

WORKSHOP REPORT

MANAGING TRANSBOUNDARY IMPACTS IN PRIORITY AREAS

Towards an Action Plan for Ecosystem – based Management
(EBM) in the Southern Adriatic Sea Ecoregion

31 MAY 2019

Herceg Novi, Montenegro



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CONTRIBUTORS

Sudar, S., Merkohasanaj, M., Simonida Kordic, Herceg Novi Municipality...

Workshop Context and Objectives

Transboundary cooperation is key to maintaining healthy seas and collective natural resources, including fisheries and biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. As such, Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) is an important and powerful approach that can be used. However, it needs to be communicated more widely to properly assess its relevance, potential and utility. **EBM directly links ecosystem state to pressures. This requires transboundary assessment, monitoring and management. There are practical advantages of using spatial boundaries of ecosystems as delineated by their ecological community structure and functioning.** These areas are called ecoregions and it is where critical processes need to be maintained to ensure the persistence of natural resources and ecosystem services. Understanding ecological processes and policies at ecoregional scale and using appropriate planning and management units are entry points to best practice EBM.

The workshop built upon questionnaires conducted in 2018 and presented at the CBD COP 14 meeting in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt¹ in November 2018. This is the most recent workflow from a multiple of Interreg projects and research groups working in the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas. The Montenegro workshop focussed on one ecoregion in the Mediterranean, **the Southern Adriatic, specifically the South Adriatic Ionian Strait Ecologically and Biologically Sensitive Marine Area (EBSA)**, which lies partially within the jurisdictions of the countries of Albania, Croatia, Italy and Montenegro. The aim of the workshop was to foster an **open exchange between the relevant Adriatic Sea stakeholders including managers, policymakers, civil society and the scientific community.** The workshop identified priority challenges, while balancing ecological, economic, and social perspectives, to develop a roadmap that addresses transboundary impacts in this common marine ecoregion. Analysing the architecture of the sustainable governance frameworks that promote cross border collaboration was a key aspect of the workshop. The framework developed for the Southern Adriatic will also be transferable and applicable to a wider range of ecoregions in the Mediterranean region.

This workshop was undertaken as a key workflow under the EU funded Interreg Med Biodiversity Protection community represented by the project [PANACeA](#). PANACeA is an overarching project that works closely with a community of 11 projects, built on the efforts of around 200 Mediterranean institutions, and aims to mainstream networking and management efforts in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas as a mechanism to enhance nature conservation and protection in the region. **It acts as a Science-Policy platform to foster the exchange of experiences and knowledge and influence behavioural and policy changes in the Mediterranean region.** The workshop has been prepared and developed in close collaboration with the MarCons Cost Action.

¹ The workshop will utilise the recommendations of the COP 13 Side Event [Ecosystem-based approaches to managing transboundary and cumulative impacts in the Mediterranean](#) that was developed in partnership with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The European Topic Centre of the University of Malaga (ETC-UMA), lead partner of PANACeA, is an international research centre and part of the core team of the European Environment Agency. ETC-UMA is engaged in the development, coordination, and dissemination of environmental knowledge to support science-based practice, evidence-based policy and decision-making. The results of ETC-UMA's applied research target key regional policies affecting European environmental aspects and key Mediterranean and global conventions, namely the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention. The Centre thematically focuses on environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources, and the use and promotion of nature-based solutions, as well as strong collaborations with regional key stakeholders.

The European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) is a funding organisation for the creation of research networks, called COST Actions. These networks offer an open space for collaboration among scientists across Europe (and beyond) and thereby give impetus to research advancements and innovation. The MarCons COST Action CA15121 'Advancing marine conservation in the European and contiguous seas' (<http://www.marcons-cost.eu/#>) strives to consolidate a network of scientists and stakeholders who are involved in marine conservation in European and contiguous seas. The MarCons Cost Action aims to bridge the gap between conservation science and policy makers and substantially contribute to the challenge of halting biodiversity loss in the European Seas by 2020.



Figure 1. Workshop participants, Herceg Novi, 31 May 2019.

Workshop Conclusions and Recommendations for an Action Plan

Conclusion 1

Multiple pressures on the south Adriatic Sea originate from different sectors. The cumulative impacts that these pressures yield undermine biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity, structure, and function. This impedes sustainability and resilience both beyond national jurisdictions and within protected areas. Recognising the cumulative nature and the synergistic interaction between these impacts remains an important, yet under explored issue. The lack of an archived centralised regionalised baseline database on the ecology and anthropogenic impacts, and the absence of consistent application of both **Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs)** and **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)** hampers **Transboundary Marine Spatial Planning**.

