

Interreg
Mediterranean



**BIODIVERSITY
PROTECTION**

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community Encounter

**Ecosystem-based Adaptation: A Pulse for
Transformative Changes in the Mediterranean**
Malaga, Spain, 14-16 October 2019

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Executive Summary: Igniting Transformative Changes in the Mediterranean. An Open Call for Policy Makers to Lead the Change

The **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community** celebrated a three-day encounter in Malaga (Spain) to share and discuss effective actions towards “**Ecosystem Based Adaptation: A Pulse for Transformative Changes in the Mediterranean**”.

This encounter celebrated **three-years of collaborative work** by a Community of nearly 200 Mediterranean and European institutions to support a more effective management of biodiversity, ensuring proper ecosystem functions across the Mediterranean.

The **Community** has led the development of the “**Mediterranean Declaration for an Ecosystem Based Approach**”, a [common vision for joint action](#) to better manage our natural resources and reduce the multiple pressures and their impacts on Mediterranean biodiversity.

Based on the scientific findings and results of a wealth of projects and initiatives carried out in the Mediterranean between 2017-2019, **the Community further invites Policy Makers to:**

1. Improve the conservation status of biodiversity by:

- Empowering a **coherent, interconnected, well-managed and resourceful network of Marine Protected Areas** that cover a science-based target of at least 30% of the Mediterranean Sea;
- Sustaining the **resilience of natural ecosystems** to deliver **ecosystem services** to local communities and stakeholders reliant on the Mediterranean Sea;
- Establishing **more effective policy processes** to expedite the designation of new MPAs with appropriate levels of protection to achieve **science-based conservation targets**;
- Facilitating the development of **macro-regional Biodiversity Restoration Plans** to preserve our **natural capital** safeguarding the future of the people living throughout the Mediterranean region;
- Developing stronger **legal frameworks** for marine conservation in and around MPAs, ensuring the coercive capacity of state, local and MPA management bodies to undertake and enforce effective actions;
- Developing more effective **governance frameworks for PA management**, allowing the engagement of local communities and stakeholders through **co-management schemes** and providing MPAs with the necessary **management capacity** and **technical resources** to empower them to fulfil their objectives and **monitor their effectiveness** in terms of their contribution to biodiversity conservation and social and economic progress;
- Contributing to science-based decision-making processes by **downscaling and sharing a common approach to monitoring efforts**





- Integrating **social sciences** in the “*interdisciplinary knowledge package*” required for addressing biodiversity conservation across MPAs in the Mediterranean.
- Supporting continuous **networking, interdisciplinary training** and **knowledge exchange** amongst professionals working in MPA management bodies to build knowledge on Mediterranean ecology and human use patterns of natural resources, advancing excellence in biodiversity conservation.

2. Support and adopt priority actions in sensitive hotspot areas in the Mediterranean Sea, namely:

- Working **beyond protected areas and national jurisdictions** to address the **transboundary challenges** of **conserving mobile species and addressing impacts** such as pollution, fishing, and climate change using existing ratified mechanisms such as the Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas in the Mediterranean;
- Step-up the development of a **multi-level governance** of the **Mediterranean**, allowing for a strong political and institutional framework to address our shared challenges at different policy levels;
- Allocating **statutory powers** and **funding** to macro-regional agreements and other international, conservation instruments, strengthening the effective, **transboundary governance** of the **Mediterranean** region and promoting cooperation between states;
- **Mainstreaming** biodiversity considerations into the planning of sectoral policies to ensure the development of a truly **sustainable, Blue Economy**, putting **marine conservation** and the **ecosystem-based approach** at the centre of socioeconomic development across the Mediterranean;
- Making **smart, sustainable use** of Mediterranean natural resources by favouring the planning of economic development and conservation measures according to **eco-regions and ecologically functioning units**;
- Defining clear responsibilities and clarifying the roles of the different institutional frameworks in the Mediterranean to speed up **consensus**, effective **leadership** and **transboundary coordination**;
- Identifying and mitigating **potential conflicts** between conservation and use of marine resources outside Protected Areas through adequate, **ecosystem-based, Marine Spatial Planning**;
- Address and respond to **cumulative and transboundary pressures** currently threatening Mediterranean biodiversity and therefore our human wellbeing;
- Ensuring the allocation of **financial resources** to the urgent task of preserving **biodiversity** in the Mediterranean as a source of **wealth, jobs, health** and **wellbeing**, financing **innovation, nature-based solutions** and the **sustainable use** of natural capital.





Existing **science-based solutions** tested in the Mediterranean provide clear guidance for priority actions that can be readily applied to ignite **transformative changes** to support the conservation of biodiversity. For example, achieving **Targets 2 and 4** of the **EU Biodiversity Strategy** (“Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services” and “Ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources”, respectively) could be addressed -amongst other actions- by:

- Restoring nature in public spaces;
- Developing co-management schemes to support the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Shifting environmentally harmful subsidies; and
- Implementing Ecosystem-based Spatial Planning & Management.

These actions are just indicative examples amongst a wealth of **innovative solutions** that can be implemented with the **tools** and **methods** available at the **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community**. These solutions are there to inform and support **science-based policies** geared at scaling-up and mainstreaming successful actions that result in positive, local impacts that add-up at regional level. The knowledge is there, its application only requiring **leadership** and a **will** to act.





Table of contents

Executive Summary

1. About this Report

2. The need for transformative changes in the Mediterranean and the response from Mediterranean institutions

3. Igniting change through effective policies: recommendations for Policy makers

4. Annex: Additional materials

- [Agenda 14-16 October 2019 Malaga and access to presentations](#)
- [Speakers Booklet](#)
- [Photo Gallery](#)
- [Video Gallery](#)
- [Press release ES - Málaga le toma el pulso a cambios transformadores para proteger los ecosistemas mediterráneos](#)
- [Press release FR: Malaga donne l'impulsion pour des changements profonds vers une meilleure protection des écosystèmes en méditerranée](#)

