



## Press release

# A new cooperation project to improve the environmental sustainability of Mediterranean coasts

**Malaga, 20 October 2021 (ETC-UMA)** - The project ENSERES (ENhancing Socio-Ecological RESilience in Mediterranean coastal areas) funded by the European Union under the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation program ENI CBC Med, has kicked off in Malaga bringing together international organizations engaged in research, environmental protection, and public authorities from five countries to start the work plan for the next 24 months, until September 2023.

After more than ten years of work related to spatial information and environmental conservation at European and international level, the European Topic Centre of the University of Malaga (ETC-UMA) will be the lead coordinator of a new partnership among Mediterranean cities and marine protected area networks. The objective of this new collaboration, involving coordinated activities with the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas of the United Nations Mediterranean Action Plan, is to transfer of monitoring and management knowledge and techniques and digital tools across the Mediterranean shores. The knowledge about ecosystems and biodiversity and the environmental threats and pressures they face will provide the basis for the adoption of protection and management measures with an integrated approach, in particular in Sfax (Tunisia) and in Tyre (Lebanon).

The ETC-UMA coordinator, Dania Abdul Malak, has introduced the project as "an initiative that aims to integrate existing management tools with an ecosystem-based approach into coastal and marine areas. The Mediterranean natural resources offered by the sea and its surroundings are crucial for its economic and social sustainability. With this project, we want the people living along the coast to better know the value of these ecosystems and engage them in their protection through an enhanced integrated management of human activities."

The Vice -Rector for Research of the University of Malaga, Juan Teodomiro López, added: "It is a pleasure for the University of Malaga to participate in international cooperation projects and to be able to lead initiatives that link ETC- UMA's research and previous work to the realities of the coastal-marine environment, both in our city and in other parts of the Mediterranean coast."

As Alejandro Lafarga, the ENI CBC Med programme's representative, acknowledged: "Cooperation at all levels and between different initiatives is fundamental to have a successful transfer of best practices and knowledge for the benefit of our Mediterranean sea."

### For further information:

Christoph Schröder, Project's Coordinator, ETC-UMA, [christoph.schroder@uma.es](mailto:christoph.schroder@uma.es)

Sonsoles San Román, Communication officer, ETC-UMA, [sonsolessanroman@uma.es](mailto:sonsolessanroman@uma.es)

<http://www.etc.uma.es/enserres/>





**Note to editors:**

The ENSERES project for improving the ecological and social resilience of coastal communities in the Mediterranean area is led by ETC-UMA. The project, with a total budget of 1.1 M €, is funded by the European Union under the ENI CBC Med program with a contribution of 0.99 M € (90%) and will run for two years. The project main partners are MedCities (Mediterranean Cities Network, Spain), MedPAN (Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Network, France), the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (UNEP MAP SPA-RAC, Tunisia) and the MedSea Foundation (Italy), which will work together with the Natural Reserve of Tyre in Lebanon and the Sfax Municipal authority in Tunisia among others.

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