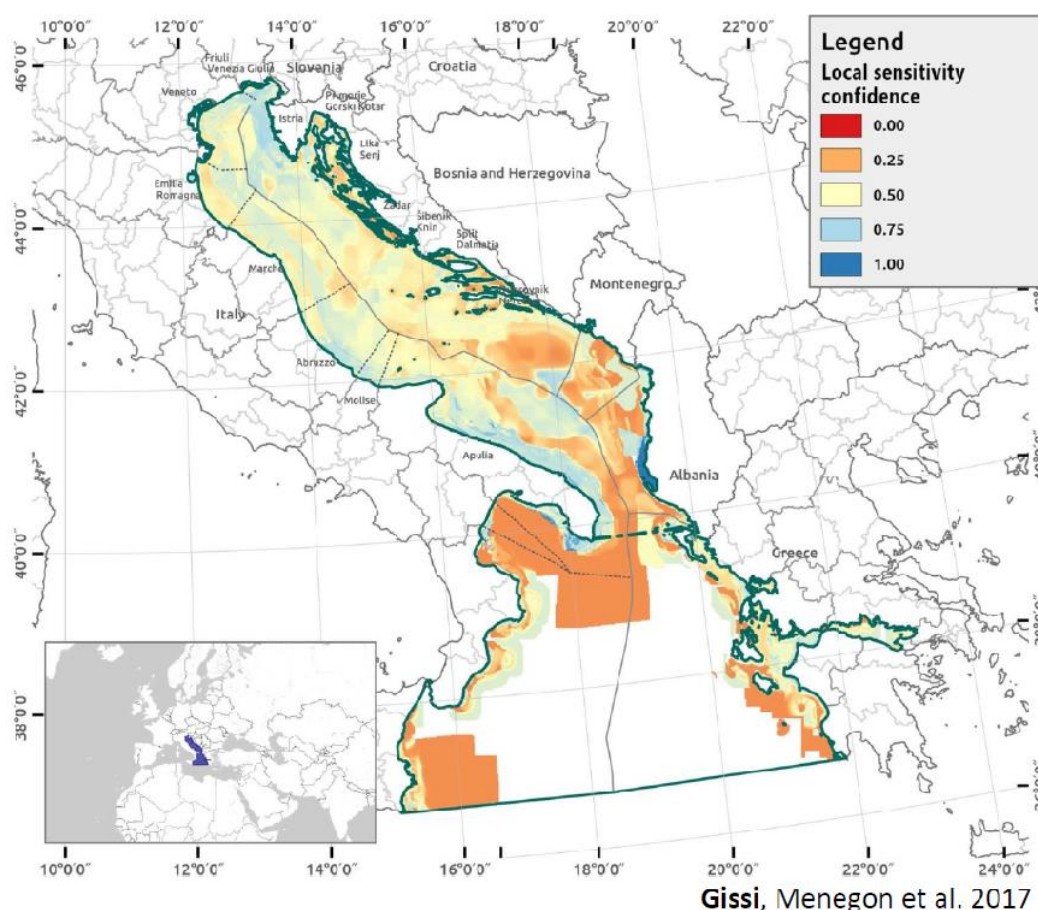


Figure 2. Local Sensitivity Confidence Index (LCSI) for the Adriatic Ionian Region. LCSI = 1.00 (in dark blue) indicates where the LCSI is higher, meaning that the confidence in sensitivities judgement from experts is high; LCSI=0.00 (in dark red) indicates where the LCSI is lower, meaning than the confidence in sensitivities judgement from experts is low. It shows the necessity of improving and coordination of assessments methods in the study area. *Source:* Gissi, Menegon et al. (2017).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ⇒ *National strategic environmental assessments are required in Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and Italy:*
- *EU member states in the Adriatic have the obligation to utilise the **EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive**. Accession countries should be encouraged to align themselves to these commitments and, where possible, they should be assisted to harmonise processes to reach these goals;*
- *Regional mechanisms and financial instruments should ensure proper channelling of funds to implement these commitments to produce tangible results to change the trajectory of biodiversity degradation in these sensitive areas;*
- ***Marine** rather than maritime **spatial planning** is required recognising that the marine environment is the foundation on which **Blue Growth** is based, and hence deserves priority protection.*