LIST OF ACRONYMS FREQUENTLY USED IN THIS REPORT

CBD: United Nations
Convention for Biological
Diversity

EBM: Ecosystem-based
Management

EBSA: Ecologically and
Biologically Significant Area

EcAp: Ecosystem Approach

FRA: Fisheries Restricted Areas

GES: Good Environmental
Status

ICZM: Integrated Coastal Zone
Management

IMAP: Integrated Monitoring
and Assessment Programme

MedPAN: Network of Marine
Protected Area managers in the
Mediterranean

MAP: Mediterranean Action Plan

MPA: Marine Protected Area

MSFD: Marine Strategy
Framework Directive

MSP: Maritime Spatial Planning

OHH: Ocean and Human Health

PA: Protected Area

SDG: United Nation's Sustainable
Development Goals

SSF: Small scale fisheries

UN: United Nations





1. About this report

The **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community** featured by the **PANACeA** project celebrated a three-day encounter in Malaga (Spain) on 14-16 October 2019 to share and discuss effective actions towards “**Ecosystem-based Adaptation: A Pulse for Transformative Changes in the Mediterranean**”. This encounter celebrated **three years of collaborative work** achieved by this Community to safeguard mechanisms and tools that support a more effective management of biodiversity, ensuring proper ecosystem functions across the Mediterranean. The event was a joined effort led by the ETC-UMA as coordinator of the **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community**, with the support of the **City of Malaga** (Andalusia, Spain), the **Alborania Museum** and the **Observatory for the Urban Environment of the City of Malaga** (OMAU).

The event profiled the latest achievements concerning collaborative science, management and policy and demonstrated the work of over 200 institutions engaged in cooperation for biodiversity conservation related actions. It also shed light on its major future steps and planned actions for the upcoming years, informing on their alignment with post 2020 regional and global targets.

The extensive exchange of ideas and experiences resulted in a valuable set of ideas and recommendations identifying some of the key actions that need to be undertaken to preserve the functionality of Mediterranean ecosystems, in order to safeguard the delivery of basic services -such as clean water, clean air and food provision- on which our society depends.

The **key messages, conclusions and recommendations** that resulted from the meeting are summarized in this Report, structured around the **need for transformative changes** in the Mediterranean, the **response from Mediterranean institutions** and the **key recommendations for Policy Makers**.





2. The need for transformative changes in the Mediterranean and the response from Mediterranean institutions

There is overwhelming evidence that the Earth's systems are under unprecedented pressure¹. International panels of experts and scientists agree that we are in the midst of an **interconnected climate crisis**, a **biodiversity crisis** and a **natural resources exhaustion crisis**, at a point in which we are about to double our need for natural resources in the near future. While for a long time a vision was shared that we could make the World's economies sustainable and its societies resilient, there is currently no single example of any country that has succeeded in contributing to economic growth and to environmental sustainability at the same time. As the Earth's system continues to erode, we are reaching the limits of availability and there is not a place in the Planet that is immune from these dynamics.

Our future is deeply embedded in society's structures. It is determined by the way we live, by the way we travel, the way we move, the way we eat, the way we consume, the way we produce, the way we communicate...and thereby by our demand for energy supply, for food production or raw materials, like rare metals, for example. Dealing with our current **societal challenges** - encompassed within the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) of the **United Nations** - requires awareness on the **trade-offs** and **conflicts** that we face in addressing them and recognizing the notion and value of **natural capital**. We need to go through some **fundamental shifts** in the way we see the society of the future and our production and consumption patterns, placing natural capital at the core of our decision-making processes. As we reach the limits of the Earth, we need to reflect on a simple question, that demands a complex response: **how do we approach the transformation of our societal systems? And what paths of action can we follow together?** Defining solutions to transform the world can only be accomplished through "togetherness" and co-design of feasible and inclusive actions and measures. This is the only way to qualify the achievement of the **SDGs**.

Through the past 25 years, an international community of "biodiversity guardians" has developed involving representatives of public and private organizations that have sought to advance solutions to protect biodiversity, unfortunately without success. Tipping points -situations in which ecosystems experience a shift to a new state, with significant changes to biodiversity and the services to people it underpins- are being reached both at a regional and global scale. If we are to succeed in the goal of preserving the Earth's biodiversity, we need to **reinvent our future**. And we can only do so by applying a **comprehensive approach** that recognizes the need to **rethink our** (food, energy, transport) **systems all together**, as the only way to reshape society.

Preserving nature can no longer be left to biodiversity guardians alone. The goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through **transformative changes** across **economic**, **social**, **political** and **technological** factors, facilitating the design of actions that can be embraced by society at large.

¹ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Report on the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean 2019 (SoED 2019)





What is an ecosystem and why is it important to support its conservation?

Ronald Uhel (European Environment Agency) explains it [in this short, 2-minute video](#)

Why do we need transformative changes?

Tatjana Hema (UN Environment) explains why [in this short, 1-minute video](#).

What does this mean for the Mediterranean?

For the last 25 years, the international community has strived to operationalize the **ecosystem-based paradigm** or **approach**. The ecosystem-based approach (EcAp) is founded on recognizing the full array of interactions within an ecosystem, including humans, rather than considering single issues, species, or ecosystem services in isolation. Since then, in the **Mediterranean**, many gaps have been filled in understanding what needs to be done to reverse the current trends. Unfortunately, we still have not reached a mechanism that effectively puts all the available knowledge into practice to trigger the necessary transformative changes in a region known for its unique biodiversity and rich cultural variety.

What is the ecosystem-based approach and why do we need to support its application?

Peter Mackelworth (Blue World Institute) explains it [in this short, 1-minute video](#).

Khalil Attia (UNEP MAP RAC/SPA) introduces another vision [in this short, 2-minute video](#).

That is why the **Biodiversity Protection Community** led the development of a “**Mediterranean Declaration for an Ecosystem-based Approach**”, a [common vision for joint action](#) by Mediterranean and European institutions to better manage our natural resources and reduce the multiple pressures and impacts on Mediterranean biodiversity, for a sustainable future. The Declaration is a consensus statement towards understanding and managing transboundary and cumulative impacts of human activity in Mediterranean ecosystems.

Why is the ecosystem-based Declaration so important for the Mediterranean?

Paolo Lombardi (WWF Mediterranean) explains it [in this short, 2-minute video](#)

It offers a comprehensive, integrated, ecosystem-based and cross-cutting approach for the conservation and management of the coastal and marine environment, advocating for collaborative mechanisms, tools and actions, based on the following consensus:

1. The current state of biodiversity is dire and human use of natural resources is not sustainable in the Mediterranean region.
2. New marine protected areas (MPAs) should be designated in underrepresented habitats and the integrity and management of existing ones should be strengthened and ensured using principles of ecological network design and best practices management sharing.





