

Enhancing private sector engagement in ecosystem-based approaches

Report of the 4th Capitalisation event of
the MED Biodiversity Protection
Community

Rome, 6 & 7 May 2019



Author: Xavier Lafon (PANACeA)

Contributors: Dania Abdul Malak (ETC-UMA, PANACeA), Sonsoles San Román (ETC-UMA, PANACeA), Carolina Pérez Valverde (MedCities, PANACeA), Alexandra Froment (Plan Bleu, PANACeA), Nelly Bourlion (Plan Bleu, PANACeA), Lise Guennal (CPMR, PANACeA)

Credits: Design and layout by UNIMED

Copyrights: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



Disclaimer: The content of this report does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the report lies entirely with the authors.

Table of Contents

I. What is the challenge addressed	4
II. About this report	7
III. Key messages and results from the Community	7
What to expect when engaging the private sector?	7
Improving an inclusive and engaging decision process.....	7
Committing to Ecosystem-based management	8
Diversifying opportunities to engage	9
Engaging in co-responsibility	9
Getting involved in accurate risk assessments.....	10
Making behaviour towards sustainability economically profitable	11
Opening possibilities to delegate management.....	11
Compensation for conservation costs	12
Changes related to public image	13
What does ‘engagement’ mean?	13
How to engage the private sector?	13
Which territories to consider	14
Providing reliable knowledge to increase responsibility.....	14
Facilitating supporting frameworks.....	15
Working together	16
Speaking the same language	17
Identify incentives, be inventive	18
IV. The path forward	19
IV. Annexes	20

Enhancing private sector engagement in Ecosystem-based approaches

Report of the 4th Capitalisation event of the MED Biodiversity
Protection Community

Rome, 7 May 2019

I. What is the challenge addressed

Despite rich and diverse natural capital, the Mediterranean is in great danger and urgent action is required to reverse the loss of biodiversity and to preserve the structure and the functions of its ecosystems. Impacts of economic activities both on land and at sea are increasing, leading to habitat degradation and biodiversity loss, hence threatening the livelihoods of Mediterranean communities. Mediterranean ecosystems and their highly dependent social systems are therefore seriously threatened. However, no global action seems strong enough to efficiently protect both systems.

With a view toward this goal, Ecosystem-based management (EBM) should be the basis for biodiversity protection and natural resource management, as it allows addressing sustainable development and global challenges (e.g. climate change and pollution), while paying attention to the ecological functions of key habitats and species.

Ecosystem-based management

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is a management approach that goes beyond examining a single issue, species, or ecosystem function in isolation. Instead, EBM recognises ecosystems for what they are: a rich mix of interconnected and interacting components, including people and the cumulative pressures of human activities. EBM aims to conserve ecosystems and the functions that sustain the services they provide to benefit current and future human generations.

Community-based EBM seeks to combine conservation objectives with the generation of economic and social benefits for communities. It operates under three key assumptions:

- Local stakeholders and communities are in the best position to preserve natural resources.
- People will preserve a resource only if its benefits exceed the conservation costs.
- People will preserve a resource that contributes directly to their quality of life.

Ecosystem-based management is at the core of the Interreg MED Biodiversity Protection Community featured in the PANACeA project. The project is gathering the findings from more than two years' work in projects that have already proved their efficiency and relevance, and providing a renewed vision of biodiversity protection policy. Disclosing these findings beyond the biodiversity protection community is one of the key objectives of the project. The MED Biodiversity Protection Community acknowledges that different types of stakeholders need to get involved, including very importantly the private sector.

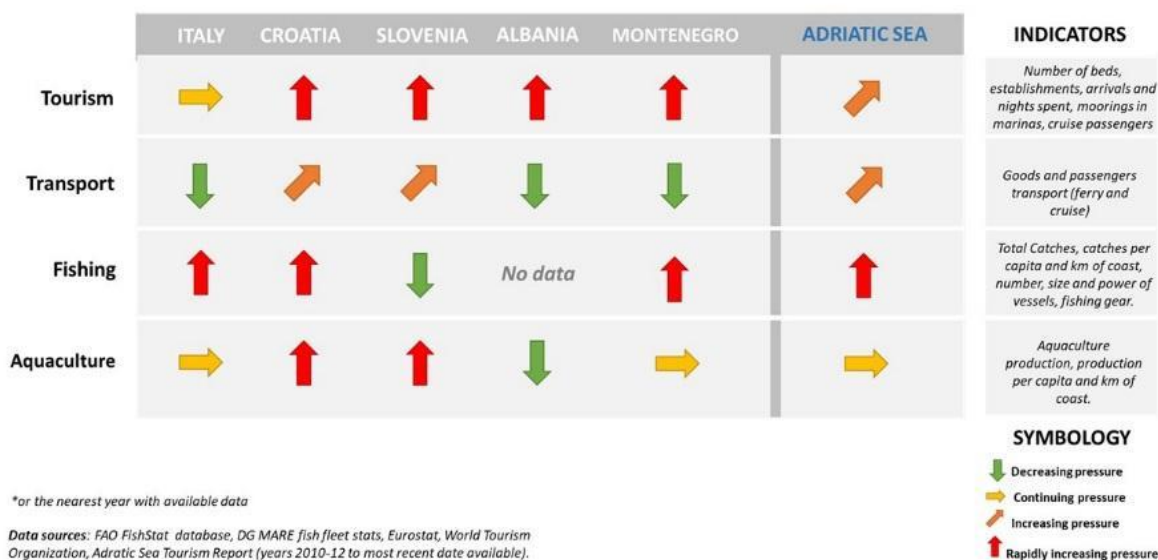
EBM therefore requires engagement by policy makers, as formally expressed in the MED Biodiversity Protection Community Declaration¹ on "*Ecosystem-based approaches for biodiversity protection and management*", presented to the European Parliament in Brussels on 4 December 2018, in collaboration with the European Parliament Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas Intergroup (SEARICA).