Conclusion 2

Conservation and management beyond nationally protected areas and national boundaries are necessary to address transboundary mobile species such as pelagic fish, mammals, and reptiles. These species inhabit coastal and pelagic habitats that are impacted by pollution, overfishing, and climate change at the macro-regional scale.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *The integrity and management of existing national marine protected areas (MPAs), should be complemented and bolstered with **transboundary MPAs** using principles of ecological network design that include representative replicated habitats, and effective management, monitoring, and enforcement;*
- *Furthermore, any new MPAs in the area beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) designated **to protect underrepresented habitats and species in the Adriatic Sea** should be embedded within broader planning frameworks taking advantage of currently existing transboundary ecoregional frameworks. Information already exists to be able to identify priority areas for MPAs in the South Adriatic Ionian Strait EBSA, which provides just such a framework.*

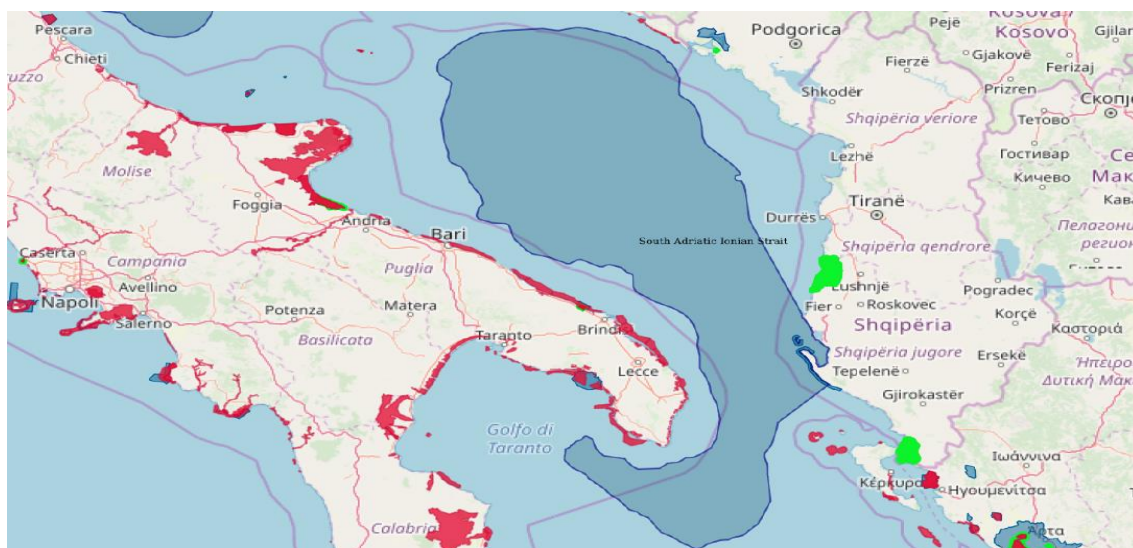


Figure 3. Territorial waters and Protected Areas in the Southern Adriatic Sea. The figure shows how protected areas in the area are only present in the territorial waters of the countries. It difficulties its effectiveness and representativeness of Adriatic ecosystem. Source: Tools4MSP Geoplatform.

Conclusion 3

The Transboundary EBM of the ABNJ requires the use of eco-regional planning approaches that account for multiple hierarchical scales and need to have as a foundation a harmonised regional information system in order to reach **the target of “Good Environmental Status” according to the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive**, which identifies the Adriatic as a sub-region in the Mediterranean.

RECOMMENDATIONS

⇒ *There is a need to strengthen and utilise the existing frameworks in the region:*

- *The European Union Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR) provides a political framework to develop a vision and action plan beyond national boundaries;*
- *Article 11² of the MSFD Directive requires countries to address cross border issues (between EU and non EU countries) to ensure proper assessment of the regional environmental status of marine waters.*

