

**Actions for Marine Protected Areas PLUS
AMAre PLUS
Interreg MED
Coordinator: CoNISMa
Minutes of the Kick-off meeting (KOM)**

**13th July 2021
Webex platform**

Agenda

AMAre PLUS will build upon the concrete AMAre projects' achievements and will transfer coordinated strategies towards new MPAs to monitor and manage biodiversity and marine resources. AMAre PLUS, through a close collaboration between scientists and MPA Management Bodies, will transfer three highly connected products: 1- the Spatial Geoportal to collect fine scale data on biodiversity status, environmental variables, human pressures distribution and intensity, relevant for management and for exchanging information among MPAs; 2- protocols for ecological monitoring; 3- best practices for the management of human uses and the achievement of the EU legislation goals. The aim is to transfer standards to harmonize the high monitoring/management heterogeneity characterizing present Mediterranean MPAs, contributing to the implementation of an effective MPA network, instrumental to maximize the effects of protection on biodiversity and recommended by EU policies.

Expected attendants:

CoNISMa, ISMAR CNR, CSIC, Public Institute Landscape Park Strunjan, APAM-AFMA, Samaria National Park, Marine Protected Area Secche Meloria, Marine Protected Area Porto Cesareo, Marine Protected Area Torre Guaceto, Public Institution Brijuni National Park, University of Montenegro, Pelagos Sanctuary, Marine Protected Area of Portofino, Public enterprise for coastal zone management of Montenegro, MEDPAN, PANACEA.

Tuesday 13th July

10:00-10:15 Simonetta Frascchetti (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II - CoNISMa): The process of transferring the AMAre PLUS products. Science-based monitoring to support MPA management

10:15 -10:30 Federica Foglini (ISMAR CNR): The Spatial Geoportal: from AMAre to AMAre PLUS

10:30-10:45 Joaquim Garrabou (CSIC) Success stories in transferring monitoring protocols across MPAs

10:45-11:00 Lisandro Benedetti-Cecchi – Luca Rindi (Università di Pisa - CoNISMa): Early warning system to detect departure from healthy conditions in coastal habitats

11:00-11:15 Short break with coffee

11:15-12:15 Presentations of the AMAre PLUS Marine Protected Areas in the following order:

APAM-AFMA, Public Institute Landscape Park Strunjan, Samaria National Park

Public Institution Brijuni National Park, Pelagos Sanctuary, Marine Protected Area of Portofino, Marine Protected Area Porto Cesareo, Marine Protected Area Secche Meloria, Marine Protected Area Torre Guaceto, Public enterprise for coastal zone management of Montenegro

12.15-12.20 Comments from MEDPAN

12.20-12.25 Comments from PANACEA

12.25-13.30 General discussion and concluding remarks

Participants list

CoNISMa -LP	✓ Simonetta Frascchetti ✓ Lisandro Benedetti ✓ Luca Rindi ✓ Maddalena Laggini
CNR-ISMAR - PP	✓ Federica Foglini ✓ Valentina Grande
Institut de Ciències del Mar-CSIC - PP	✓ Emma Cebrian Pujol ✓ Joaquim Garrabou
Landscape Park Strunjan - PP	✓ Samanta Makovac ✓ Robert Smrekar ✓ Sara Cernich
Management Body of Samaria National Park - West Crete – PP	✓ Antonis Barnias ✓ Dimitris Poursanidis
APAM -PP	✓ Christian Decugis ✓ Claire Lemoine ✓ Benoit Derijard ✓ Victor Decugis
MedPAN -AP	✓ Pierre Vignes ✓ Marie Romani ✓ Magali Mabari ✓ Reda Neveu ✓ Frederic Ducarne ✓ Sonsoles San Roman
MPA Punta Campanella AP	✓ Rosa Linda Testa ✓ Domenico Sgambati Testa
MPA Nettuno - AP	✓ Caterina Iacono
Portofino MPA - AP	✓ Lorenzo Merotto ✓ Valentina Cappanera
Public enterprise for Coastal Zone Management of Montenegro – AP	✓ Nemanja Malovrazic ✓ Aleksandra Ivanovic ✓ Vukašin Mijatović
Institute of Marine Miology - University of Montenegro - AP	✓ Dijana Došljak ✓ Ana Pesic ✓ Vesna Mačić
Public Institution Brijuni National Park, Croatia - AP	✓ Andrea Blašković
Meloria MPA -AP	✓ Andrea Porchera
Porto Cesareo MPA AP	✓ Paolo d'Ambrosio ✓ Andrea Picciolo
Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement – AP	✓ Costanza Favilli ✓ Maxime Trapani ✓ Dania Abdulmalak ✓ Sarra Hihi

Summary

The kick-off meeting's main aim was to start organizing the transferring of AMAre products, exploring the feasibility of this activity across MPAs "takers" and "associate partners". The goal is to capitalize on this opportunity to concretely contribute in building a network of MPAs sharing data and approaches in assessing effectiveness of protection and detecting changes at Mediterranean scale.