¹ [Declaration for a Mediterranean Ecosystem-based approach to biodiversity protection](#)

Beyond the engagement of policy makers, EBM would only be effective if all stakeholders commit themselves, including businesses and civil society. As stated in the Declaration, *“Multiple pressures on the Mediterranean Sea from different sectors yield cumulative impacts that undermine biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, structure, and function, thus impeding their sustainability and resilience beyond geopolitical borders, and even reaching into protected areas”*.

The Adriatic Sea is an example of these multiple pressures from different sectors, as proven by data gathered from FAO, Eurostat and the UN World Tourism Organization.

Driver's trends between 2010 - 2017*



Source: PowerPoint presentation by Dania Abdul Malak, ETC-UMA, MED Biodiversity Protection Community, PANACeA

“The current state of biodiversity is dire and human use of natural resources is not sustainable in the Mediterranean region”, acknowledges the MED Biodiversity Protection Community Declaration.

II. About this report

This report summarises the results of the discussions held during the open seminar “**Ecosystem-based responses to Mediterranean biodiversity challenges**” of the MED Biodiversity Protection Community on 7 May 2019.

By organising this capitalisation event, the MED Biodiversity Protection Community considers it possible and necessary to take charge of the integration between biodiversity management tools and challenges brought on by the growth of economic activities. It has therefore mobilised relevant representatives of biodiversity protection projects and private sector actors to share their views and best practices. Presented below are some of the reasons and means discussed to engage the private sector and break free from a “fundraising only” vision.

III. Key messages and results from the Community

What to expect when engaging the private sector?

Improving an inclusive and engaging decision process

Some fora open to the private sector used to be places for the expression of group positions. Without engagement from the stakeholders, these fora tend to present maximised demands based on their own exclusive interests. By shifting such forums into engaging and participatory platforms, participants commit themselves to discuss and endorse conclusions that provide a more effective way to implement the measures agreed. Such a process ensures that the measures are understood, accepted and that compliance can be guaranteed, minimising negative impacts and maximising positive outputs, with the involvement of various types of stakeholders.

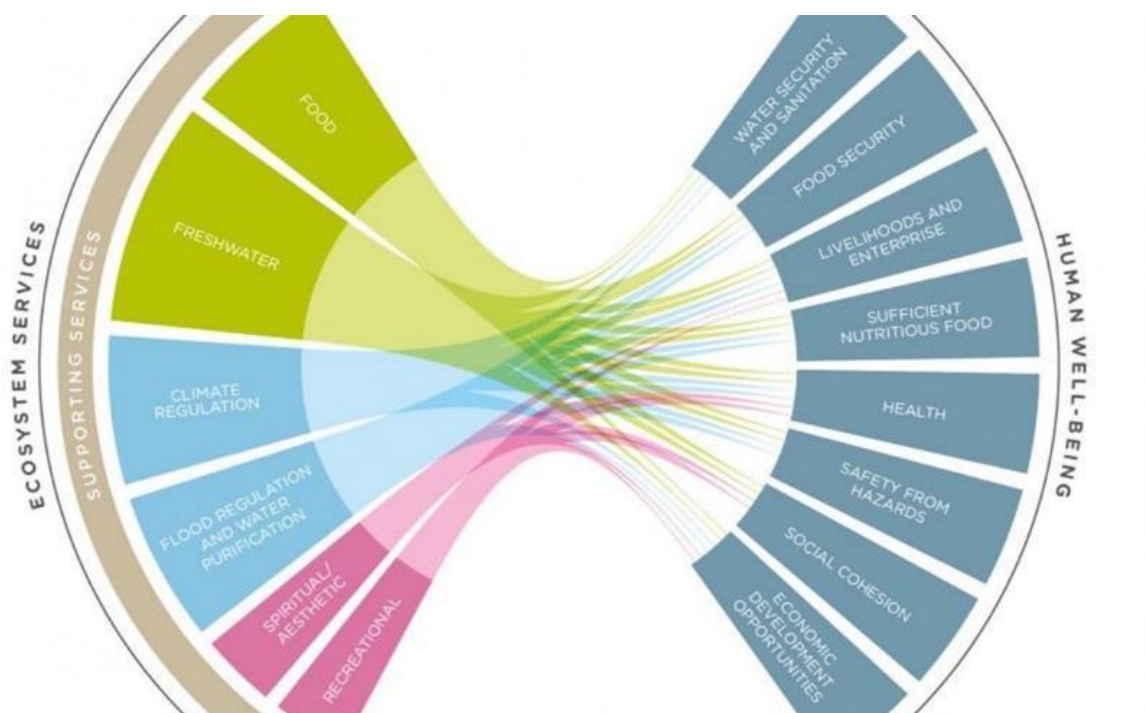
MEDAC (the Mediterranean Advisory Council) is an example of such a transformation, now providing common support and advice to implement the EU Common Fisheries Policy in the Mediterranean Sea.