3. Local community co-management is a powerful tool for participatory decision-making that needs to be empowered for enhanced decentralised governance of biodiversity and natural resources.
4. 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.
5. Working beyond protected areas and national boundaries is necessary to address transboundary mobile species conservation and impacts such as pollution, fishing, and climate change and requires the use of ecoregional planning approaches and units that account for multiple hierarchical scales to reach a Good Environmental Status.
6. Using spatial units of management and protection with distinct ecological functions where critical processes such as ecological connections are strongest require better policies and tools reflecting the transboundary nature of biodiversity for an effective management and to ensure the persistence of natural resources and ecosystem services.
7. A regionally accepted ecoregional planning unit and platform designed upon territorial and scientific consensus is essential. Ecoregional planning and management will encompass multiple country commitments across the Mediterranean, together with macro-regional strategies.
8. Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas, transboundary jurisdictions developed under the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Mediterranean Action Plan and that have the consensus of Contracting Parties, are an underutilised platform that can be used as key planning approach for ecosystem-based management across EU and non-EU countries in the Mediterranean. Understanding and managing these units and their connectivity is key for proper Ecosystem Functioning of cross-sectoral and integrative mechanisms in order to preserve Mediterranean natural resources through the involvement of society at large.

What do we need to do in order to succeed in applying these transformative changes?

How does the “Mediterranean Declaration for an Ecosystem-based Approach” contribute?

Vedran Kikolić (European Commission) explains it [in this short, 1-minute video](#)

Where can we look for solutions to move this vision forward?

The **Mediterranean Biodiversity Community** has piloted the creation of a partnership network and successfully tested a full array of science-based **methodologies**, **protocols** and **tools** to support **ecosystem-based management** in the Mediterranean. The initiatives undertaken can inspire solutions for adoption at a wider scale ranging from local implementation to sharing regional standards for enhanced harmonization across the region and guide decision-making processes in support of **transformative changes**.

Section 3 of this document provides a reference to some of such solutions. A more comprehensive repository can be found in the [Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Tools Catalogue](#).





3. Igniting change through effective policies: recommendations for Policy makers

Igniting **transformative changes** in the Mediterranean requires **smart policies** that support a profound **shift** in socio-economic approaches and societal behaviours towards **biodiversity conservation**. Based on the scientific findings and results of a wealth of projects and initiatives carried out in the Mediterranean between 2016-2019 by the **Biodiversity Protection Community**, the Community invites Policy Makers to:

1. Create the conditions to safeguard our future: Towards Biodiversity Restoration Plans in the Mediterranean to preserve and restore key ecological assets.

A prerequisite to undertaking transformative changes to address our current environmental crises is recognizing the need to engage in **crisis management** and acknowledging the need to **invest for the future**. Just as in the past economic crises have been met with recovery plans, preserving ecosystem services requires **national biodiversity recovery** plans that dictate coherent policies and actions to restore our **natural capital**. Such plans must be underpinned by operational and financial mechanisms to reduce habitat conversion and fragmentation and to restore degraded ecosystems. We need to move away from the idea of “*protection for the sake of protection*” to **ecosystem-based management**. From “*species control*” to **habitat restoration**, to sustain **ecological resilience**, **investing in core natural assets** so that they can remain **highly productive**. These plans need to be seen in the context of integrating ecosystem services into the valuation analysis and systems of national economic accounts, moving from “*economics of welfare*” to a **social economy of wellbeing**.

Science-based solutions available from the city of Marseille & Project POSBEMED

As part of its development strategy, the city of **Marseille** is investing in enhancing the ecological resilience of its territory. In the past years, it has set up a large number of projects, amongst which:

- The creation of Calanques National Park (the only peri-urban park in Europe).
- The development of an immersed, artificial reef field in its Southern bay.
- The implementation of the Bay Contract for the good quality of all aquatic environments.

Recently, the City Council adopted a local **Biodiversity Strategy** to improve coordination amongst the different city's departments and to support local actions to protect biodiversity. The plan associated to the implementation of the Strategy covers the greening of streets, the maintenance of agricultural plots and wastelands in the urban fringe and the increase in **ecological continuity solutions** on **land** and **sea**, amongst other measures. The City has also recently taken on board the findings, recommendations and tools developed by **Project POSBEMED** to start making a more sustainable management of the ***Posidonia oceanica* banquettes** and the **dunes** found in its coastal ecosystems.





Although there is clear scientific evidence and consensus on the ecological role and relevance of ***Posidonia oceanica*** and **dunes** in coastal ecosystems, the lack of a consistent legal framework and existing social perceptions are preventing their sustainable management. New approaches are needed to focus on preserving ecological functions and so the conservation of the integrated coastal environment, considering how management practices affect the health of the entire land-sea ecosystem and the resilience of the coastline. The set of guidelines that include a **Governance Strategy** and **Action Plan** to address this challenge developed by POSBEMED is providing:

- An update to the existing perceptions by different stakeholders and the existing policy framework for the management of *Posidonia oceanica* banquettes;
- A Guide on existing methods and tools for the sustainable use of seagrass banquettes and associated dune systems; and;
- An action framework for the Mediterranean and a locally oriented toolkit with recommendations for the sound management of *Posidonia* and dune systems.

For more information please visit: <https://posbemed.interreg-med.eu/>

2. Ensure a truly sustainable Blue Economy: Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into the planning of sectorial policies.

Achieving a **Good Environmental Status** for the **Mediterranean** will not be possible if the real **value of natural capital** is not recognized and accounted for across all economic decision-making processes, especially those connected to an emerging **blue economy**.

As the **blue economy** develops, the **ecosystem-based approach** provides the right approach to understand how marine ecosystems work, providing guidance for an intervention logic that allows using marine resources sustainably across all economic sectors, mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into the planning of sectorial policies. Valuing ecosystems for their productivity - including mitigation and adaptation to climate change- requires developing a **taxonomy of ecosystem services**, so that we can better understand what needs to be managed and what proper management means, setting up structures for monitoring systems accordingly. With the right monitoring systems in place, we will be able to further promote the co-responsibility of those economic sectors that make use of natural capital to internalize the cost of pollution and natural resource depletion, sharing the burden of sustaining ecological resilience and promoting the preservation and restoration of key ecosystems and their components.