1. Amare Plus Kick-off meeting – Simonetta Frascchetti

Simonetta Frascchetti firstly explained the AMAre Plus targets transferred from the previous AMAre project (now enforced with new data and more partners).

In particular:

- standardization of biodiversity and environmental information,
- explore potential effects of human uses on Good Ecological Status of vulnerable habitats,
- reduce conflict, increasing synergies with the relevant stakeholders,
- individuate early signals of ecosystem collapse.

This "vision" is going to be transferred in AMAre Plus building a spatial geoportal.

The actions to be dedicated on both the economic and ecological context were then explained with the aim of linking the management initiatives to the biodiversity targets to be reached, the recommendations from the AMAre Project and the Transferring tools for AMAre Plus.

AMAre project recommendations:

- fine scale data (e.g. biodiversity and human uses) are needed to assess MPA effectiveness
- improve both data availability and accessibility (data sharing) to foster the comparison between MPAs across the basin
- implementation of integrated land-sea conservation and management
- systematic reporting
- MPA managers should better coordinate their activities
- working closely with other actors to face conflicts and upgrade synergies

Transferring tools (from AMAre to AMAre Plus):

- Geospatial tool to exchange information among MPAs
- Monitoring protocols to collect and compare fine-scale ecological data
- Guidelines for the assessment of early warning indicators. The observations of collapsing ecosystems make relevant to forecast and prevent future regime shift
- ISEA scheme to improve management of MPAs

The schedule of the up-coming program has been presented too, defining next meetings, Geoportal and Web App building, on-line events, trainings, and the final production of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). It has to be signed by each Receiver and will declare:

- 1) the integration of the new MPAs within the AMAre Geoportal,
- 2) the transferring of common Monitoring Protocols for vulnerable habitats and for the assessment of early warning indicators of changes into the Receiver Management Plan,
- 3) the transferring of recommendations into management best practices.

2. Spatial Geoportal for AMArePlus – Federica Foglini

Federica Foglini explained in detail how the AMAre Plus Geodatabase works, its structure and everybody role in the success of this task.

A demonstration of the AMAre Plus Geoportal was exposed to give an idea of the data elaboration final product, showing how the website works, and many possible ways to utilize and visualize the information provided for each MPA.

3. Success stories in transferring monitoring protocols across MPAs – Joaquim Garrabou

T-MEDNet's mission is to develop a collaborative observation network to track climate change in the Mediterranean coastal areas thru shared protocols (e.g. these protocols were firstly made to measure climate change and quantify mass mortality events and their distribution and occurrence along the Mediterranean basin).

Joaquim Garrabou focused on the importance of both monitoring protocols and trainings, explaining how their synergy is needed to produce a data that can be useful for improving management. “Monitoring temperature conditions protocols” and “Monitoring mass mortality protocols” were then explained, along with the results of the projects.

4. Early Warning Signals – Lisandro Benedetti-Cecchi

Early Warning Signals (EWS) are used to prevent regime shift in key habitats.

Lisandro Benedetti-Cecchi’s presentation focused on EWS monitoring and models, with examples of Mediterranean habitats studies in some AMAre Plus MPAs.

Later on, the **MPAs** presented the activities carried on in each protected site. All the presentations provided a brief description of the MPA, describing geographical, ecological and socioeconomic characteristics, their management, the bygone and on-going monitoring activities, the potential availability of already existing databases including data relevant for the management and the possible implementation than can take place with the support of AMAre Plus project.

5. Samaria National Park – Antonis Barnias

Samaria National Park has already designed and implemented geodatabases for managing MPA data. On-going and bygone monitoring and management projects were presented by Antonis Barnias, such as holistic management for marine habitats, designation and implementation of a pilot no-take zone and monitoring on reefs, *Posidonia* meadow, sea caves, monk seals and more parameters linked to the marine environment.

6. Landscape Park Strunjan – Samanta Makovac

Samanta Makovac highlighted how this MPA is a very heterogeneous site from a biological and geologic point of view.

Monitoring in the MPA is focused on different topics:

- fish catch – agreement with fishers who compile a protocol for catches,
- violations of project regimes,
- birds – once a week since 2016.

Geospatial data are available even for some other neighboring areas of ecological interest, thanks to past studies by external experts such as:

- monitoring of mobile species (marine mammals, sea turtles, birds on sea),
- mapping habitat type and inventory of species,
- monitoring habitats flora and fauna,
- research of fish community,
- mapping of Natura 2000 habitat types in the Slovenian Sea,
- mapping and assessment of environmental status of the marine meadows in Strunjan MPA.

Simonetta Fraschetti pointed out how some of the monitoring programs in place (such as the monitoring of violations in the MPA area) are very innovative and have the opportunity to produce useful results for the improvement of the MPA management.

7. Pelagos Sanctuary – Costanza Favilli

Suffering the absence of both owned spatial data and a Geoportal, Pelagos actions are strictly linked to the AMAre Plus Project, making this cooperation very useful for the management of the area.

Pelagos cover a huge area compared to the other AMAre Plus partners MPAs. This characteristic has been shown by Simonetta Fraschetti too, as an evidence that this is a chance to test the project procedures in a totally different scale. Consequently, there is a need to focus on possibly new priorities that must be detected and analyzed.

