLOYMENT

Adequately increase employment, notably public employment in direct relation to marine biodiversity conservation (and eventually include redirecting existing one) as a basic component for future blue economy wise development approaches



Partners

Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS); General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (Plan Bleu); Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC); European Topic Centre on Spatial Analysis and Synthesis (ETC-UMA); IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med); Network of Marine Protected Areas managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN); The Environmental Fund for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (The MedFund).

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Indicative calendar

Workstreams	Activities	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
1 EXPANDING THE MCPA NETWORK	a. Inventory of areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services		X	X	X	X	
	b. Assistance to countries for the establishment of soundly designed MCPAs, including areas with enhanced protection levels and encompassing areas beyond national jurisdiction			X	X	X	X
2 PROMOTING THE UNDERSTANDING OF OECMs	Assistance to countries in understanding OECM criteria and conducting the needed processes for the recognition and reporting to MAPAMED and WD-OECM of potential and candidate OECM		X	X	X	X	
3 EFFECTIVE MCPA MANAGEMENT	a. Assist countries to identify MCPAs where management plans are lacking and ensure that all MCPAs develop integrated conservation and management measures		X	X	X	X	X
	b. Promote, through pilot action, the integration of sustainable blue economy in the management plans of MCPAs (SSF, nature-based tourism)			X	X	X	X
	c. Assist countries in using MCPAs and OECMs as nature-based solutions to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation			X	X		

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PROJECT
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