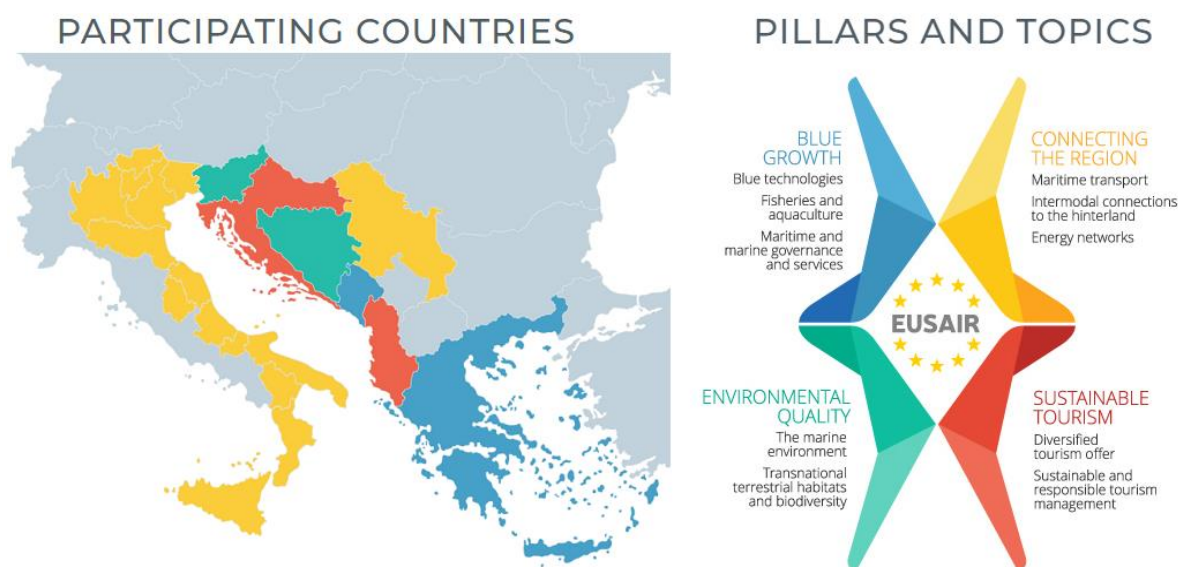


Figure 4. European Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). Participating countries and pillars and topics. Colours reflect national coordinators for each pillar. Source: EUSAIR

² Article 11 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) provides legally-binding requirements for Member States to establish and implement coordinated monitoring programmes for the ongoing assessment of the environmental status of marine waters. Member States shall establish and implement coordinated monitoring programmes for the ongoing assessment of the environmental status of their marine waters that are compatible within marine regions or subregions.

Conclusion 4

It is important to use spatial units of management and protection with distinct ecological boundaries and functions where critical ecological processes are strongest. **This requires the use of policies and planning tools reflecting the transboundary nature of sea life** to ensure effective management and persistence of natural resources and the ecosystem services they provide. A regionally accepted transboundary and ecoregional planning unit with boundaries designed through territorial and scientific consensus is essential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ⇒ *Utilise **South Adriatic Ionian Strait EBSA**, transboundary jurisdictions developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity and adopted by the Mediterranean Action Plan that have the consensus of Contracting Parties. It is a key planning unit for ecosystem – based management across EU and non – EU countries in the Adriatic:*
 - *Understanding and managing these units and their connectivity is key for proper Ecosystem Functioning in order to preserve Adriatic natural resources with the involvement of society at large.*
- ⇒ *Develop an ecoregional platform including the conservation framework of CBD EBSAs under the UNEP-MAP Barcelona Convention and undertaken under the EUSAIR operational framework to initiate the development of Action Plans:*
 - *The EUSAIR should have a decision making role in the allocation of the EU Interreg ADRION funds, and bilateral EU Interreg funds for the region, to ensure new projects are in line with the macro-regional strategy.*

