



TOGETHER |
FOR THE MED

2017-2022

IMPACT REPORT

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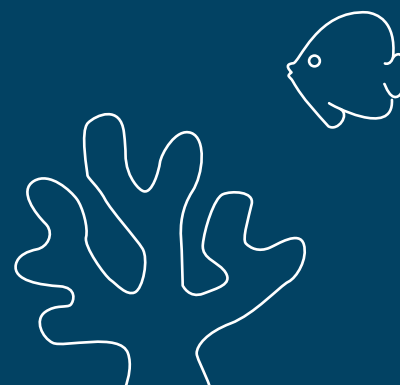


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Introduction



Background of the partnership

Since 2017, 46 organizations of diverse nature, combining various expertise related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable fishing, have joined forces to protect the Mediterranean Sea. Together, we have supported interventions in 15 countries to reduce the impact of fishing, restore vulnerable habitats and reinforce Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for the benefit of ecosystems and human communities.

Following key strategies, we have concentrated our efforts to:

- 
PROMOTE
SUSTAINABLE
FISHING
- 
ENGAGE
MEDITERRANEAN
COMMUNITY
- 
IMPROVE
LEGAL & POLICY
FRAMEWORK
- 
VALORISE
SUSTAINABLE
SEAFOOD
- 
FOSTER
FINANCIAL
TRANSITION

Empowering the legacy of MAVA, we created the Together for the Med (TGFM) network platform with the aim to join efforts to deliver a lasting common impact.



Our network



Together for the Med is a partnership uniting a **rich diversity of profiles**, like international and local NGOs, international organisations, private sector and research institutes.

The partnership is strong because **its members are complementary** in terms of status and mandates. For example, the international organisation GFCM-FAO needs NGOs and local pilot sites to implement protocols.

On the other hand, local MPAs need international organisations to make their voices heard and advocate at regional and international level. **Partners are also experienced**, with several decades of experience in the Mediterranean and very good local contact with MPA stakeholders, scientists, or fishers.

Moreover, **the geographical origin of the partners, as well as the distribution of the fieldwork sites, covers the entire Mediterranean Sea**, from Spain and Morocco to Lebanon, Turkey, and Cyprus.

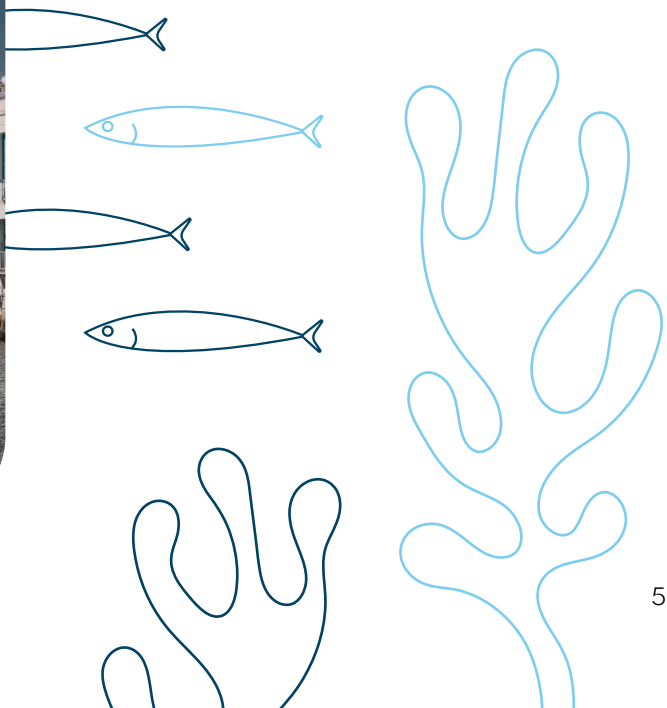
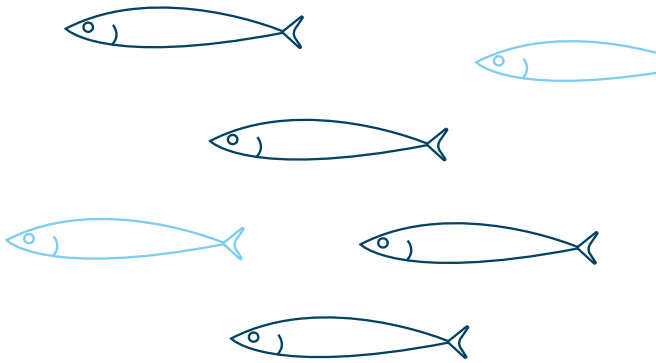
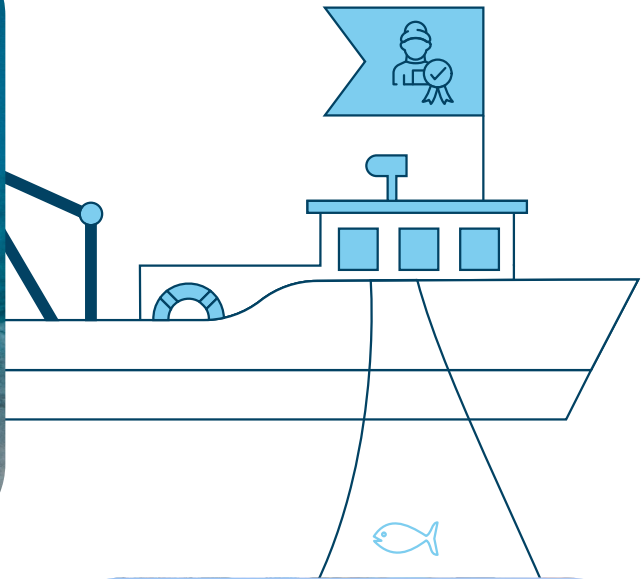
Our goals are to:

- **Protect and restore** marine wildlife and habitats in the Mediterranean Sea
- **Reconcile marine conservation with human activities** (work with sustainable fisheries and MPA stakeholders)
- **Extend the scope**: address different human pressures to the marine environment



The reason why we are all together is that MAVA believed in us. Why? Because we know how to transform funds into concrete and effective conservation measures. We are like the bee colony able to seek and collect funds and transform it into a honey for marine conservation.

Anis Zarrouk, SPA/RAC, Bycatch project manager



Our vision

Together for the Med aims to reduce fishing pressure on marine biodiversity and increase the sustainability of fisheries in the Mediterranean. A theory of change has evolved over the years, from data collection and information sharing to policy/advocacy, conservation actions, market and sustainable finance activities, towards a framework of seven key strategies.

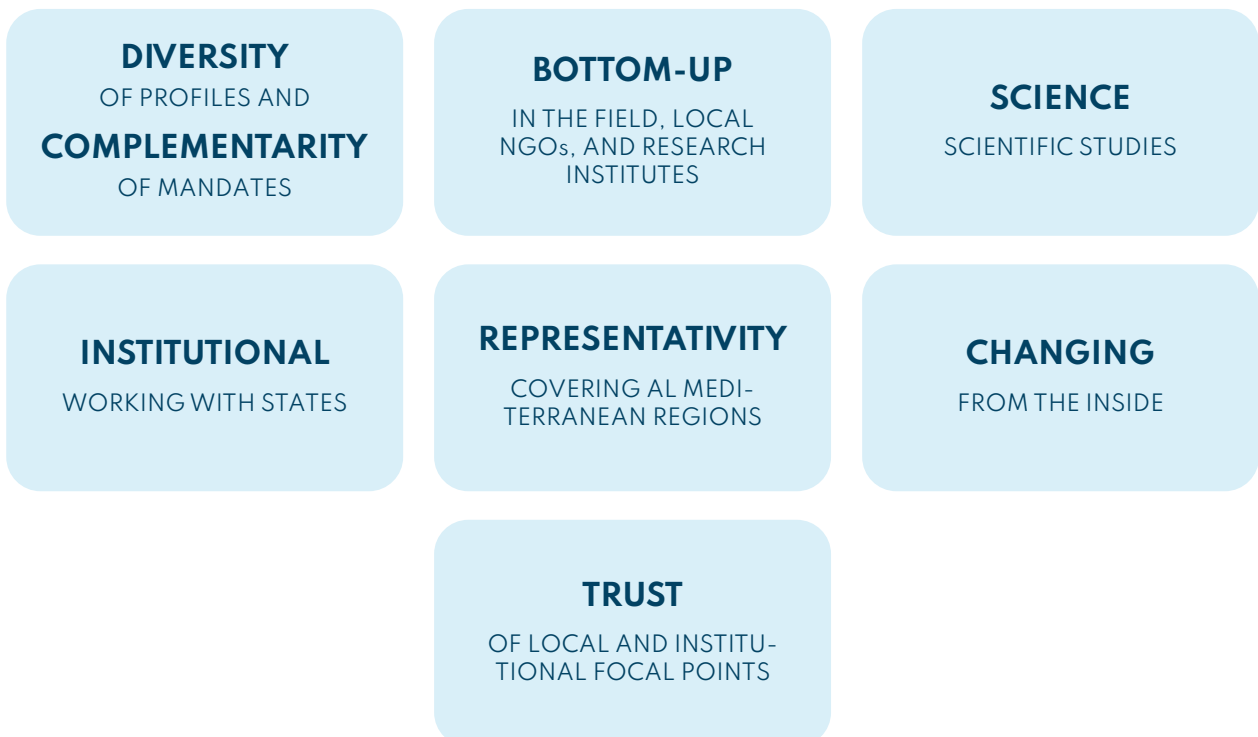
Our approach is based on:

- **Multi-level approach:** Investing at national regional and European levels on policy, implementation of technical measures to reduce fishing pressures, market solutions development, strengthening of financial sustainability, and awareness raising of Mediterranean communities,
- **Scaling up:** Building on and replicating successful processes and case studies across the region to amplify the impact of our actions, including by providing scientific, policy and financial tools/methods/frameworks,
- **Participatory management:** Building and supporting, through a bottom-up approach, participatory processes, collaborations and capacity building of local users and actors,
- **Innovation:** Valorising partners' strengths, investing in innovative technological approaches, powerful communication material, and evaluation processes.

Our mission

Our mission is to **valorise, ensure coherence, share expertise** and **scale-up** marine conservation initiatives in the Mediterranean Sea.

The partnership's characteristics and values are:



Our achievements

4,500 OBSERVATIONS ON BOARD FISHING VESSELS

AND MORE THAN 13,000 QUESTIONNAIRES WITH FISHERS FROM 7 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

3 MPAs WITH PIONEERED AND PROMOTED/ SUPPORTED CO-MANAGEMENT MODELS

AL HOCEIMA (MOROCCO), KURIAT (TUNISIA) AND GYAROS (GREECE)

10 TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS/MITIGATION MEASURES

SUCH AS FISHING GEAR MODIFICATIONS, OR ALTERNATIVE BAIT - TO REDUCE BYCATCH AND DEPREDAATION WERE TRIALLED WITH POSITIVE RESULTS DEMONSTRATING THE POTENTIAL FOR ROLLOUT IN RELEVANT SMALL-SCALE AND LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES

505 SQUARE KILOMETERS INCREASE IN NTZ AREAS

OF WHICH ABOUT 390 SQUARE KILOMETRES HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED

5 COUNTRIES IN WHICH NATIONAL LEGISLATION ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL MEASURES HAVE BEEN AMENDED AND HARMONISED

WITH THE REGIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK (ALBANIA, EGYPT, LEBANON AND TUNISIA)

A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR VULNERABLE SPECIES

IS BEING DEVELOPED AT THE GFCM LEVEL

6 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE WERE ESTABLISHED

INVOLVING KEY ACTORS IN THE FOOD VALUE CHAIN WHO ARE NOW INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARTICIPATORY CERTIFICATION SCHEME

2 SUPPORT PROGRAMMES TO IMPLEMENT LOCAL FINANCING MECHANISMS WERE DEVELOPED

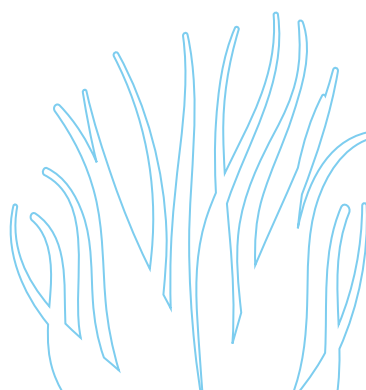
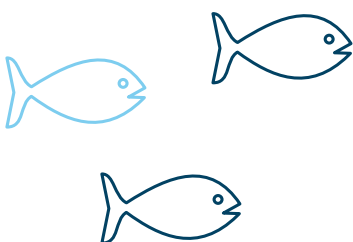
VISITOR FEES AND CONCESSIONS IN MPAs

4 SPANISH FISHERIES' SUPPLY CHAINS WERE CHARACTERISED

(BLUE AND RED SHRIMP, STRIPED SOLDIER SHRIMP, EUROPEAN ANCHOVY AND EUROPEAN SARDINE)

37 FISHERS WERE SUPPORTED, TECHNICALLY AND FINANCIALLY

TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE FISHING PRACTICES THROUGH ACCESS TO EU FUNDING



Budget engaged

Since 2017, the MAVA Foundation has funded **18 conservation projects** managed by **46 partners** to reduce fishing pressures on biodiversity all over the Mediterranean for a total of €22.808.000.