Science-based solutions available from Project PHAROS4MPAs

With the development of the **blue economy**, several maritime sectors are increasingly likely to operate more frequently both inside and in the vicinity of Mediterranean MPAs, resulting in increased environmental impacts. MPA managers tend to address interactions between maritime sectors and protected areas in an isolated manner, and management effectiveness and MPA networking are in their infancy regarding this issue. As part of the **PHAROS4MPAs project**, a set of recommendations has been developed to improve the coordination between MPAs (and their conservation goals) and maritime economic sectors. The recommendations focus on the necessary practical collaboration between MPAs and the following sectors: **offshore wind energy, maritime traffic and ports, cruise, leisure boating, recreational fisheries, aquaculture and small-scale fisheries**. The aim is to achieve enhanced management effectiveness for marine protected areas by raising **awareness, building capacity, and networking** supported by the inclusion of MPA network issues in the national maritime spatial plans that EU Mediterranean States are developing by 2021 and in the strategies developed for maritime sectors. The outcomes of the **PHAROS4MPAs** project include delivering common capitalisation baselines, recommendations, and policy tools adapted for the **MedPAN network, MSP** authorities, the **European Commission**, the **Barcelona Convention**, and the various maritime sectors.

For more information please visit: <https://pharos4mpas.interreg-med.eu/>

Science-based solutions available from Project PANACeA

The **Biodiversity Protection Community** featured by the **PANACeA project** has developed the **Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform**, whose objective is to give visibility to effective methodologies, key project results, and actions towards biodiversity protection performed in the context of the Interreg MED funded Community of projects, as well as to other Interreg MED projects and partners. This platform provides a gateway to the spatial data generated by the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community, and a knowledge reference (enriched with relevant external sources) on protected areas, ecoregions, and environmental pressures to support regional environmental policy on biodiversity protection, natural resource management, and sustainable growth in Mediterranean protected areas and beyond. The Platform's map viewer is developed to spatially represent data and information generated by the projects of the Community. The **Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform** can be easily accessed by anyone interested in the themes of biodiversity protection and the implementation of an ecosystem approach to the Mediterranean. Further connections may be developed to ensure a wider spatial, temporal, and thematic coverage of the data.

For more information please visit: <http://panaceaweb.adabyron.uma.es>





3. Make a smart use of our natural capital: Favour planning according to ecoregions.

Managing “**ecoregions**”² - the spatial boundaries of species diversity and functioning ecosystems- and fully protecting a proportion of these ecoregions is key, as they define the space where critical processes must be managed and maintained to allow marine resources and biodiversity to persist into the future. Sub-regional approaches to planning ecoregions should be encouraged, taking into consideration their singular specificities to approach challenges brought by anthropogenic uses (i.e. overfishing). **Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas** can be used as representative “Planning Units” of these ecoregions, as they are scientifically and politically accepted through formal consensus processes under the **United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and **UN Environment**.

4. Downscale and share a common approach to monitoring efforts and integrating social sciences in the “knowledge package” required to addressing biodiversity conservation.

To better understand the transboundary impact of global environmental challenges such as climate change and identify relevant trends, we need to **downscale** and **share a common approach** to monitoring efforts and to the analysis of climate processes and their effects on sub-regions and local areas. We need standardized, homogeneous **monitoring programmes in all regions** for inventorying and mapping not only coastal and marine species and habitats but also socio-economic activities and the pressures exerted on them, based on the ecological objectives, targets and indicators set forth in the **Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme** and related **Assessment Criteria (IMAP)** of the **Barcelona Convention**.

Scientific data are required to gather evidence that can effectively support decision-making processes. However, igniting transformative change requires managing not only ecological systems, but also **socio-economic systems**. Therefore, **social sciences** need to be integrated as part of the “knowledge package” required to addressing biodiversity conservation, restoration and management plans in the Mediterranean.



² Ecoregions, are defined as relatively large units of land or water containing a distinct assemblage of natural communities sharing a large majority of species, dynamics, and environmental conditions (WWF, 2014).





Science-based solutions available from Project AMAre

Mediterranean MPAs are in need of data to identify key pressures, to understand the effects of human activities, plan concrete actions to protect coastal and marine ecosystems, and monitor the effectiveness of the protection measures implemented. At present, MPA managers are often not aware of the current status of their protected areas and the efficacy of conservation measures due to lack of historical data and monitoring schemes in these regions. **Fine- scale, quantitative information** provided through **monitoring** is crucial to inform management about the effects of protection measures and the sustainability of human uses. This quantitative information should be gathered by using appropriate sampling methods with the necessary statistical power to detect ecologically, economically and socially relevant changes compared to external, non-protected areas. To address this need, the **AMAre project** adopted a common monitoring approach to assess the effect of human stressors on three specific habitats: *Cystoseira spp.*, *Posidonia oceanica*, and coralligenous formations.

Project AMAre is showing that close **collaboration** between **scientists** and the **MPA managers** is leading to **in-depth knowledge** on both the **distribution of biodiversity** and on the **distribution of human uses**, through the creation of a spatial geoportal that can be used within each MPA and across MPAs. This is a good example of the tools available to increase and share knowledge and support a common monitoring system in MPAs. Moreover, the project has also developed a common management framework to assist MPAs fulfil their conservation objectives.

For more information please visit: <https://amare.interreg-med.eu/>

Science-based solutions available from Project MPA-ADAPT

The effects of climate change and global warming are particularly alarming for the Mediterranean Sea, which is warming faster than the global oceans. The **MPA-ADAPT** project has piloted the development of a **network of MPA “sentinel” sites** using a collaborative data infrastructure to support the gathering of relevant data on climate change. The Project developed **5 standard protocols** as a practical guide to track climate-related impacts in Mediterranean MPAs and beyond, following the requirements of the **Ecosystem Approach** and in the framework of the **UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention**. The resulting outputs of the protocols provide key information to support **climate change mitigation strategies** and effective **adaptation plans** in Mediterranean MPAs. By implementing the proposed protocols, important physical and biological data can be collected to understand climate change and seawater warming in the Mediterranean, and to support the drafting and implementation of adequate management strategies by Mediterranean MPAs. The necessary materials to implement these protocols is estimated to cost €1800 per MPA.

For more information please visit: <https://mpa-adapt.interreg-med.eu/>

[Watch here a 2-minute video introduction to MPA-Adapt](#) by Joaquim Garrabou (ICM-CSIC)





5. Make the most of available tools to preserve biodiversity: Revisiting the role and needs of Protected Areas.

Protected Areas (PAs) have proven to be one of the most effective tools to preserve biodiversity. We need PAs to sustain the **ecological coherence** and **capability** of **natural ecosystems** to deliver **services and to ensure resilience to climate change and other impacts on biodiversity**. There is general scientific consensus that we need to protect at least 30% of the Oceans through Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to achieve effective protection. Achieving such protection in the Mediterranean requires a coherent network of MPAs that are **correctly placed, coherently designed, well connected and effectively managed**.