Numerous fora have emerged involving the Mediterranean Sea, but not all of them are efficient. The key idea to attain efficiency is that the decision process involving private actors needs to be engaging, including for public authorities, if stakeholders within the forum are to be successful enough to reach an agreement. The Maritime Cluster for the Balearic Islands experience, presented in Rome, provides an illustration of how to fulfil this requirement.

By committing to governance processes, private actors can integrate more effectively into the community and become better involved in nature conservation. Thus, they can increase their understanding of how economic development and viability depend on the provision of ecosystem services and on properly maintained biodiversity and habitats. This awareness of their dependency on natural resources helps leverage their participation in biodiversity management actions as they realise the need to secure the basis of their economic activity in the long term.

Committing to Ecosystem-based management

Biodiversity is the keystone of our well-being, as we all depend on ecosystems and the services and goods they provide for our well-being, mostly through economic activities but also as regulators of climate, the water cycle, erosion and many other processes. Healthy ecosystems underpin our economic ability to deliver valuable services, for either provision, regulation, culture or support, as shown in the following graph.

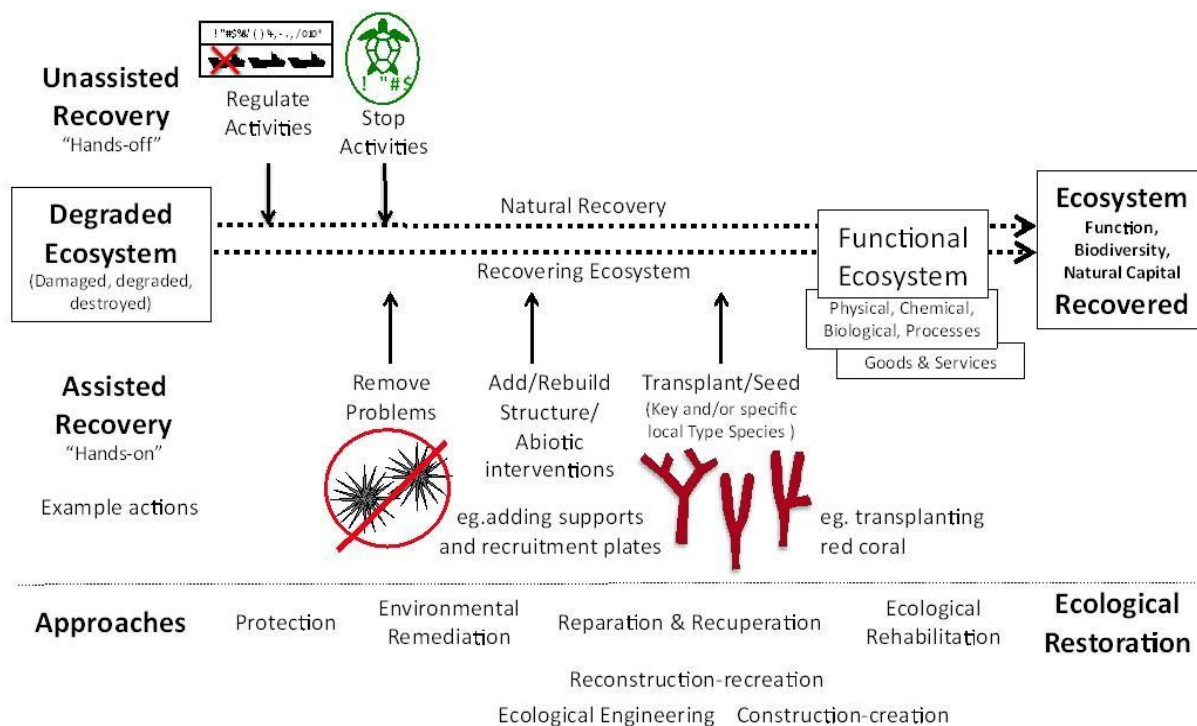


Source: IUCN Water, 2013

In the long run, healthy ecosystems shape the long-term economic and social development only if used sustainably. Making this message clear, we might expect a greater involvement from the private sector in effective ecosystem-based management approaches to ensure more sustainable ways and to take advantage of our shared natural capital to ensure economic profit in the future as well.

