UNITED NATIONS

EP

UNEP/MED WG.546/5

UNEP

UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

10 February 2023
Original: English

9th Meeting of National Correspondents of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Region (SAPBIO)

Barcelona (Spain), 24 February 2023

Agenda item 4: Review of the Draft Resource Mobilisation Strategy for the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, including the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for marine and coastal protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean

Project Concept 2 : Recovering key Mediterranean marine and coastal habitats

UNEP/MAP
SPA/RAC - Tunis, 2023

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Project Concept 2 :

Recovering key Mediterranean marine and coastal habitats

Project 2: Recovering key Mediterranean marine and coastal habitats

Issues at stake

The Mediterranean Sea is the victim of decades of unsustainable use despite the efforts for an effective management. The severe pressure from intense fisheries, maritime traffic, land-based 3

Geographical coverage of the project

The project will focus on the Mediterranean countries **with particularly low MCPA coverage**, such as the **Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries**. It will be implemented in the following countries: (to be developed in consultation with the National correspondents)

Project Work packages

Work package 1: Improving knowledge

Activity 1.1 Mapping of key marine habitats and inventory of areas with degraded ecosystems

Rationale

Data availability regarding the distribution of the key Mediterranean habitats is insufficient and very patchy. Indeed, national and regional reports have noticed that the information about the distribution, extent and status is very incomplete in many countries and missing in big parts of the southern and eastern basins.

Such information is of crucial importance for the elaboration and implementation of conservation measures, the spatial planning of human activities in the marine environment and for the Environmental Impact Assessment of projected industrial, touristic, infrastructure and other installations in the coastal and marine zones.

Description of the activity

This activity will be mainly dedicated to elaborate detailed maps of (i) key Mediterranean marine habitats focusing on seagrass meadows, coralligenous assemblages and dep-sea habitats, with the view of providing decision makers with habitat distribution maps to take into account when adopting conservation measures, elaborating maritime spatial plans and other plans of relevance for the marine and coastal environments and (ii) degraded ecosystems with the view of developing and implementing national restoration strategies of marine ecosystems.

Under this activity the following actions will be implemented:

Action	Expected results	Proposed Partners (Not limited to/tbc)
Action 1.1.1 Acquiring detailed cartography of key Mediterranean habitats in identified priority areas	Maps showing the distribution, extent and status of key habitats available for decision-making in relation to conservation programmes, regulation of sea uses (anchoring, fishing,	SPA/RAC, Plan Bleu, GFCM, IUCN-MedETC-UMA

	pipelines, etc.), maritime spatial planning, etc.	
Action 1.1.2 Identification and mapping of degraded ecosystems and evaluation of their potential for restoration	Improved knowledge of the location, extent and degradation state of key Mediterranean marine ecosystems as baseline information for the elaboration of national strategies for marine ecosystem restoration. Development of national restoration strategies in accordance with the 24 steps of the Short-Term Action Plan on Ecosystem Restoration (STAPER) adopted under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.	

Implementation timetable

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	

Activity 1.2 Prediction and warning systems for Marine Heat Waves (MHWs)

Rationale

In its Issues Brief of October 2021 about Marine Heat Waves (MHWs), IUCN stressed that "due to increased greenhouse gas emissions, extended periods of extreme warming in seas and oceans have increased in frequency by 50% in the past 10 years and are becoming more severe". MHWs are discrete periods of unhabitual rise of sea water temperature occurring in surface or deep waters. They have been shown to generate damages to and a decrease of recruitment of some species and also to kill or reduce the productivity of economically important species.

In the Mediterranean, severe impacts on sessile marine species have been attributed to abnormal persistence of MHW events. To better understand the relationship between MHWs and observed impacts, coordinated continuous monitoring of seawater temperature is needed through a network of observation points ensuring wide coverage of MHW Sensitive Habitats.