The Aichi target of effectively protecting 10% of the Ocean by 2020 has not been achieved. Stepping up to the 30% scientific target will require creating **national accountability systems** and **indicators**, as well as a **strong political commitment** coupled with **adequate financial and human resources** to:

- Adequately **distribute protection efforts** across the Mediterranean.
- Establish **stronger, national legal and administrative frameworks** for MPAs.
- Designate “**no-take zones**” within MPAs.
- Seize the potential of MPAs as a network of **sentinel observatories** to deliver data on Essential Ocean Variables, allowing for long-term data collection.
- Staff and train the (management, scientific and technical) teams to enable them to properly **gather scientific data, monitor, enforce and manage** MPAs, including reaching out and working with local stakeholders.
- Set up **new governance systems** for MPAs to accelerate adaptation to climate change and to respond to emerging global environmental risks, as well as to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and land-sea interactions through the engagement of local stakeholders and effective **co-management schemes**.
- **Connect MPAs** and their teams across the region to protect key biodiversity areas and mobile species in the Mediterranean through an **integrated approach to biodiversity conservation** and to the planning of socio-economic activities, following an ecosystem-based approach and using available networks (i.e. **MedPAN** and the **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community**).





Science-based solutions available from Project AMAre

MPAs need coordinated strategies in support of sound **Maritime Spatial Planning** (MSP) in PAs, and to address conflict “hotspots” that require scientific-based, informed management decisions. The **AMAre WebGIS Geoportal** is a web-based portal that provides **MPA managers, decision-makers, scientists** and **citizens** with a user-friendly platform for sharing spatial data and information, which is instrumental for **taking informed decisions** for **MPA management**. Massive use of the AMAre Geoportal could have an effective impact on conservation and management of biodiversity within and outside PAs, as the tool supports maritime spatial planning and the monitoring of associated implementation plans. To date, the WebGIS Geoportal covers only the 5 pilot MPAs involved in the AMAre project. Its coverage may be extended to include relevant data and information to support the management of other Mediterranean MPAs and to share information between MPAs at the basin level. The project has been working on:

- The spatial planning and redistribution of human activities reducing conflicts and increasing synergies.
- The implementation of well-designed monitoring activities shared and comparable across MPAs/FRAs and habitats, allowing the objective to comparatively assess the performance of single MPAs versus an MPA network.
- The potential to individuate early warning indicators of changes.
- The development of common transfrontier regulations and development of best practices to deal with present and future drivers of changes.

For more information please visit: <https://amare.interreg-med.eu/>

Science-based solutions available from Project PlasticBustersMPAs

Impacts of **marine litter** on marine biota, on species inhabiting or passing by MPAs, remain poorly understood and addressed. The **PlasticBustersMPAs** project is working to identify prevention and mitigation measures that are urgently needed to address such impacts, providing MPA managers with practical solutions.

The main challenges for the diagnosis of the impacts of marine litter are to simultaneously detect the presence and effects of marine litter on the environment and biodiversity, including endangered species, finding suitable bio-indicator species that can allow diagnosing these impacts on biodiversity. The Project is bringing together different types of expertise from different institutions: the participation of scientific partners (research institutions, universities), NGOs, ministries, regional authorities and MPA managers facilitates the application of a common monitoring approach, allowing for the design and implementation of already existing, concrete solutions. Once verified as effective, these solutions are planned to be up-scaled and extended to other areas in the Mediterranean.

For more information please visit: <https://plasticbustersmpas.interreg-med.eu/>





Science-based solutions available from Project PANACeA

MedBioLitter is a **thematic database** on **interactions** between **biodiversity** and **marine litter** hosted in the **Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform**. Research efforts on marine litter are increasing our knowledge on the amount, composition and impacts on marine ecosystems, biodiversity and people. However, the number of studies is scattered and geographically unbalanced, making it difficult for policy makers, managers, the business sector and the general public to accurately understand the dimensions of such a modern challenge and the urgency to react.

Based on the **LITTERBASE** by **AWI** at global scale, **PANACeA** has developed **MedBioLitter**, an open database and spatial geoportal on current scientific knowledge related to marine litter and biodiversity interactions in the Mediterranean region.

Hosted by **ETC-UMA**, **PANACeA** lead partner, the **MedBioLitter** thematic database is regularly updated to include key scientific findings of projects developed by the **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community** and a network of partner institutions, active on marine litter research. The **MedBioLitter** database includes, in addition to the geolocation of more than 470 studied areas and species, direct access to more than 100 articles; the most recent scientific literature on marine litter and biodiversity in the Mediterranean including spatial data, metadata and authorship.

For more information please visit:

https://panaceacatalogue.adabyron.uma.es/gvsigonline/core/public_project_load/marinelitter/

6. Address cumulative and transboundary pressures: Resolving potential, growing conflicts between the protection and the use of marine resources outside of Protected Areas.

Research shows that cumulative environmental pressures have been underestimated in the Mediterranean region. Current knowledge confirms that climate change and other transboundary pressures, including pollution, are undermining Mediterranean ecosystems within and outside MPAs. While establishing MPAs reduces pressures on biodiversity from specific site and local impacts, protected areas are still exposed to impacts beyond their management boundaries. Protecting 30% of the Ocean resources will not render the desired results unless we set out to ensure the **sustainable use** of its other 70%.

Ensuring a sustainable use of the Mediterranean Sea requires a **mix of solutions**, such as fostering **nature-based solutions**; effectively implementing **Maritime Spatial Planning** following an ecosystem-based approach to the development of economic activities in the region; advancing **integrated management** of coastal areas and river basins to address land-sea interactions; applying **green taxes** that incentivize pro-environmental choices; or **eliminating harmful subsidies**, amongst many others. Europe's upcoming **Green New Deal** can pave the way to rollout and upscale such solutions, mobilizing the investment and financial resources to support transformative changes in Europe. But a **strong political commitment** from all Member States is required for investment to materialize, as well as continuing to build partnerships with other States through the **Barcelona Convention** and with stakeholders across the region so that transformative changes are undertaken across the Mediterranean and become therefore effective for the whole region.