Diversifying opportunities to engage

There is a wide diversity of means to contribute to EBM, ranging from reducing the ecological and carbon footprint to actively engaging in ecological restoration and conservation management. From a private point of view, these can offer many potential business opportunities and assist in shifting behaviours and perceptions towards better sustainability. Unassisted recovery can be achieved by shifting harmful (or harmless) behaviours into sustainable and pro-biodiversity ones, even providing a competitive advantage. Assisted recovery, on the other hand, may open new market developments for the future.



Source: Chris Smith, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research

Engaging in co-responsibility

The key assumption to reduce the footprint of economic activities is to make the private actors aware of the co-responsibility they share with public actors and society at large to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. Co-responsibility is necessary because sustainable ecosystem management would benefit both conservation and economic actors, and human well-being in the long run.

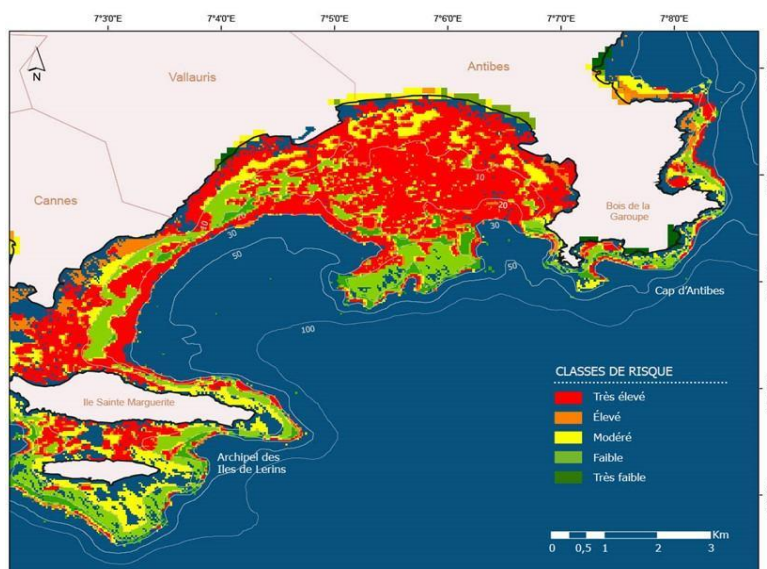
Numerous examples were mentioned, including marine aquaculture moving cage units away from sensitive areas, mini spatial plans developed for recreational boat users², or efforts to re-engineer coastal protection works using nature-based solutions³.

Getting involved in accurate risk assessments

Driving forces related to climate change are increasing abruptly. Erosion and coastal flooding are accelerating coastal hazards. Consecutive and cumulative impacts on private sector activities are becoming numerous. The loss of habitats, biodiversity, landscaping and environmental heritage can harm tourism development, fisheries and maritime transport infrastructures.

Private actors are well aware of these global changes. However, doubts about exact local impacts and lack of "regulation" of certain harmful activities concerning boat moorings, oil spills, ballast waters, etc. prevent them from changing behaviours now. A localised risk assessment directly involving stakeholders like the private sector can therefore offer room for negotiation and for actors to adapt, making their activities in the Mediterranean more resilient to climate change impacts.

Alessio Satta, from the MEDSEA Foundation, illustrated this situation with an example in the Gulf of Antibes. An accurate and relevant risk assessment, evaluated through the RAMOGE project, drove the interest of local authorities. As a result, they engaged to actively protect *Posidonia oceanica* beds and meadows in the region.



Source : RAMOGE coastal risks map (Satta et al, 2019)

² <http://www.observatoire-marin.com/mouillagepampelonneuk.htm>

³ For example, the removal of an estuarine seawall, with accompanying restoration of a saltmarsh behind the seawall.

Making behaviour towards sustainability economically profitable

Other means to engage the private sector in ecosystem-based management is to make their behaviour towards sustainability more profitable.

Fisheries provide a good example of this strategy, where conservation measures can lead to more productive marine ecosystems and biodiversity. Sustainable fishery practices lead to a measured harvesting of the resource at the best long-term rate, i.e. respecting the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).

Allowing the private sector to gain recognition and acknowledgment as part of its change in behaviour is another way to relate biodiversity protection and management to economic profitability. Moreover, a recognition mechanism might encourage customers to change their consumption patterns and choices. Hence, both private businesses and consumers can assist in the process of making those private actors engaged in sustainable behaviours and operations more profitable.

In brief, sustainable behaviour could be the only sound strategy for private actors through both direct economic profitability and better public image to drive their market share.