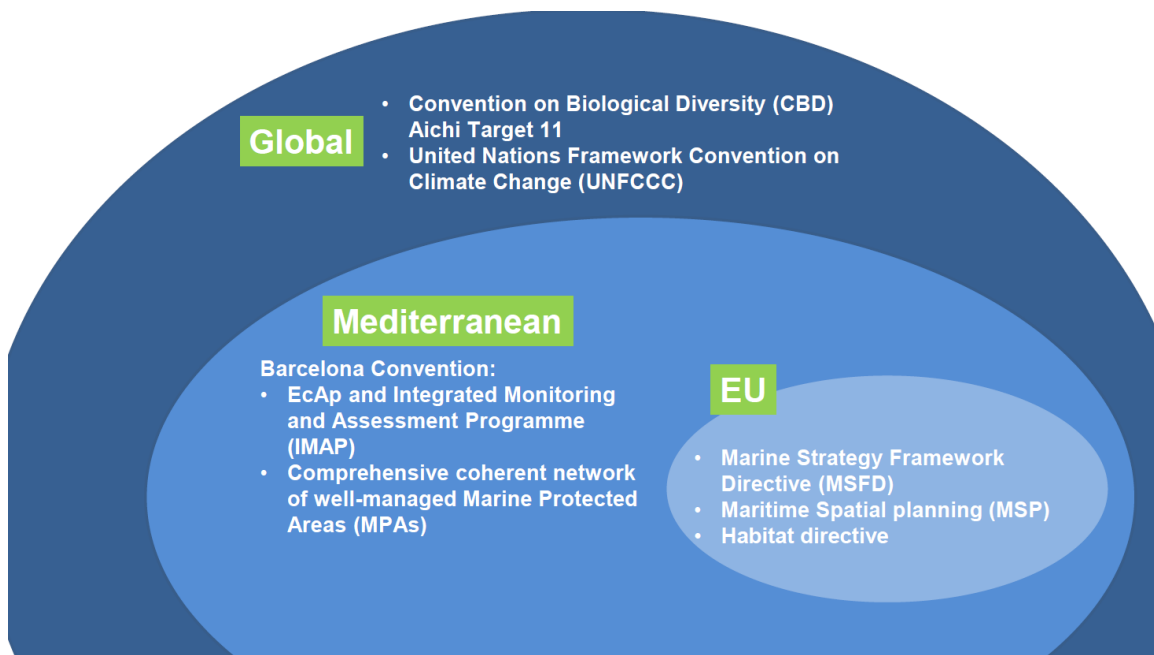


Figure 5. Management and policy frameworks implemented in the Adriatic Sea. CBD promotes collaboration among and beyond national jurisdictions through EBSAs, being possible to foster cooperation among EU and non – EU countries. Furthermore, at the Mediterranean level, the Barcelona Convention develops joint, comprehensive and consistent management tools such as the IMAP that can be also applied in the Southern Adriatic Sea. Even more, at the European Union level, MSFD, MSP or EUSIR are nowadays being applied in the area. For all these reasons, the ecoregion demonstrates high opportunities for a joint environmental management among countries. Source: Garrabou's Workshop Presentation.



Conclusion 5

Ecoregional planning and management will need to include **multiple country commitments across the southern Adriatic** that links with Mediterranean and EU macro – regional strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ⇒ *Initiate **Systematic Transboundary Marine Spatial Planning (STMSP)** process in the Adriatic Ecoregion using the South Adriatic Ionian Strait EBSA as a demonstration site:*
 - *Although EUSAIR is an important potential platform, there are power dynamics between countries and pillars in the region that need to be addressed, and a paucity of baseline data in the south-eastern Adriatic;*
 - *Given the importance joint governance in an EBSA, discrepancies in capacity and empowerment between countries makes the management of transboundary areas difficult. Therefore, increasing the capacity of management and governance in the south Adriatic to ensure consistent capacity across the ecoregion is also key;*
 - *The main objective of this TSP process should be conservation of biodiversity to maintain ecosystem processes and management of activities that impact them.*
- ⇒ *Set up a macro-regional institutional platform (not a series of short-term national or bilateral projects) with an **Adriatic Knowledge and Data Center** to support TSP working closely with EUSAIR and building on Adriplan and Portodimare³:*
 - *Marine biodiversity science in the EUSAIR region is not consolidated and relies on fragmented contributions from around the basin. There is a need for a science / research agency to centralise data management and support decision-making;*
 - *An international working group or committee should support the macro-regional institutional and technical platform by: a) encouraging national authorities to implement a common vision / a common deliverable within the region; and b) considering the socioeconomic and policy implications.*

³ <https://www.msp-platform.eu/projects/portodimare-geoportal-tools-data-sustainable-management-coastal-and-marine>

Conclusion 6

The ABNJ is considered to be 'common property'; hence the role of industry, local communities and advocates for the environment is significant. This was shown in the international debate over the Jabuka Pit Fisheries Restricted Area⁴.