Science-based solutions available from Project REINWASTE

The Government of Andalusia (Spain), through its Agency for Agriculture and Fisheries Development (AGAPA) is leading the **REINWASTE Project**, which seeks to reduce the environmental impact of agri-food production through the application of the principles of the **circular economy**. The Project aims to reduce the generation of inorganic waste in industrial food production processes, favouring the adoption of greener, innovative solutions. The project has allowed the quantification of inorganic waste by farmers and industries across 3 agri-food value chains (meat, dairy and horticulture) in 3 EU regions (Sud-Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur in France, Emilia-Romagna in Italy and in Andalusia in Spain, respectively), as well as pilot testing the application of solutions (such as the use of alternatives to conventional staking string clips and grippers; thin conventional mulching plastic alternatives; or testing valorization options for wastes with difficult management).

For more information please visit: <https://reinwaste.interreg-med.eu/>

Science-based solutions available from Project MitoMED+

Tourism is one of the main economic activities on Mediterranean coastal areas, generating almost 11% of their GDP. Tourism also puts pressure on the environment, yet there is still a large degree of uncertainty on how to put sustainability into practice in this strategic sector. Project **MitoMED+** has developed a set of indicators that destination management organizations are adopting as a reference to guide tourism investments and planning.

For more information please visit: <https://mitomed-plus.interreg-med.eu/>

These Projects are part of the **INTERREG MED Green Growth** and **Sustainable Tourism Communities**, respectively.

The **INTERREG MED Green Growth Community** is a network of projects that promote a sustainable development in the Northern and Eastern Mediterranean area based on the sound management of the natural resources, taking into account the effects on the labour market by promoting social inclusion as well as green growth and jobs.

More information on the Green Growth Community: <https://green-growth.interreg-med.eu/>

The **INTERREG MED Sustainable Tourism Community** brings together institutions and professionals developing projects to study, test and capitalise innovative instruments and actions towards the enhancement of tourism sustainability in the Mediterranean.

More information on the Sustainable Tourism Community: <https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/>





7. Up-scale action: Putting marine conservation at the centre of socioeconomic progress across the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean Sea is one ecosystem. The objective of preserving its functionality will not be achieved if we fail to act in the whole basin. The mission of the **Barcelona Convention** is to build this coherence, fostering collaboration and solidarity and closing the gaps to make sure that all Mediterranean countries cooperate and work together as one. Other cooperation platforms, such as the **Union for the Mediterranean**, are also working to bring together **Mediterranean** countries to address common challenges, such as preserving the health of the sea in its capacity to be a resource for the people of the Mediterranean. We need to reinforce these frameworks to push for **coherent policies** that systematically use the **SDGs** as a reference framework. While some progress has been made, there are still plenty of challenges ahead, such as:

- Addressing the unbalanced geographical distribution of MPAs between the North, South and East of the Mediterranean. Currently, less than 3% of marine areas in the Southern Mediterranean are protected (even less than 1%, if we look at national levels).
- Recognizing that safeguarding environmental heritage is a means to address urgent challenges -such as health, education, poverty, employment and security-, rather than a conflicting area of action competing for resources.
- Setting up the institutional frameworks required to enact legislation and enforce it at national and regional level, including at relevant ecological unit levels, following a shared action plan to safeguard the ecological resilience of the Mediterranean.
- Putting marine conservation at the centre of socio-economic progress in the Mediterranean - away from its current situation as a secondary objective- to ensure the availability of adequate human and financial resources to address our shared challenges.
- Recognizing that the **wellbeing** of present and future generations is inextricably linked to the **health** and **productivity** of the **ocean**, supporting research to advance knowledge of the **dynamics, links** and **connections** between **healthy oceans** and **healthy humans**.

Up-scaling action by supporting coherent ecological networks and capacity building

MedPAN is the network of Marine Protected Areas managers in the Mediterranean. It gathers today 120 institutions and NGOs that either have direct responsibility for managing Marine Protected Areas (MPA) or are involved in the development of MPAs in the Mediterranean. These players manage over 100 MPAS in 20 Mediterranean countries.

The MedPAN network's **mission** is to promote, through a partnership approach, the sustainability and operation of a network of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean that is ecologically representative, connected and effectively managed to help reduce the current rate of marine biodiversity loss. MedPAN facilitates a permanent sharing effort amongst the managers and stakeholders working in MPAs across the Mediterranean, building their capacity to effectively manage their MPAs in link with the other players in their territories.

For more information please visit: <https://medpan.org/>





Up-scaling action through scientific cooperation

Project MedSeaLitter has championed the refinement of existing **monitoring protocols** for **floating marine litter** and for the **ingestion** of marine litter. The resulting protocols have been included in the review of the **Guidance on Monitoring of Marine Litter in European Seas** in 2019 by the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Technical Group for Monitoring Marine Litter. These protocols and the lessons learned from the implementation of Project MedSeaLitter have been further applied by **Project PlasticBustersMPAs** and will be transferred to the Southern basin of the Mediterranean through the **ENI-CNB COMMON Project**. **COMMON** will apply the **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)** principles to the challenge of marine litter, improving knowledge of the phenomenon, enhancing the environmental performance of 5 pilot coastal areas in **Italy, Tunisia and Lebanon**, and engaging local stakeholders in marine litter management. **Projects MedSeaLitter, PlasticBustersMPAs and COMMON** provide an example of how scientific cooperation can contribute to upscale solutions to biodiversity protection across the Mediterranean.

For more information please visit: <http://www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/common>

Science-based solutions available from project SOPHIE

Funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, the "**Seas, Ocean and Public Health in Europe**" project (**SOPHIE**) is helping to build new research capacity for the emerging scientific discipline of "Ocean and Human Health" (OHH), which explores the links between the health of the ocean and human health. In October 2019, project **PANACeA** teamed up with **SOPHIE** to facilitate the organization of a workshop seeking to identify current trends on **OHH interactions** in the **Mediterranean** basin, and their potential impact. Feeding from the results of this and other workshops organized across European sea basins, as well as a number of research activities and input from a dedicated multidisciplinary Expert Group, **SOPHIE** will produce a **Strategic Research Agenda** in 2020 presenting **key themes** which should be the focus of future research across Europe, making recommendations about how to implement, coordinate and communicate such research.

For more information please visit: <http://sophie2020.eu>





8. Work with stakeholders at different levels: Towards a multi-level governance of the Mediterranean.

Effective governance of the Mediterranean requires the commitment of different stakeholders, including local, regional and national authorities, international governance organizations, scientific institutions, the private sector and civil society.