8. Porto Cesareo – Andrea Picciolo

In Porto Cesareo MPA, a great amount of data, useful for the population of the geoportal, have already been collected. Many surveys on very different topics (coastal erosion, sea turtle nests, marine litter, *Pinna nobilis*,

fisheries monitoring, T° etc.) already took place in the area and more are going to come, such as instoring an ecoreef in the MPA or drone remote sensing to study coastal erosion on seasonal scale. The past experience of the Porto Cesareo MPA in AMAre will inspire the adoption of the products by the new AMAre Plus MPA.

9. Secche della Meloria – Lisandro Benedetti-Cecchi

A brief but effective description of past and present monitoring programs took place along with management actions. One of the main goals of this MPA is restoring the habitats of this highly diversified area. Future plans include the increase of the size of the no-take area in the MPA to cover even rocky reefs and protect more habitats, and monitoring of invasive algae and fish.

10. Regno di Nettuno and Punta Campanella – Domenico Sgambati

These MPAs preferred to attend this first meeting focusing on making these project “lessons” their own.

11. Public Enterprise for Coastal zone management of MONTENEGRO – Aleksandra Ivanovic

Aleksandra Ivanovic explained the importance of this very recent MPA, showed the other on-going projects in Montenegro finalized to protect marine and coastal ecosystems in coastal areas, then presented the next activities that are going to be carried out. In particular, Montenegro aims to “Review the status of existing (coastal) protected area”, establish 3 new MPAs” and “prepare expert analysis and provide capacity building related to coastal and marine ecosystem management plans”. An inventory of habitats and species important for conservation on both marine and terrestrial part with field work, data processing and GIS mapping has already been done.

The last two presentations concerned the collaboration with PANACeA and MedPAN:

12. Panacea – Sonsoles San Roman

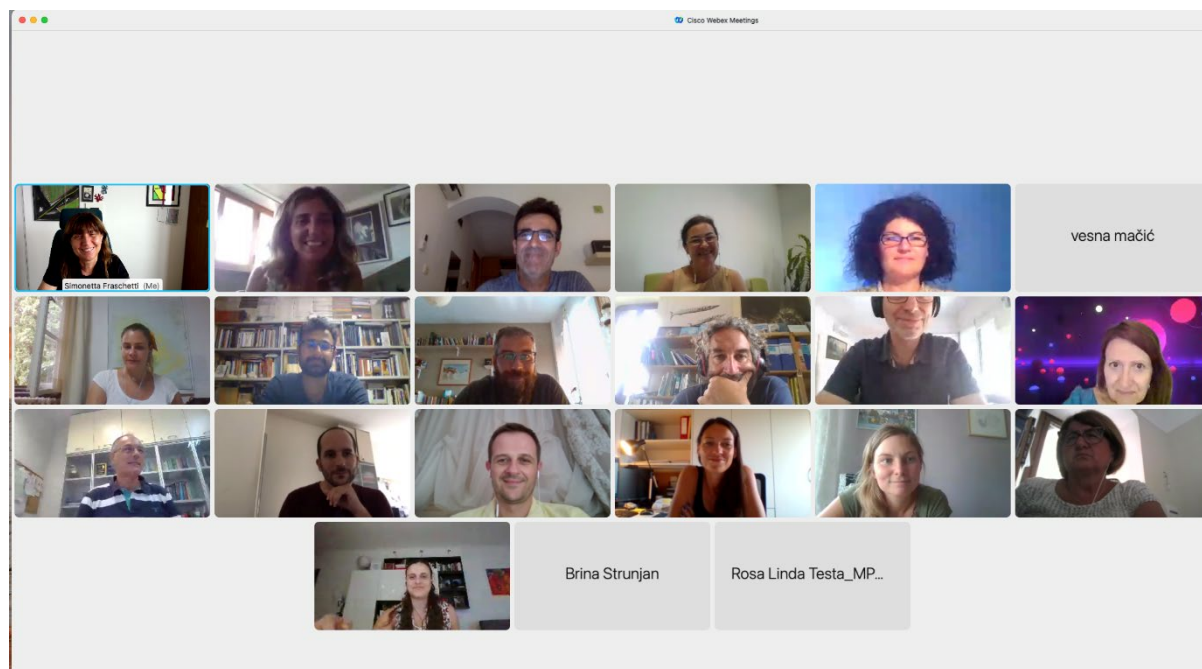
Sonsoles San Roman summarized the main goals of the project and the reasons why the need to update a database with new MPA fine scale data is crucial to coordinate and take key steps together, as already demonstrated by PANACeA Project.

13. MedPAN – Pierre Vignes

According to MedPAN feedbacks, data sharing is critical and important. A geoportal tool, training modules and protocols are necessary for the management of an MPA.

A summary on the next steps of the project and their organization took place before the end of the presentations.

The coordinator asked the partner to be proactive, pointing out how important is, for the success of this project, a strong interaction among the partners.



Group picture, AMAre Plus KOM (13/07/2021)