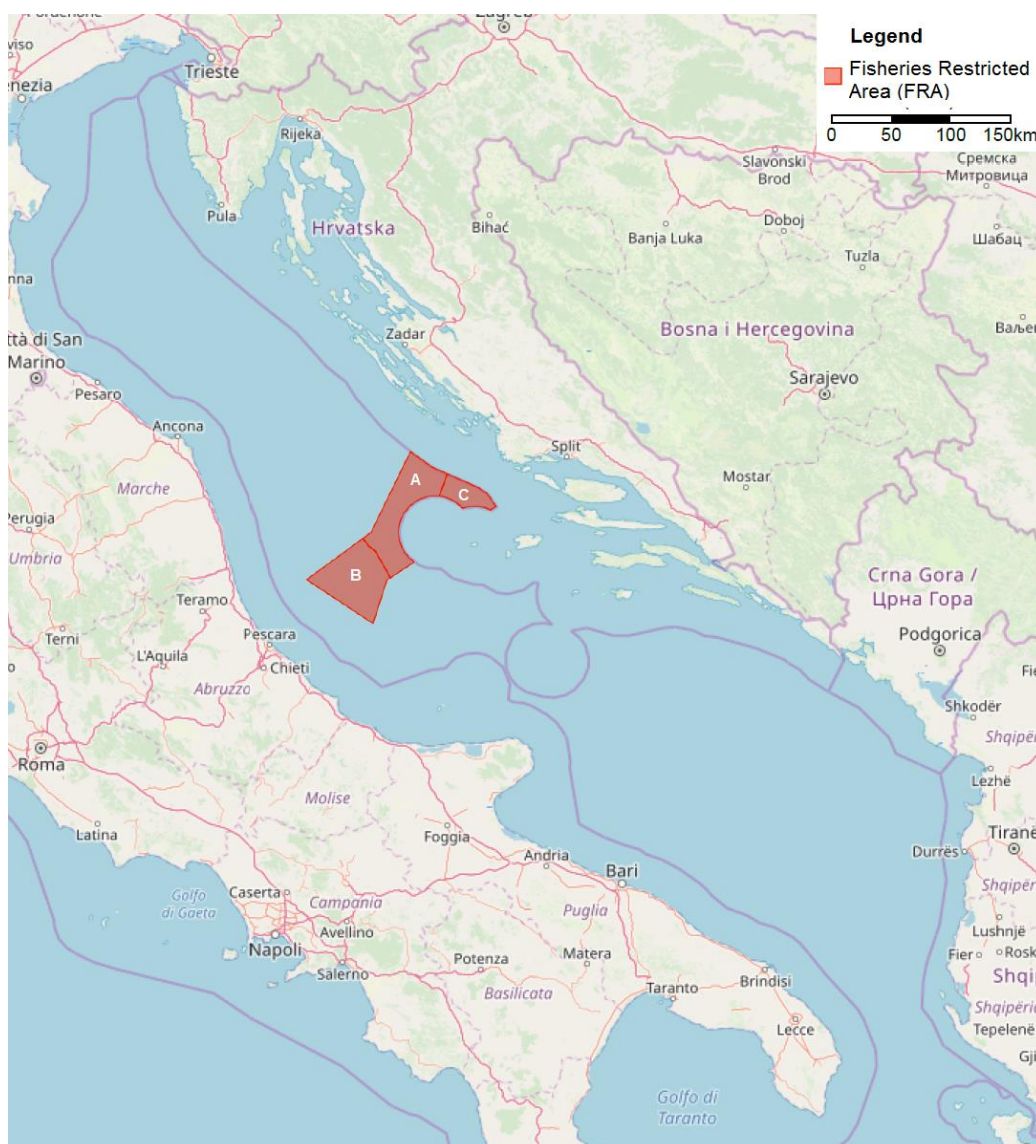


Figure 6. Jabuka/Pomo Pit Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) adopted by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). It is divided in three areas with different limitations to fishing activity, being area A the most stringent. All the Adriatic countries are participating parties in the GFCM, being this FRA an example of the possibility to adopt collaborative measures in ABNJ in the area. *Source:* Tools4MSP Geoplatform.

⁴<https://gfcml.sharepoint.com/CoC/Decisions%20Texts/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2FCoC%2FDecisions%20Texts%2FREC%2ECM%5FGFCM%5F41%5F2017%5F3%2De%2Epdf&parent=%2FCoC%2FDecisions%20Texts&p=true&cid=264a663a-ea8b-4e1b-aafd-bc92a66f7076>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ⇒ *Co-management is a powerful tool for participatory decision-making that needs to be empowered for enhanced decentralised governance of biodiversity and natural resources;*
- ⇒ *Ensure pro-active (decentralised) mechanisms that enable effective participatory approaches and the **involvement of local communities** in decision-making to increase the acceptance of implementing transboundary actions;*
- ⇒ *No political obstacles regarding the impact or natural resource management exist between the southern Adriatic countries. However, **coordination and third-party facilitation between national biodiversity and resource management government institutions** is needed (because of a lack of time, resources, or lack of priority) and one potential solution is to create a platform for systematic strategic planning in the ecoregion to ensure a holistic process development;*
- ⇒ *Engagement with industry and other stakeholders in the south Adriatic must be undertaken in good faith and facilitated through an independent platform rather than simply superficial or short term initiatives.*

Planning for future actions

Building on the main common conclusions and recommendations extracted from the Herceg Novi workshop in Montenegro resulting from the open exchange and active involvement of its participants, **a roadmap addressing transboundary impacts in this common marine ecoregion was set.**

The next steps envisaged are a **three-year action plan (2019-2022), co-financed by the Interreg Med programme specific objective on Biodiversity Protection**, to be implemented within an informal working group structure for the transboundary case study in the Southern Adriatic-Ionian ecoregion. The working group will build on the results of a preliminary survey led by ETC-UMA and priority actions identified during the workshop to implement actions towards proper management of underrepresented habitats in this ecoregion that respect the integrity of sensitive habitats at risk. A governance mechanism will be prioritised based on participatory processes among multi-stakeholders in the region and using the principles of ecological network design and best practices management.