Top-down approaches are necessary to create the framing political and institutional commitments and conditions for effective action, promoting the development of integrated policies and plans that foster both the investment in natural capital and the sustainable use of marine resources across the Mediterranean. The **UN Barcelona Convention** and other cooperation platforms such as the **Union for the Mediterranean** provide the political framework to step-up urgent actions. Transboundary governance remains an issue, but there are successful examples based on a clear definition of responsibilities; criteria on how to deal with uncertainty through the precautionary approach; and a clear mandate to act.

But bottom-up approaches towards governance are also equally important and required to:

- **Effectively communicate the cost of biodiversity loss:** We need to better explain to all relevant stakeholders (economic users of natural resources) how the current trends of biodiversity loss and the exhaustion of natural capital will affect them; as well as how the actions undertaken to reverse these trends and to better manage the maritime space and natural resources in general will affect their economic activities.
- **Empower co-management of natural resources across the Mediterranean:** Participatory schemes are key to support the establishment of long-lasting relationships with relevant stakeholders, as means to strengthen management processes for Mediterranean natural resources at local level.

Science-based solutions available from Project WETNET

The **Wetlands Contract** is a **voluntary governance tool**, an innovative methodology for water and wetlands management. Based on the **active participation of local stakeholders**, the users of the same natural resource, its aim is to improve coordination and stimulate the effectiveness of the management and planning of protected wetlands in the Mediterranean. It consists of a series of shared, specific, and detailed commitments and actions. The Wetland Contracts take into account the problems and needs of the people, plants, and animals that live in, or benefit from, wetlands, either permanently or temporarily. Its objective is to ensure proper governance to protect wetlands and their surroundings. The main result of the Wetland Contracts is the improved effectiveness of wetland management through the active involvement and participation of all relevant stakeholders, using citizen participation tools for participatory processes and raising awareness on the benefits of co-managing for sustainability.

For more information please visit: <https://wetnet.interreg-med.eu/>

Watch here a short, [2-minute video on WETNET](#) by Giancarlo Gusmaroli (Italian Centre for River Restoration)





Science-based solutions available from Project FishMPABlue2

Ensuring the effective management of a Mediterranean MPA requires **good governance** and an ecosystem-based approach that integrates the fisheries sector, particularly small-scale fishers, as legitimate actors in the decision-making process. **Project FishMPABlue2** has developed the **Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) Governance Toolkit** as the cornerstone of a bottom-up, “towards co-management” approach to fisheries management. The tool describes more than 20 actual measures to enhance the environmental and socio-economic effectiveness of MPAs in SSF management, and the degree of feasibility of each. The SSF Governance Toolkit can be a useful instrument for any MPA manager who wants to improve governance in their MPA through better cooperation with local small-scale professional fishers. The tested tools can address some of the most recurring problems any MPA manager encounters when dealing with SSF in or around the MPA.

For more information please visit: <https://fishmpablue-2.interreg-med.eu/>

Watch here a short, 2-minute video [introduction to FishMPABlue2](#) by Luca Santarossa (Federparchi – Europarc Italy)

9. Ensure the financial resources to achieve the objective of preserving biodiversity in the Mediterranean.

Safeguarding biodiversity both inside and outside Protected Areas requires **substantial financial resources** to mobilize the research, management and political processes required to roll-out effective actions across the Mediterranean. Allocating sufficient financial resources is a necessary condition to achieve the objective of protecting Mediterranean biodiversity, matching **sustainable investments** with **environmental risks**. While it is mainly the task of governments to **scale up** their commitment to provide such resources and to support international and regional cooperation and solidarity, activating new financial mechanisms and resources is also important. Fostering **blue entrepreneurship** in MPAs can be a way forward to tap into such resources by engaging the private sector, creating the conditions for entrepreneurs to develop market solutions that contribute to the conservation and valorisation of MPAs. The involvement of local communities and users of natural resources (species and spaces) and the acceptance of co-responsibility to increase resilience and protection is seen as fundamental for filling the gaps towards an effective ecosystem-based approach to biodiversity protection and sustainable resource management.

Science-based solutions available from Project DESTIMED

Ecotourism can be a source of **direct funding** for MPAs, as well as generating other indirect benefits such as raising the awareness of the general public by conveying the natural values of the PA. **Project DESTIMED** is developing methodologies and tools and **advance ecotourism** in MPAs, working through local ecotourism clusters to develop new ecotourism products that strive to reduce the **ecological footprint** of tourism, while maximizing its social benefits.

For more information please visit: <https://destimed.interreg-med.eu/>





Tapping into new financial resources: The Med Fund

The aim of the **MedFund** project is to contribute to the long-term management of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas by strengthening their financial sustainability through the establishment of an environmental fund (or “trust fund”) financing mechanism. It is a unique and innovative financial tool but also a political dialogue tool for the Mediterranean basin countries and stakeholders with a very high potential of evolution to provide multiple services to MPAs such as covering their operating costs. This ‘trust fund’ will help to better manage the MPAs of the participating countries and of the Mediterranean region insofar as well-managed MPAs can help reduce poverty and improve wellbeing.

For more information please visit: <https://ufmsecretariat.org/project/medfund/> and <https://iwlearn.net/resolveuid/9866fe27-21b2-408b-bcc7-586a9550284e>

The **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community** further invites **Policy Makers** to [sign the Mediterranean Declaration for an Ecosystem-based Approach](#), which was signed by around 20 institutions in Malaga (Spain) on October 14, 2019, including the Malaga City Council, the Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FAMP), the University of Malaga, the OMAU, the Herceg Novi Municipality in Montenegro, the City of Marseille, the Interreg Med Programme, MedCities, MedPAN, a representative of the former SEARICA Group of the European Parliament, WildSeaEurope and various regional activity centres of the United Nations Environment Programme such as Plan Bleu, SPA-RAC, PAP-RAC and SCP-RAC among others.

The **Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community** will continue to work towards advancing the implementation of this vision across the **Mediterranean** throughout **2019-2022**.