Still, economic incentives might be necessary to trigger a change in practices. An example highlighted was the engagement of local fishermen in Sicily to collect and monitor marine litter. An initial pecuniary incentive turned out to be the spark that reduced the reticence from private actors and allowed for a virtuous path that started with pilot interventions and became systematic over time.

Opening possibilities to delegate management

Although protected areas are closely related to public regulations, it might be relevant to question the legitimacy and efficiency of the best management practices to enforce protection. In places where public management has proven to lack the efficiency needed to actually protect and manage biodiversity, attempts have been made to delegate management to private ventures.

This does not mean a shift in management goals. These are still the responsibility of public authorities. Wildlife conservation and law enforcement remain the common premises of protected area management. However, delegating management to a private venture might facilitate initiatives for community development and local economic growth. It is also a means to mobilise private drivers and increase accountability, both towards public authorities and private actors.

Delegated and shared management should not be seen as exceptional. Land stewardship agreements are an example of such management delegations, with their number increasing in Europe. Through such agreements, public bodies and companies can establish voluntary agreements with other partners, either environmental organisations or private actors, to delegate the conservation of their land and sea areas. This allows small conservation actions to be carried out at a local, tailor-made scale. Added together, these conservation actions based on delegated management amount to millions of hectares and provide a model to bring society closer to management.

Compensation for conservation costs

Engaging private actors in conservation actions usually comes at a cost. Such is the case with the financial resources needed as incentives for local fishermen to collect and monitor marine litter in Sicily, estimated at €127,000. The action, set up by the fisheries local action group, gathered nearly one thousand 115-litre sacks containing marine litter, through 150 trips on fishermen's boats, 140 boats and an individual cost of €400 per outing. As another example, a fisheries local action group (FLAG) requires an average annual budget of €2M. Engagement by private actors may thus imply a certain and significant cost, at least to incentivise change.

Private financing through economic activities relying on ecosystem services is an ongoing issue at present. For instance, financial resources can be raised through landing fees on islands or entry tickets to protected areas. That is the case in contexts with high cultural and tourist appeal like Mediterranean islands, where tourist accommodation and service facilities could allocate a percentage of their turnover to environmental protection activities. The mobilisation of these resources as financial incentives could further foster the engagement of private actors in conservation activities. In these cases, economic costs and revenues would not be diverted from the private sector exclusively, but rather redistributed.

The cost of conservation actions is not necessarily offset by revenues in the long term. Engaging the private sector in opportunities within protected areas or related to improving the biodiversity conservation status (sustainable use, sustainable tourism...) is a lead and a must to build an economy that is biodiversity-conservation dependent. Income from these compensation schemes could provide resources for conservation, incentives to change private sector behaviour and assist in ensuring the economic sustainability of a balanced socio-ecological system.

Changes related to public image

Even without any financial incentives, examples of private actors involved in beach clean ups and diving and fishing for litter collection are numerous. Some private actors get involved in direct restoration activities by providing boats, diving equipment and divers. Private sector partnerships with non-governmental organisations can provide the resources to carry out conservation actions. These actions can take the shape of more sustainable technical solutions by, for instance, creating special natural biodegradable biopolymers and building frames and 3-d structures to support oyster reefs, mussel beds, and seagrass meadows.

These are high-level commitments because they can overtake the economic rationale of the private actor. They appeal to societal values. They make sense only if private sector management genuinely believes in proper biodiversity management and introduces conservation initiatives at the core of the company. These kinds of private actors are, for instance, fisheries local action group bearers. Their identification and involvement is a prime objective.

By informing the public of their initiatives and commitments, large- and medium-sized companies might also shift consumers' behaviours and global public involvement into sustainable biodiversity management.

What does 'engagement' mean?

Widespread compliance with commitments to conservation measures is a decisive requirement that leads to success. It is of utmost importance to acknowledge that the private sector will hardly commit itself for the sole sake of biodiversity. Private actors will not comply with measures that are irreconcilable with their economic sustainability. Neither will they comply with measures that have been decided without their input. That is why engagement is so important. Engagement means being part of a common goal, namely Ecosystem-based sustainable management. Inclusive models of governance are key, as is taking into consideration the private actors' drivers for action.

How to engage the private sector?

The MED Biodiversity Protection Community's Rome event was a great opportunity to share best practices and in-depth knowledge on co-management and governance as a means to engage the private sector. The Biodiversity conservation community is providing tested tools and generating reliable knowledge. Local, regional and public agencies from many Mediterranean countries discussed

Ecosystem-based responses to Mediterranean biodiversity conservation challenges with non-governmental organisations, research institutes and private companies.

Speakers and contributors at the Rome debate agreed that there is a need for a good mix of incentives, publicity, stakeholder involvement, coordination and governance. They identified premises, expectations and key ingredients like transparency, mutual trust within the partnership and shared objectives. Contextualisation, efficiency, credibility, legitimacy and dispute or conflict resolution were also listed as requirements to achieve effective private sector engagement. Discussions took place to develop these broad ideas.