Description of the activity

Under this activity a network of observation points will be selected and equipped with in-Situ seawater temperature dataloggers in site with MHW sensitive assemblages and habitats to ensure continuous monitoring of the seawater temperature variation. Standard monitoring protocol will be used by the national teams participating in this activity of the project. The collected data will be made available through a dedicated platform and regularly compiled to serve as an early warning system about the occurrence of MHWs and their possible impacts. The installed dataloggers will be regularly visited by scuba diving to retrieve the recorded data and ensure required maintenance operations

Under this activity the following actions will be implemented:

Action	Expected Results	Proposed Partners (Not limited to/tbc)
Action 1.2.1 Setting a Mediterranean network for the monitoring of seawater temperature in habitats that are sensitive to MHWs	Better knowledge of the impact of MHWs on habitats and species Availability of long series of data allowing to detect trends Timely availability of data to serve as early warning system	SPA/RAC
Action 1.2.2 Elaboration of standard protocol to collect data and share it through a dedicated platform		SPA/RAC, ETC-UMA

Implementation timetable

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3

Work package 2: Restoration

Activity 2.1 Pilot actions for ecosystem restoration

Rationale

Achieving Target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework requires to ensure that "by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity". For the Mediterranean, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention agreed, through the Post-2020 SAPBIO to develop by 2027 the full inventory of ecosystems with the highest ecological relevance and/or regeneration potential and by 20230 complete the restoration of most of those selected.

However, creating a momentum for ecosystem restoration at national and regional levels, requires the mobilisation of resources, capacity building, cooperation, mutual assistance and technology transfer between the countries of the region. To create such a momentum, there is a need to foster political will through advocacy and demonstrative action showing the feasibility of restoration and the benefits that can be generated not only in terms of reversing biodiversity loss but also in recovering the ecosystem services.

Description of the activity

This activity will consist of a series of pilot actions in selected sites identified within the framework of Action 1.1.2 of this project (Identification and mapping of degraded ecosystems and evaluation of their potential for restoration). For each pilot action, a feasibility study will be undertaken to define the most suitable restoration approach for the site and to assess the possible adverse impact that might be generated by the intervention.

Under this activity the following actions will be implemented:

Action	Expected Results	Proposed Partners (Not limited to/tbc)
Action 2.1.1 Pilot actions to restore ecosystems in selected sites	Feasibility of and benefits from ecosystems restoration demonstrated to decision-makers to foster political will towards restoring the degraded marine ecosystems	SPA/RAC, Plan Bleu, GFCM, IUCN-Med, MedPAN, OCEANA, ETC-UMA
Action 2.1.2 Development of regional trainings and guidelines for ecosystem restoration	Enhanced capacity of the Mediterranean country to perform Marine ecosystem restoration	

Implementation timetable

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	

Work package 3: Project coordination and management

The Project implementation will be coordinated by SPA/RAC in collaboration with the Project partners and with the guidance of a Steering Committee composed of representatives of the participating countries and the Project partners.

The rules of procedures for the Steering Committee will be defined in close consultation with the financing partner(s).

A full-time project coordinator and an administrative assistant will be appointed for the project duration.

In addition to the regular reporting to the financing partner(s), reports about the progress made in the implementation of the project will be submitted by SPA/RAC to the SPA Focal Points. The other partners may also report to their respective relevant governing bodies.

A mid-term evaluation and final evaluation of the project will be undertaken taking into account the result indicators to be agreed in the logical framework of the project

Project partners

A short presentation will be given here for each of the Project partners (to be provided by the partners)

Project Timetable

		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Work package 1: Improving knowledge	**Activity 1.1 Mapping of key marine habitats and inventory of areas with degraded ecosystems**						
	Prediction and warning systems for Marine Heat Waves (MHWs)						
Work package 2: Restoration	**Pilot actions for ecosystem restoration**						

Project Cost estimates

	Expected funding from donor(s)	Expected Co-funding	Total Estimated cost (US$)
Activity 1.1 Mapping of key marine habitats and inventory of areas with degraded ecosystems	800 000		
Activity 1.2 Prediction and warning systems for Marine Heat Waves (MHWs)	200 000		
Activity 2.1 Pilot actions for ecosystem restoration	600 000		
Project coordination	300 000		
Total	1 900 000		