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The following **Thematic Projects** are currently part of the **MEDITERRANEAN Biodiversity Protection Community**:

- [Project ACT4Litter](#): Joint measures to preserve natural ecosystems from marine litter in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- [Project AMAre](#): Development of shared methodologies and special tools to foster the resilience of a Mediterranean MPA network as well as concrete MSP applications.
- [Project ConFish](#): Connectivity among Mediterranean fishery stakeholders and scientists to resolve connectivity of fishery populations.
- [Project EcoSUSTAIN](#): Improved management and networking of protected areas by building capacity and testing innovative water monitoring solutions.
- [Project FishMPABlue2](#): Fishing governance in MPAs. Potentialities for the Blue Economy.
- [Project MEDSEALITTER](#): Developing Mediterranean-specific protocols to protect biodiversity from litter impact at basin and local MPA levels.
- [Project MPA-ADAPT](#): Guiding Mediterranean MPAs through the climate change era: Building resilience and adaptation.
- [Project PHAROS4MPAs](#): Blue Economy and Marine Conservation.
- [Project PLASTICBUSTERS MPAs](#): Preserving biodiversity from plastics in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas.
- [Project POSBEMED](#): Sustainable management of the systems Posidonia-beaches in the Mediterranean region.
- [Project WETNET](#): Coordinated management and networking of Mediterranean wetlands.

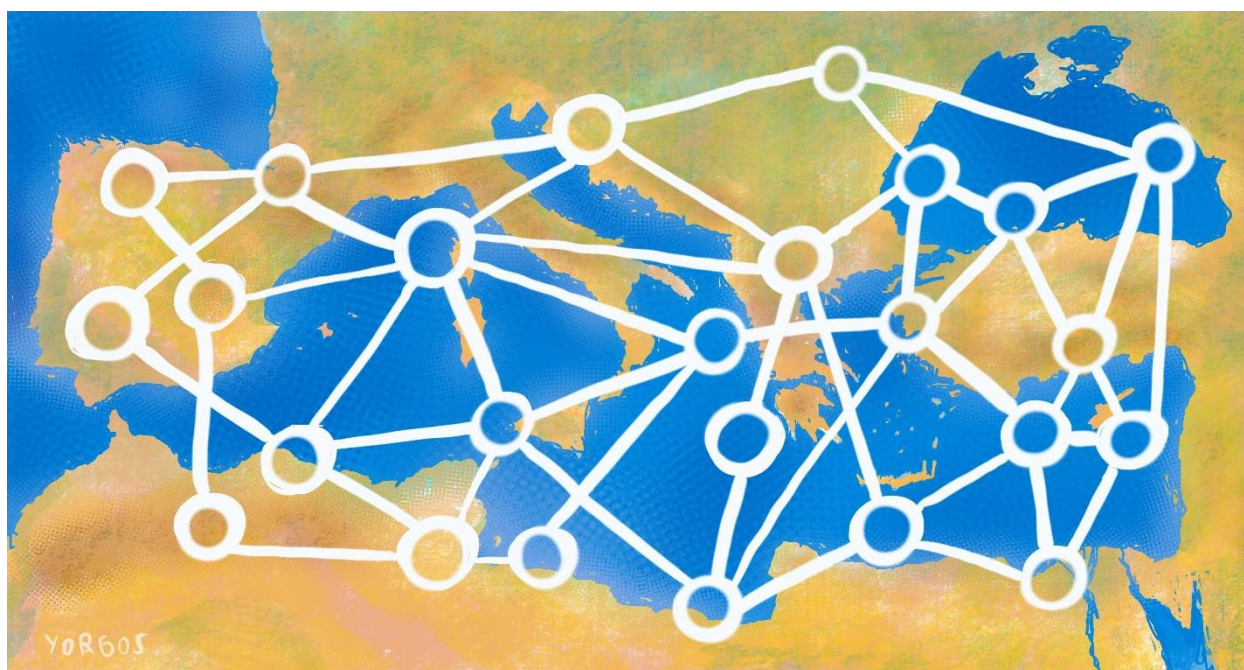
To download a more comprehensive description of these Projects, [please click here](#).





Annex: Additional materials

- [Agenda 14-16 October 2019 Malaga and access to presentations](#)
- [Speakers Booklet](#)
- [Photo Gallery](#)
- [Video Gallery](#)
- [Press release ES - Málaga le toma el pulso a cambios transformadores para proteger los ecosistemas mediterráneos](#)
- [Press release FR: Malaga donne l'impulsion pour des changements profonds vers une meilleure protection des écosystèmes en méditerranée](#)





The MED Biodiversity Protection Community featured by PANACeA

MED Biodiversity Protection Community brings together a comprehensive network of experts from public & private institutions actively working to protect biodiversity and natural ecosystems in Mediterranean Protected Areas. Filling the current gap between Science, Management, and Policy is one of the priority targets of the Biodiversity Protection Community.

The Biodiversity Protection Community seeks to identify and generate synergies amongst the work of relevant Mediterranean stakeholders, including Protected Area managers, policymakers, socio-economic actors, civil society and the scientific community. The initiative undertakes actions to increase the visibility and impacts of the results of different thematic biodiversity protection projects that are being undertaken by members of its Community, also with the financial support of the Med programme, reaching a common and pre-identified strategic target audience.

Several policy aspects are addressed under the umbrella of these thematic projects, covering biodiversity protection, sustainable use of natural resources, ecosystem-based management approaches - including Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) - as well as governance mechanisms. The Community is working to advance more effective biodiversity protection in the Mediterranean through enhanced monitoring and management of coastal and marine ecosystems, specifically targeting more sustainable fisheries, better adaptation to climate change effects, better prevention of marine litter and improved waste management.

PANACeA supports the MED Biodiversity Protection Community by:

- > Offering support as well as communication and capitalization opportunities to the MPs.
- > Seeking interconnectivity amongst MPs and offering networking opportunities.
- > Helping MPs achieve their results by creating opportunities to exchange and transfer methodologies, tools, practices and knowledge.
- > Ensuring adequate deployment of the activities, services, and tools it develops by involving its Advisory Board throughout the project lifetime.
- > Mobilizing experts from outside the MED Programme, especially from the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean region, who focus on biodiversity protection, in order to make possible communication with a wider community of experts and a broader dissemination of the Community's results.
- > Building upon the individual projects' needs to create a unique and adapted tool, the MED "Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform" (BPKP), as both a community building and a long-term capitalization tool that allows a one-entry-point access to all the knowledge generated by the biodiversity protection community.

The community's Open Seminars / Knowledge Sharing & Community Building meetings are amongst the key tools that have been devised to achieve the above-mentioned objectives. Open Seminars are knowledge-sharing events that seek to share information, advance knowledge, and enhance collaboration on relevant topics amongst Community members, also engaging stakeholders and experts outside the Community.



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



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[PANACeA Biodiversity Protection](#)



[MED Biodiversity Protection Community Newsletter](#)

Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform: biodiversity.uma.es

Project co-financed by the European
Regional Development Fund

The MED Biodiversity Protection Community is featured by PANACeA