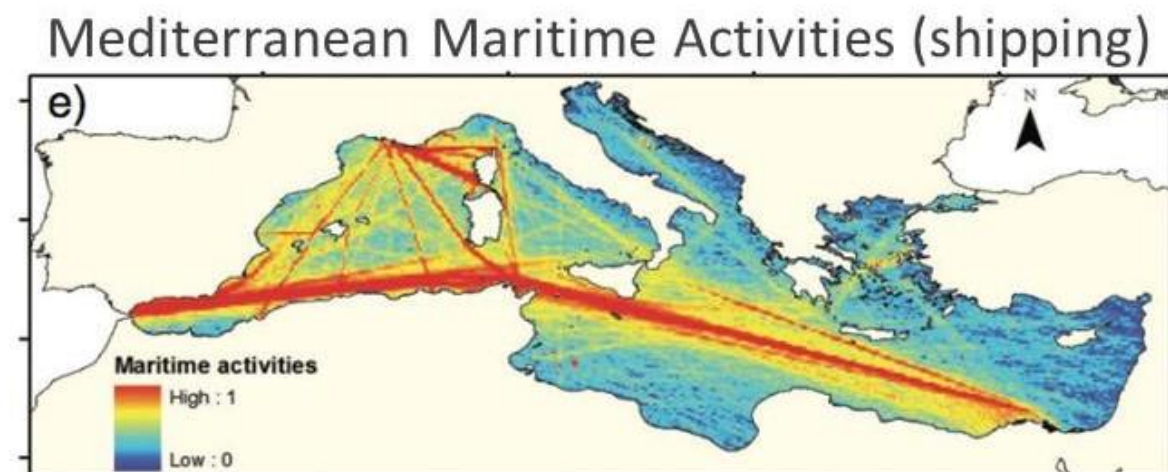
Which territories to consider

Enforced and well-managed protected areas are powerful tools for effective biodiversity conservation and protection, though their management should be strengthened to ensure ecological connectivity through network design and best-practices management.

Working beyond protected areas with an ecosystem approach helps address transboundary impacts by presenting actions that ensure more sustainable ways of using natural capital in the Mediterranean (local knowledge, participatory approaches, co-responsibility, effective public-private partnerships).

Providing reliable knowledge to increase responsibility

Monitoring and addressing the increasing cumulative impacts of pressures and threats in key ecological areas is crucial. Data and science are the basis of efficient management and should be a priority to implement co-management, or bottom-up management approaches. Such public knowledge is the basis for making actors aware and responsible for their impacts and leading them to address the issue of cumulative impacts among the actors involved. Thus, data are being made available to depict and report on sectoral impacts, as shown below with the shipping example.



Coll et al., 2010. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*

Facilitating supporting frameworks

For participatory approaches to succeed, it is of critical importance to provide a specific regulatory framework. Actors expect such a framework to give legal coverage to new governance structures, to define obligations and responsibilities or to establish standardised procedures. This framework sets the common ground and rules necessary to engage dissimilar actors. Any framework is preferable to an unorganised collaboration.

There is no need to create supporting frameworks from scratch. Existing ones can be efficient, considering the local contexts, history and objectives. For instance, in the Sicilian islands, communal administrations are still regarded and recognised as the legitimate facilitator for involving all the various actors in inclusive governance. Private actor engagement is more successful when embedded in an existing regulatory and structural framework, as long as the history of this framework fosters confidence among stakeholders.

The need for a common framework does not require defining this framework a priori. Many alternative governance frameworks already exist. One could consider different models, assess and evaluate them before selecting the one best suited to the local situation and objectives. There is no single optimal solution. It is possible to organise alternative governance models based on simple criteria, such as the way stakeholders are involved or the outreach or the impact of decisions.

Alternative Governance Models

- Regional Sea Assembly
Multisector Assembly



- Advisory Alliance



	Non-Binding decisions	Binding decisions
No stakeholder involvement	Cross-border Platforms	Regional Sea Convention +
Stakeholders involved	Advisory Alliance	Regional Sea Assembly Multisector Assembly

Source: Iolanda Piedra Mañes, Maritime Cluster of the Balearic Islands

A framework, however, is not an objective by itself. The purpose is not to comply with the process organised within, but to transcend it in order to achieve a global objective. However, misleading frameworks and focusing on processes can turn into distrust and uncertainty, especially if there is no clear institutional or political support.

In the absence of public agency or political leadership, actors should consider explicit self-organisation as a reasonable option. Co-management committees for fisheries are a possible example, operating at an appropriate geographical scale where stakeholders are structured. The committees include a general and a technical sub-committee. The technical sub-committee develops a management plan which includes a socio-economic programme that will be validated before being legally issued as an order.

The Maritime Strategy of Catalonia adopted in May 2018 has been combined with a decree on the governance model for professional fishing, issued in June 2018. The decree formally regulates the co-management of fisheries. In this case, the policy ensured a central place in governance to the fisheries industry as a driving pillar of the national Blue Economy sector. The decree provides rights and responsibilities to the different actors identified. As an ongoing project, another decree should provide a specific label for fish catches from locally co-managed fisheries. Such a new framework would help gain consumers' recognition of sustainable fishing practices.

