

0ST-2020







RECOVERING KEY MEDITERRANEAN MARINE HABITATS

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The Mediterranean is one of the most economically important seas in the world, generating an estimated annual economic value of US\$450 billion from

ocean-related activities. However, despite being one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, is threatened by decades of unsustainable practices leading to the degradation of marine and coastal habitats. Rapid, unsustainable development is increasing pressures on an already fragile environment, with a continuing loss of biodiversity - 75% of the assessed Mediterranean fish stocks are overfished and Posidonia oceanica seagrass meadows, important carbon sinks, have decreased by 34% over the past 50 years. Future trends are set to have equal impacts through a range of maritime activities, likely resulting in conflicts and cumulative negative impacts on key marine habitats, highlighting the need to build a long-term capacity for restoration efforts in the region.

Project 2 seeks to reverse the trend of ecosystem decline to aid in the recovery of key Mediterranean marine habitats.



Despite efforts for effective management, intense pressure from fisheries, maritime traffic and landbased activities still poses a threat to biodiversity in the region. The recovery of marine habitats in the Mediterranean basin is hindered by data sporadicity regarding the location, status and extent of key marine habitats, degraded ecosystems and their restoration potential, knowledge gaps and lack of response mechanisms and coordinated monitoring efforts to threats like marine heat waves (MHWs),



resulting in significant ecosystem impacts, and a lack of capacity and political will to implement and support restoration efforts.



The project will implement two workstreams (1) to enhance knowledge and (2) to build capacity regarding ecosystem restoration over 2.5 years. The total implementation cost of the project is estimated at USD 2.095 million, with a breakdown per activity as indicated in **italic* below.

This cost includes expected co-funding from countries and implementing partners of 195K, and expected funding from donors of 1900K.

1 | IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge on the location, extent and status of key marine Mediterranean habitats will be enhanced alongside the development of national restoration strategies. Workstream 1 will:

- a. Map key marine habitats in identified priority areas and assess the extent of degraded ecosystems to develop national restoration strategies (in accordance with the UN CBD Short-Term Action Plan on Ecosystem Restoration (STAPER)), whilst guiding well-informed marine spatial planning of human activities for purpose of mitigating impacts on marine habitats. Estimated cost in USD Total cost: 860K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 60K, expected funding from donors: 800K.
- b. Develop prediction and warning systems for MHWs that have increased, both in frequency and severity, and establish a network of observation points, compiling data and detecting trends, to better understand the impact of MHWs on marine habitats and species. Data will then be collected and shared through a dedicated platform to serve as an early warning system. Estimated cost in USD - Total cost: 255K,



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expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 55K, expected funding from donors: 200K.

2 | DEVELOPING ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION STRATEGIES

Momentum around ecosystem restoration in the region will be built, fostering political will and enhancing capacity. Workstream 2 will demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of ecosystem restoration through a series of pilot actions in selected sites (identified during mapping exercises – see Workstream 1 above) and develop and disseminate a host of resources including training and guidelines including species recovery plans, criteria for sites with high ecological relevance and regeneration potential, and priority actions for the implementation of the restoration programme of Pinna nobilis. This activity will aim to **build momentum** around ecosystem restoration at national, regional, and global levels, using a demonstrative approach to foster political will in the benefits of reversing biodiversity loss and recovering ecosystem services. This support actions under Target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Post-2020 SAPBIO 2027 and 2030 targets.

Estimated cost in USD - Total cost: 660K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 60K, expected funding from donors: 600K.



Implementation

The project will **focus on countries with low MCPA coverage**, mainly in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries: Albania, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia.

The project 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, project partners and donor(s). Estimated cost of the project coordination in USD (included in the total implementation cost, indicated above) - Total cost: 320K, expected in kind co-funding from countries and partners: 20K, expected funding from donors: 300K.



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



SPECIES AND HABITATS PLANS

Update Mediterranean action plans for selected species and habitats listed under the SPA/BD Protocol

SPECIES RECOVERY

Develop recovery plans and implement emergency actions for endangered and threatened species whose continued survival depends on such actions, including their habitats

12 RESTORATION

Support restoration of ecosystems providing key services, those degraded and expected to become increasingly critical in a changing climate, such as wetlands and shallow seashore habitats among others



General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (Plan Bleu); 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); OCEANA.

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INVERTEBRATES

Survey distribution and abundance, and assess status and main anthropogenic pressures, over priority invertebrate species with focus on Coraalium rubrum. Pinna nobilis, and vermetid platforms

VERTEBRATES 18

Establish the distribution, status, and the main anthropogenic pressures of species listed under Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol



Workstreams	Activities	Yea	ur 1	Year 2		Year 3	
1 IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE	a. Mapping of key marine habitats and inventory of areas with degraded ecosystems		Х	х	х	х	
	b. Prediction and warning systems for Marine Heat Waves (MHWs)		Х	Х	х		
2 DEVELOPING ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION STRATEGIES	Pilot actions for ecosystem restoration			Х	х	х	х



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