The outcomes of this pilot working group will be **a transferable governance model that could be applied at transboundary level in other areas of the Mediterranean** to ensure influencing transitional and transformative changes in the Mediterranean, safeguarding transboundary mobile species, reducing cumulative impacts and adapting to climate changes.

Annex I

AGENDA – Managing Transboundary Impacts in Priority Areas: Towards an Action Plan for Ecosystem – based Management (EBM) in the Southern Adriatic Sea Ecoregion

31 May 2019 from 9:00 – 17-15 h - Palmon Bay Hotel, Herceg Novi, Montenegro

9:00 – 9:45

Welcome and Introduction

Official Welcome

Mr. Stevan Katić, Mayor of Herceg Novi, Montenegro

Opening remarks about PANACEA

Ms. Simonida Kordić, Head of Office for International Cooperation, Municipality of Herceg Novi

Session agenda and objectives

Dr Ameer Abdulla, ETC-UMA and IUCN WCPA, Workshop Chair

9:45 – 11:00

Main transboundary and multiple impacts in the Southern Adriatic Sea of Albania, Montenegro, and Italy

Presentations:

- Mr. Antonios Nikolopoulos, Energean, Greece/Montenegro
- Dr. Andrea Barbanti, CNR-ISMAR/PHAROS4MPAs, Italy
- Dr. Elisabetta Manea / Dr. Elena Gissi, University of Venice, Italy

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee break

11:15 – 12:00

Survey Results and Panel Discussion

Presentation:

Mr. David Medina, European Topic Centre (ETC-UMA), Spain

Panel chaired by Dr. Ameer Abdulla:

- Mr. Mihallaq Qirjo, The Resource Environmental Center Albania (REC Albania)
- Dr. Andrea Barbanti, CNR-ISMAR Italy
- Mr. Nenad Rakocevic, GIZ Country Office, Montenegro
- Ms. Marija Bajkovic, Public Enterprise for Coastal Management, Montenegro

12:00 – 14:00

Potential tools and specific policy processes needed to address transboundary and cumulative impacts on biodiversity at various scales in the Adriatic

Presentations:

- Dr. Peter Mackelworth, Blue World Institute & Institute for Tourism, Croatia
- Ms. Marina Markovic, UN Environment PAP/RAC, Croatia
- Mr. Frédérick Herpers, Strategies Mer et Littoral, France
- Dr. Joaquim Garrabou, ICM-CSIC, MPA-ADAPT, Spain

Panel Discussions facilitated by Dr. Peter Mackelworth

- Ms Milena Batakovic, Nature and Environmental Protection Agency - NEPA Montenegro
- Ms. Age Martini, Specialist at the Regional Administration of PA in Shkodra Region, Albania
- Dr. Nicola Ungaro, Apulian Regional Agency for the Environmental Prevention and Protection, Italy
- Ms. Aleksandra Ivanovic, Integrated Coastal Management Agency of Montenegro

14:00 – 15:00

Lunch

15:00 – 17:00

Towards an Action Plan to address Transboundary Impacts in the Southern Adriatic Ecoregion

Guided discussion and working group chaired by Dr. Ameer Abdulla, ETC-UMA and IUCN WCPA

- Dr. Leonardo Tunesi, Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), Italy
- Ms. Valbona Kolaneci, Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania
- Mr. Vasilije Buskovic, GEF/UNEP MPA project, Montenegro

17:00 – 17:15

Closing remarks

- Dr. Dania Abdul Malak, ETC-UMA, PANACeA, Spain

Annex II

GLOSSARY

Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides that the areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (ABNJ) include: 1. the water column beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), or beyond the Territorial Sea where no EEZ is declared, called the High Seas (Article 86); and 2. the seabed which lies beyond the limits of the continental shelf, established in conformity with Article 76 of the Convention, designated as "the Area" (Article 1). <i>References: Kimball, L.A. (2005), and the UNCLOS 1994</i>
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a convention signed by 150 government leaders at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the Convention on Biological Diversity and has 3 main objectives, being 1) The conservation of biological diversity; 2) The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and 3) The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The CBD is dedicated to promoting sustainable development. Conceived as a practical tool for translating the principles of Agenda 21 into reality, the Convention recognizes that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and microorganisms and their ecosystems – it is about people and our need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live. entered into force on 29 December 1993. <i>References: The Convention on Biological Diversity: https://www.cbd.int/convention</i>
Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)	The EBSAs are special areas in the ocean that serve important purposes, in one way or another, to support the healthy functioning of oceans and the many services that it provides. <i>References: The Convention on Biological Diversity: https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/about</i>
Ecoregion	An ecoregion is an area often covering thousands of square kilometres, crossing national borders, the boundaries of which are sharply defined, but encompass important areas for ecology and evolutionary processes (Bensted-Smith and Kirkman, 2010). Strategies that address the needs of the different stakeholders, organizations and agencies have helped develop region-wide concepts that support an EBM approach within ecoregions.