Working together

By building cooperation and trust

Co-management consists of mutual acceptance and respect for the different roles among stakeholders, though each one tends to consider itself to be the key player. Therefore, the facilitator plays a decisive part. The facilitator is in charge of fostering mutual understanding and has to promote the willingness of everyone to seek compromise and renounce private points of view. Whether the facilitator succeeds in instilling these behaviours or not, the facilitator will build a common engagement. Only then can the facilitator expect to reach a common ground for co-management that is further ahead in the quest for social, economic and environmental sustainability in the interest of the system as a whole.

Indeed, cooperation projects are of primary concern. They improve relationships among actors within local communities in the long term. Cooperation projects are necessary in order to build practical regional and thematic working groups to foster socio-economic development around co-management initiatives.

Among all the projects depicted during the event, the importance of building trust has always been asserted. Building trust relies on transparency around agendas and on addressing expectations. A good practice would be to promote participatory planning processes as part of any co-participatory approaches for managing natural resources, based on clear roles and responsibilities, a common code of conduct, recognition of the importance of community ownership for surveillance and enforcement, and room for flexibility and readjustments based on local experiences and following a feedback loop.

By mixing profiles from Public and Private sectors

The event allowed different profiles to share their experiences. John E. Scanlon, from African Parks, has worked in the private sector, in government and with the United Nations. Iolanda Piedra Mañes, from the Balearic Maritime Cluster, has experience teaching economics and is the president of private sector clusters. Jorge Ventocilla, now an independent expert, had an academic career before advocating for conservation before policy makers. Giampaolo Buonfilio, President of the Italian Cooperatives Alliance in the fisheries sector, also chairs a consortium that provides scientific studies and research. Bringing together such varied profiles provides opportunities to foster dialogue and understanding.

By focusing the collaboration on a well-defined objective

Focusing on one specific action allows going further and avoids global complexity. In order to make private actors the protagonists in the protection and sustainability activities, it can be efficient to pay exclusive attention to one clearly detailed activity: for instance, monitoring and collecting marine litter by local fishermen. This focus allows tasking reconnaissance exclusively to the targeted private actor with a single unitary budget. Focusing collaboration on one common objective is an efficient means to achieve significant results.

Speaking the same language

By considering economic profitability as a sound driver

Private actors rely on a simple objective: the profitability of their activities. This assumption has to be recognised and taken into account when trying to engage them in biodiversity protection and management. Raising awareness within the private sector on the short-term economical benefits versus the long-term economical benefits where sustainability of use is a fundamental concept is a clear need among private actors aiming at lasting benefits. It does not capture all the complexity of their own drivers, but it should be kept in mind and used.

For instance, economic profitability underlies the support for the concept of sustainable fisheries since that ensures the fishing activity can occur indefinitely and feed a growing population, while maintaining healthy and productive fish stocks and ecosystems. If the EU fish stocks could be restored, catches would increase by 50%, hence increasing profit for private actors and ensuring long-term sustainability.

By avoiding maximalist conservation objectives

Engaging with private actors implies that one should not be too exclusive in focusing on biodiversity conservation. A conservation project officer has to focus his/her work on projects linked to the conservation of biodiversity, while simultaneously recognising and embracing his/her relationships with the environment and people's activities.

While giving equal consideration to all stakeholders, co-management will always imply different kinds of prerequisites from the economic, social and biodiversity points of view. Those, if brought to the table in maximalist terms, i.e. with the aim of achieving the maximum possible results, will threaten the discussion outcomes, affecting potential positive outcomes and making the different positions irreconcilable.

Identify incentives, be inventive

Incentives are often seen as necessary tools to engage private actors. The fundamental question is to design incentives that will change the balance of profitability for the private sector no matter their behaviour, with some denying any impact made on the ecosystems, whereas others fully support their protection.

Incentives are not necessarily related to a funding mechanism. The incentive can be money as well as image, for instance. It is possible to increase market value by labelling good practices, such as in fisheries. The Marine Stewardship Council is engaging with non-governmental organisations, market actors and fisheries to support the sector in its transition toward sustainability. Non-governmental organisation pressure is an incentive that gives specific value to ecosystem-based management practices, making them economically profitable. The trend in recent years shows an increasing involvement of market actors and private sectors in fisheries improvement projects. Another incentive can be to rely on attracting technical resources, either traditional and scarce or modern and demanding, like young and well aware professionals who embrace the sustainability culture.

IV. The path forward

Civil society is increasingly demanding participatory approaches to get involved in local management, including biodiversity conservation and management. This deep-rooted trend can provide a more effective impulse, affecting public authorities as well as private actors who are held accountable for the impacts of their activities on biodiversity. It could well be, therefore, that participatory approaches will continue to bloom and not vanish as a passing fad.

