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Agenda Item 5: Conservation of Species and Habitats

MedKeyHabitats II Project - Mapping of marine Key habitats and assessing their vulnerability to fishing activities in the Mediterranean.

Note:

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Mapping of marine Key habitats and assessing their vulnerability to fishing activities in the Mediterranean - MedKeyHabitats II Project

Total duration: 39 months, from July 2017 to September 2020

Execution: This project is executed by SPA/RAC in partnership with IUCN-Med and MedPAN

Funding: The MedKeyHabitats II project is financially supported by the MAVA Foundation (1 210 000 Euros).

Direct Beneficiary Countries: Algeria, Cyprus, Malta, Morocco Tunisia and Turkey.

Indirect beneficiary Countries: Greece, Cyprus, Spain and Tunisia (Small Projects – MedPAN).

The MedKeyHabitats II project (2017 - 2020) is the follow up to a first project, the MedKeyHabitats I, that has been implemented from 2013 to 2016 to enhance knowledge on marine habitats through mapping and characterization activities in 5 future Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)¹. The MedKeyHabitats II objective aims also to establish mapping inventories / characterization of marine habitats in 14 additional areas and to assess their sensitivity to fishing activities.

MedKeyHabitats II project aimed to assist the beneficiary countries to meet their obligations under the Barcelona Convention, particularly regarding marine biodiversity conservation and the development of a well-connected and effective system of marine protected areas in the Mediterranean.

The MedKeyHabitats II project's activities included (i) a series of field surveys to characterize and map marine habitats with a focus on seagrass and coralligenous distribution, (ii) the production of sensitivity maps of marine habitats to fishing activities and (iii) training activities on standard methodologies and prospecting techniques.

The MedKeyHabitats II project organized also a series of symposia on marine key habitats and Non-Indigenous species in the Mediterranean (6th Mediterranean Symposium on Marine Vegetation, 3rd Mediterranean Symposium on the Conservation of Coralligenous and other Bioconcretions, 2nd Mediterranean Symposium on the Conservation of Obscure Habitats, and 1st Mediterranean Symposium on Non-indigenous Species).

The SPA/RAC Beneficiary sites of the MedKeyHabitats II project

- Algeria : Habibas and Paloma islands
- Cyprus: Cape Greco MPA
- Malta : Żona fil-Baħar bejn Rdum Majjiesa u Għar Lapsi, Żona fil-Baħar fl-inħawi ta' Għar Lapsi u ta' Filfla, Żona fil-Baħar fl-inħawi tad-Dwejra (Għawdex), Żona fil-Baħar bejn Il-Ponta tal-Ħotba u Tal-Fessej (Għawdex), Żona fil-Baħar bejn il-Ponta ta' San Dimitri (Għawdex) u Il-Qaliet
- Morocco : Al Hoceima National Park
- Tunisia : Kuriat Islands
- Turkey : Foça SEPA

The MedPAN Beneficiary sites of the MedKeyHabitats II project

- Cyprus: Lara Toxeftra Protected Area
- Greece: Amvrakikos Gulf National Park
- Spain: Chafarinas Islands Special Conservation Area
- Tunisia : Kuriat Islands

¹ Beneficiary sites of the MedKeyHabitats I project are Algeria: Rachgoun Island, Montenegro: Platamuni and Ratac areas, Morocco: Jbel Moussa, Tunisia : Cap Negro-Cap Serrat

Results- NUMBER CRUNCHING

The SPA/RAC component of MedKeyHabitats II project produced several reports², maps and data that were provided to the relevant national authorities to be used as a tool for sustainable coastal zone planning and management. The maps will be available soon on the Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform³

The SPA/RAC component of MedKeyHabitats II project's outputs include:

- Characterization of species and habitats in 14 pilot sites;
- Detailed and updated maps of marine habitats produced in 10 pilot sites (MPAs, future MPAs, Special Areas of Conservation);
- set up of 12 monitoring systems of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in 4 pilot sites;
- set up of 5 monitoring stations for coralligenous assemblages in 3 pilot sites;
- Socio-economic study and assessment of the impact of fishing activities on habitats in 11 pilot sites;
- Production of vulnerability maps to fishing activities and development of zoning proposals and/or fishing activity management measures to reduce the impact on marine habitats in 13 pilot sites;
- Development of a national action plan for the conservation of marine vegetation in Cyprus;
- Development of a synthesis of current knowledge on Mediterranean coralligenous assemblages;
- Development of a synthesis of current knowledge on sea caves in the Mediterranean; and
- Organization of the regional symposia on key marine habitats and non-native species from 14 to 18 January 2019 in Antalya, Turkey.

² <https://www.rac-spa.org/publications>

³ <http://data.medchm.net>

GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

APERÇU GEOGRAPHIQUE DU PROJET



MKHII
MEDKEYHABITATS



Mapping using side-scansonar
Cartographie par sonar latéral

Mapping using visual methods
Cartographie par méthodes visuelles

Characterisation of species and habitats, assessment of Socio-economic & of their Vulerability to fishing Activities
Caractérisation des espèces et des habitats, évaluation socio-économique et de leur vulnérabilité aux activités de pêche

Setting up and enhancing monitoring systemsfor marine key habitats
Mise en place et renforcement des systèmes de surveillance des habitats marins clés

On-Job Training on key marine habitats/
Formation sur le tas sur les habitats marins clés

Regional Training Session on GIS and SDI
Formation Regionale sur le SIG et IDS

Organising and co-organising scientific events
Organisation et co-organisation de manifestations scientifiques