

MedMPAnet

Newsletter

Towards a representative
Mediterranean Marine
Protected Area network

Third Issue, March 2014

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Albania

After national consultations and the selection of the Porto Palermo Bay as a pilot site in Albania, RAC/SPA signed, in March 2013, an MoU with the Institute of Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) for the implementation of the activities planned within the MedMPAnet project.

Following first contacts with the local authorities and few meetings with the interested stakeholders, in particular fishermen, in the Porto Palermo Bay area, socio-

economic and ecological studies have been undertaken. Furthermore, a survey on needs and demands concerning local stakeholders participation mechanism have been carried out in view to elaborate the management plan of the Porto Palermo Bay MPA, planned to be accomplished in 2014.





Algeria

RAC/SPA has continued joining efforts with PAP/RAC, UNESCO/IHP and the 'Conservatoire du Littoral' for the elaboration of a Coastal Plan for the Réghaïa area through combining the work underway on the ICZM plan with the potential establishment of an MPA in the area. A socio-economic study, including the identification of potential stakeholders and partnerships that could be involved in the Réghaïa marine protected area creation and management was carried out in 2013. The ecological field survey will be undertaken by RAC/SPA experts' team in 2014 along with the elaboration of management and zoning plan of the Réghaïa marine protected area.





Croatia

Following joint consultations during 2012, RAC/SPA and the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection in Croatia have refined and adjusted the project activities according to the actual priorities of the country focusing on an ecological study, a fishery study and capacity building activities for the inventory of marine biodiversity (Posidonia meadows and Coralligenous habitats), in the County of Primorje & Gorski Kotar.

Beginning 2013, an MoU was signed between RAC/SPA, the Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection, the State Institute for Nature Protection and the Public Institution Priroda, enabling thus the starting of the MedMPAnet pilot activities in Croatia. In this context, two fieldworks for the socio-economic fisheries study were conducted, in April and May 2013, mainly through interviews with local fishermen. They

were undertaken around two study areas – one MPA and three proposed marine Natura 2000 sites of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

Furthermore, monitoring protocols for Posidonia and coralligene were set up and tested and ecological surveys with regards to marine species and habitats mapping have been undertaken in July and August 2013 at Prvic Island-Grgurov kanal Special Reserve, and Unije, Srakane and Susak Natura 2000 sites.

Finally, as part of the project capacity building programme in Croatia, three trainings on GIS (ArcGIS) for 6 participants were held respectively in Rijeka (30 September - 4 October 2013), Zagreb (4-8 November 2013) and the Public Institution Priroda, Rijeka (14-15 November 2013).



Montenegro

Building on the results of the rapid assessments undertaken in 2011 and 2012, and in close consultation with the Ministry of Environment of Montenegro, Boka Kotorska Bay has been selected as a pilot site. In this concern, RAC/SPA has contracted an international consultancy firm which carried out a fishery study and an ecological survey of the Kotor Bay marine area, using the side scan sonar technique. The data collected from the MedMPAnet Project particularly from the habitats assessment survey, contributed to the establishment of a GIS database for the purpose of CAMP Montenegro project. Furthermore, RAC/SPA is joining efforts to PAP/RAC and CP/RAC in the «Pilot Project on Testing the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) application in Boka Kotorska Bay», in particular the implementation of supporting activities regarding green entrepreneurship in Kotor Bay specially focused on ecotourism activities and aiming to assess the possibilities of reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment through the implementation of green entrepreneurship and ecotourism activities.





Morocco

In April 2013, a joint meeting co-organized in Rabat by the 'Haut Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la Lutte contre la Désertification' (HCEFLCD) and RAC/SPA, gathered MPA stakeholders in Morocco, including relevant administrations, scientists and NGOs, and allowed presenting the achievements of the MedMPAnet Project in the country. The assessments regarding (i) the characterization of priority marine sites suitable to become MPAs in Morocco, (ii) the identification of stakeholder group and potential partnerships to create MPAs and (iii) the preliminary ecological characterization of the Cap des Trois Fourches marine area have been indeed approved.

Further to the achievement of this first project phase and under the MedPartnership project, it has been agreed to carry out a complementary field survey in the Cap des Trois Fourches marine area and to proceed to the elaboration of a management plan of this future MPA along with the setting-up of a consultation mechanism involving all stakeholders.

RAC/SPA has undertaken an on-site field assessment in the Cap des Trois Fourches marine site, from 8 to 20 September 2013. A team of ten national and international researchers/experts worked together on the collection of biological data which have been processed and reported on georeferenced maps. This allowed finalizing a rapid natural habitats assessment of the site, along with preliminary management proposal and outlines.





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Tunisia

Following the results of the field surveys and the socio-economic study carried out in the Kuriat Islands, RAC/SPA launched in 2013, in collaboration with the Tunisian Coastal Protection and Planning Agency (APAL), the process of elaboration of a detailed management plan for the Kuriat Islands marine protected area.