	<i>References: Kirkman, H. and Mackelworth, P., 2016. Defining approaches to the management of large marine systems. In Marine transboundary conservation and protected areas (pp. 47-62). Routledge</i>
Ecosystem-based Management	Ecosystem-based management is an environmental management approach that recognizes the full array of interactions within an ecosystem, including humans, rather than considering single issues, species, or ecosystem services in isolation. <i>References: Christensen, Norman L.; Bartuska, Ann M.; Brown, James H.; Carpenter, Stephen; d'Antonio, Carla; Francis, Rober; Franklin, Jerry F.; MacMahon, James A.; Noss, Reed F.; Parsons, David J.; Peterson, Charles H.; Turner, Monica G.; Woodmansee, Robert G. (1996). "The Report of the Ecological Society of America Committee on the Scientific Basis for Ecosystem Management". Ecological Applications. 6 (3): 665–691.</i> doi:10.2307/2269460. JSTOR 2269460 <i>Long et al 2015 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2015.01.013</i>
Marine Spatial Planning	Marine spatial planning is a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that usually have been specified through a political process. Characteristics of marine spatial planning include ecosystem-based, area-based, integrated, adaptive, strategic and participatory. <i>References: UNESCO – IOC</i> http://www.ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147&Itemid=76
Maritime Spatial Planning	Maritime spatial planning (MSP) works across borders and sectors to ensure human activities at sea take place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way. <i>References: EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive 2014/89/EU</i>
Transboundary Marine Spatial Planning	Transboundary Marine Spatial Planning requires the development of a common vision of regional actors in assessing, evaluating and monitoring marine spatial plans. As a consequence, joint governance, balancing of powers, institution and capacity building, sufficient stakeholder's participation and open and transparent dialogue in the planning process gain more importance in here than in regular MSP. <i>References: Hassan et al 2017. Transboundary Marine Spatial Planning and International Law.</i>
South Adriatic Ionian Strait EBSA	The area is located in the center of the southern part of the Southern Adriatic basin and the northern Ionian Sea. It is characterized by steep slopes, high salinity and a maximum depth ranging between 200 m to 1500 m. Water exchange with the Mediterranean Sea takes place through the Otranto Channel, which has a sill that is 800 m deep. This area contains important habitats for Mediterranean megafauna and for rare slow-growing deep water corals amongst other important habitats and species. <i>References: https://chm.cbd.int/database/record?documentID=204126</i>

Annex III

List of participants – 31 May 2019

Institution	Country
Agricultural University of Tirana	Albania
Environmental and Territorial Management Institute (ETMI)	Albania
Regional Administration of Protected Areas – Lezha (ARPA – Lezha)	Albania
Regional Administration of Protected Areas – Shköder	Albania
Resource Environmental Center Albania (REC Albania)	Albania
Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation (BWI)	Croatia
United Nations Environment Priority Actions Programme / Regional Activity Centre (UN PAP/RAC)	Croatia
Stratégies Mer et Littoral	France
University of Thessaly	Greece
Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA)	Italy
National Research Council – Institute of Marine Sciences (CNR – ISMAR)	Italy
Regional Agency for Environmental Prevention and Protection (ARPA Puglia)	Italy
University of Venice	Italy
Energean Montenegro Ltd DSD	Montenegro
German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ)	Montenegro
Herceg Novi Municipality	Montenegro
Nature and Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)	Montenegro
Public Enterprise for Coastal Zone Management (PECZM)	Montenegro
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Montenegro
University of Montenegro – Institute of Marine Biology (IMBK)	Montenegro
European Topic Centre – University of Malaga (ETC – UMA)	Spain
Institute of Marine Sciences – Spanish National Research Council (ICM – CSIC)	Spain
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	Spain



Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform



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Biodiversity Protection Community



PANACeA Biodiversity Protection



MED Biodiversity Protection Community Newsletter



**Sign the Declaration for a Mediterranean Ecosystem-
based approach to biodiversity protection**

Project co-financed by the European
Regional Development Fund

The MED Biodiversity Protection Community is featured by PANACeA