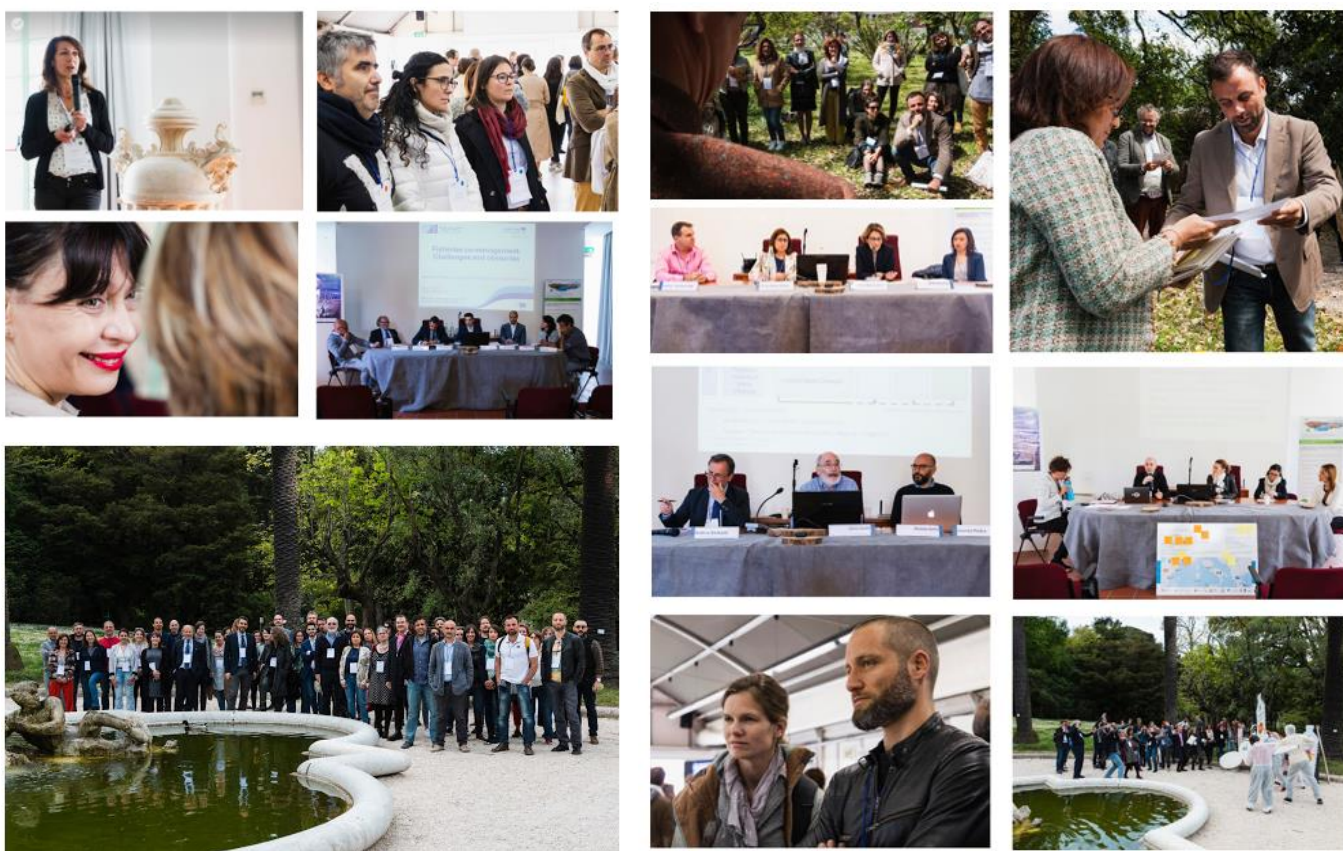
Efficient participatory approaches are demanding, however. They build on dissimilar objectives, ways of thinking, expectations and habits. Through the Interreg MED Biodiversity Protection Community, the various stakeholders affecting our Mediterranean environment are trying to determine the conditions for efficiently engaging with private actors. The path for achieving a common objective towards sustainability is not straightforward. Each engagement has to be built using the fundament of ecosystem-based management on a case-by-case basis, with flexibility and a common objective, and a healthy and sustainable Mediterranean for people and ecosystems in mind.

IV. Annexes

[Open Seminar Interactive Agenda & Presentation 7 May](#)

[Community Building Event Interactive Agenda & Presentation 6 May](#)

[PHOTO GALLERY](#)



Twitter gallery: [#PANACeAevent2019](#) - [#BiodiversityProtection](#)

Press release: [Environmental actors meet in Rome for better Mediterranean protection](#)

List of participants upon request

[Additional material](#)



Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform



<https://www.facebook.com/PanaceaInterregMed>



<https://biodiversity-protection.interreg-med.eu>



panacea-med@uma.es



@MEDCommunity3_2 #PANACeA_Med



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