The first phase of the management plan elaboration process, consisting in (i) elaborating a detailed diagnosis of all aspects related to the area and its surroundings, (ii) proposing management scenarios and (iii) carrying out on-site stakeholders' consultation meetings, has been achieved and will be concluded by a consultation workshop early February 2014.

On the other hand, a technical assistance for the setting-up of an ecological monitoring system of fish populations and marine biocenosis in the Kuriat Islands MPA started in November 2013.



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Lebanon

RAC/SPA provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment, which successfully produced an ecological characterization of three priority marine sites suitable to become MPAs: Enfeh Peninsula, Ras Chekaa cliffs, and Raoucheh cliffs. In May 2013, the assessments of biological features and ecological interest of these marine sites have been approved by the Ministry of Environment, who has also submitted an official proposal to declare the area of Ras Chekaa as MPA.

Furthermore, the meeting served also to plan and approve the upcoming phase of the Project aiming at replicating the survey in three new important sites in Southern Lebanon: Sidon, Tyre and Naqoura. Thus, from 26 August to 8 September 2013, RAC/SPA has run a field survey in these three marine sites. The same team of international and national experts as in 2012, has participated to the survey, which results have been processed and led to drawing up an ecological characterization along with a zoning and management outline proposals.





Libya

After activities disruption in 2011 and 2012, the MedMPAnet project activities on the development of a national strategy for the establishment of an MPA network in Libya resumed in 2013. Thus, several technical meetings were held in June 2013 with the different representatives of administrations, scientists, local populations and NGOs concerned by MPA creation and planning in Libya. This has led to (i) analyzing the priority needs and identifying stakeholders and potential partnerships for MPA creation and planning and (ii) organizing, in October 2013, a national workshop in which the outlines of the national strategy for the establishment of an MPA network and the draft law on protected areas in Libya have been agreed. These official documents are intended to be finalized early 2014 for a national wide consultation.

As for the pilot site of El Kouf National Park, a socio-economic study has been carried out in view of completing, along with the ecological characterization, the final recommendations for the management of the area.

On the other hand, RAC/SPA and WWF-MedPO provided their support for fifteen Libyan national officers and MPA stakeholders in terms of capacity-building on participatory process and stakeholders engagement in MPAs (Akyaka (Turkey), 10-14 February 2013).

International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3)

The MedMPAnet project was present during the third edition of the International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3) co-organized by the 'Agence des Aires Marines Protégées' (French Marine Protected Areas Agency) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), from 21 to 25 October, in Marseilles (France). This congress, organized every four years, brings together major maritime stakeholders from around the globe, beyond national or sectorial boundaries, to assist in the conservation and sustainable development of the oceans.

The MedMPAnet Project technical staff (3) and nine MPA national authorities, managers and practitioners (Albania (4), Croatia (1), Libya (2), Morocco (1), Tunisia (1)) took part to IMPAC3, allowing the project to be actively present during several events, in particular:

- The Workshop on 'Experiences with national MPA networks: Guidelines and Targets' through two presentations on the Project contribution towards (i) the development of a national network of marine protected areas in Lebanon and (ii) the development of a national network of marine protected areas in Libya: the Marine extension of El Kouf National Park;
- The Workshop on 'Governance for developing MPA networks' through the workshop co-chairing and a presentation on the 'Creation of a new marine protected area in the Kuriat Islands (Tunisia)';
- The Workshop entitled 'Towards ecologically representative and well connected regional networks' where a presentation on the 'Identification and creation of new Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean through the MedMPAnet Project' was made.

The Project also displayed two posters, on its MPA creation activities, entitled 'Towards a new Moroccan Marine Protected Area in the Mediterranean: the Cap des Trois Fourches' and 'The MedMPAnet Pilot Project in Croatia'.

For further information see: <http://medmpanet.rac-spa.org/>



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Mediterranean training session on the ecological monitoring in MPAs

As a follow-up of the successful 2011 and 2012 regional training workshops organized in Santa Pola (Spain), in collaboration with the University of Alicante, RAC/SPA organized on 23-28 September 2013, a third regional training session on ecological monitoring in Marine Protected Areas.

The main objective of the training sessions is to continue strengthening the capacity and skills of MPA managers, lead staff and practitioners, in the Mediterranean countries, by providing them with the tools and know-how needed to improve their knowledge on the issue.

As the two previous sessions, this second session is also has been convened in collaboration with the University of Alicante (Spain) and took place in its Marine Research Centre of the Santa Pola (CIMAR) and the Marine reserve of Nueva Tabarca. It has been delivered by a group of professors and focused in particular on marine field work. In this training session, the participants were initiated to the use of hydroplane and make underwater transect along the Santa Pola coastline in order to perform the

bionomical mapping of the area.

Thirteen participants from 9 Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, Spain) participated to the session.

The participants spent 2 days at the Nueva Tabarca Marine Reserve and were able to share ideas with the management team on the management aspects but also on biodiversity recovery and their benefits. Furthermore, field works were also conducted by the participants in two different areas of the marine reserve in order to assess the effect of the protection on fish, limpets, sea urchins and macro-algae. This year a free dive was organized for the participants in the most protected part of the Marine reserve in order to observe the effect of conservation in the conservation of marine biodiversity and particularly in fishs.

Information on the training workshop has been disseminated in the local periodical of Santa Pola (<http://www.periodicosantapola.es>).

On-the-job trainings

Taking advantage of the ecological field surveys undertaken in Lebanon, Morocco and Montenegro, on-the-job trainings have been delivered to twelve local experts. These on-the-job trainings have embraced various themes like benthos and fish sampling using underwater visual census and cameras, fauna and flora underwater recognizing, alien species, GIS application for marine habitats mapping, importance of socio-cultural aspects in planning MPAs, human impacts on MPAs, etc.



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Stakeholder participation toolkit for identification, designation and management of marine protected areas

Collaboration between RAC/SPA and IUCN tends, among other, to assess and support Adriatic countries' priority needs for legal, policy and institutional reforms to strengthen the creation processes and the management of Marine Protected Areas.

Within this collaboration, the production of a Stakeholder participation toolkit adaptable to the countries is a way to fulfill one of the major targets aiming at providing strategic orientations for stakeholders' participation in MPA management and planning with view to improving good governance of MPAs.

In that process, RAC/SPA has produced, through the MedMPAnet project, and in collaboration with IUCN, a new English toolkit, entitled «Stakeholder participation toolkit for identification, designation and management of marine protected areas».

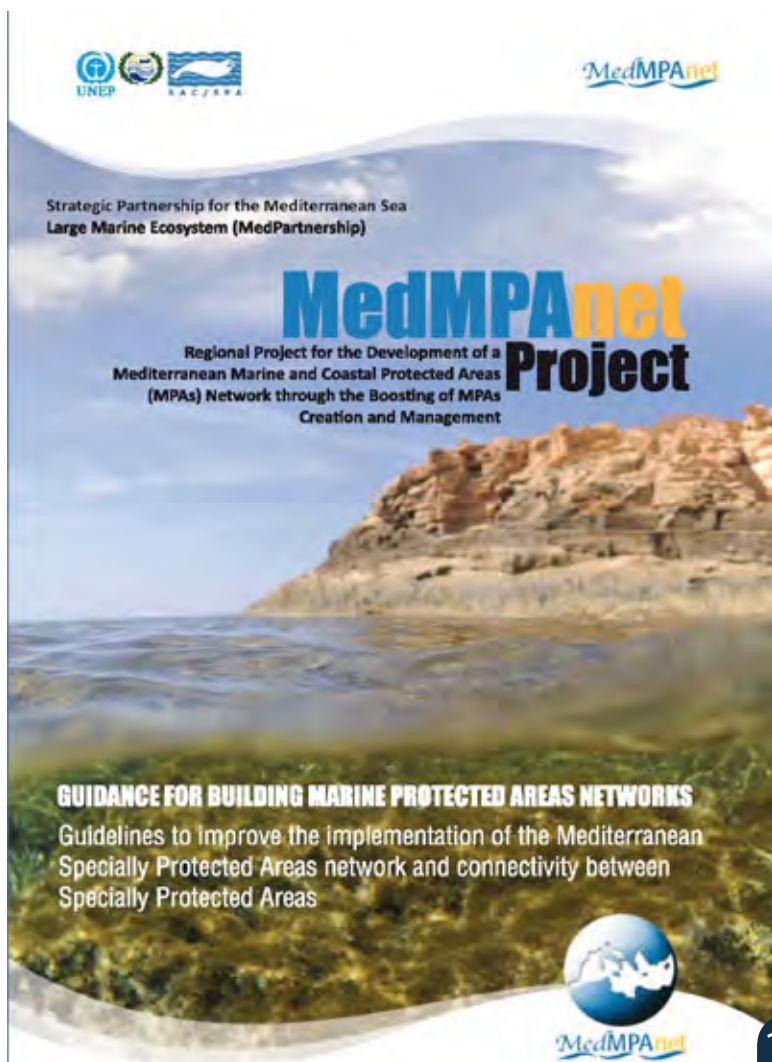


GUIDANCE FOR BUILDING MARINE PROTECTED AREAS NETWORKS

Guidelines to improve the implementation of the Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas network and connectivity between Specially Protected Areas

These guidelines set out a high level 'how to do it' guide, focussed on SPAs and the key criteria requested, but with a far wider common approach application to other MPA types. This common approach is so that the greatest use can be gained in the Mediterranean from this guidance. It explains in a step-wise way the best practice application of network design principles such as representativity, replication and connectivity, so, through systematic conservation planning, the contribution of SPAs to the Mediterranean MPA network can be increased.

Over twenty separate recommendations are made to help make it as easy as possible to match current SPA and MPA network activities to key issues raised by these guidelines.





Towards a representative Marine Protected Areas network in the Mediterranean !