STRATEGIES	AMOUNT (IN €)	%
Strategy 1: Site-level demonstrations	5.355.560,00	33
Strategy 2: Scaling-up	2.177.606,00	13
Strategy 3: Policy and advocacy	2.605.959,00	16
Strategy 4: Technical solutions	3.786.025,00	23
Strategy 5: Market incentives	426.971,00	3
Strategy 6: Financial sustainability	1.031.783,00	6
Strategy 7: Partnership	889.057,00	6

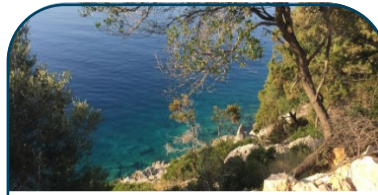


Our projects



BALEARICS

Restoring Balearics' marine ecosystem and turning the islands into a Med reference of marine conservation.



BLUE INCUBATOR

Leveraging marine conservation through entrepreneurship.



CO-MANAGED MPA / NO-TAKE ZONES

Scaling up co-managed and financially sustainable no-take zones and marine protected areas.



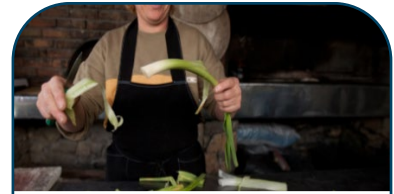
CONSERVATION OF MARINE TURTLES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Enhancing the protection and conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean region.



CYPRUS BYCATCH

Reducing the impact of bycatch on vulnerable species across the island of Cyprus.



FOODNECTED - TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND FAIR FOOD SYSTEMS

Building a widely shared approach about sustainable food.



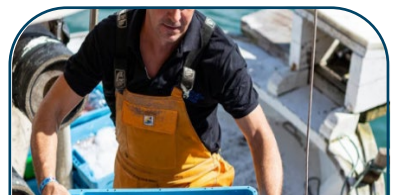
GFCM-LEX

Developing a region-wide legal framework for the conservation of Mediterranean living marine resources and ecosystems.



INCA GREECE

Addressing the interaction between small-scale fisheries and megafauna in Greece.



MEDBYCATCH

Developing a standardized multi-taxa approach to study and mitigate bycatch in the Mediterranean.



MEDKEY HABITATS

Carrying out an inventory of the main marine habitats of conservation interest.



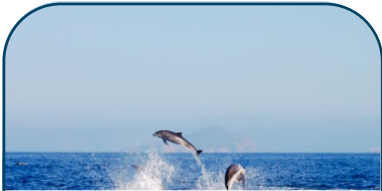
MEDPATH

Supporting fisheries to achieve higher degrees of environmental sustainability.



MEDSEAGRASS

Restoring *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in the Gulf of Oristano.



MITIGATING DOLPHIN DEPREDATION

Strengthening cetacean conservation and sustainable fisheries.



SAFESHARKS

Reducing incidental catches and consumption of sharks in the Southern Adriatic.



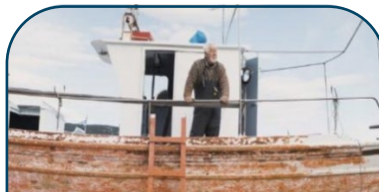
SEAFOOD ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Supporting sustainable artisanal seafood commodity markets.



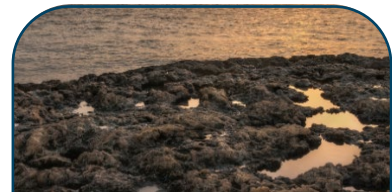
SPECIES KNOWLEDGE

Filling key knowledge gaps for vulnerable species incidentally caught by fishers.



SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

Establishing pre-financing facilities for small-scale fishers to access EU funding.



THE KURIAT PROJECT

Supporting the management of the marine and coastal protected area of the Kuriat Islands in Tunisia.

The Together for the Med partners



The impact report: a narrative of common outcomes

What is the purpose of this report?

Things began 5 years ago, when the MAVA Foundation decided to organize its financial support to certain marine conservation projects under an overarching thematic program. These projects were organized by theme, expertise, geography around the same result chain: **Reducing fishing pressure on marine biodiversity**. With the announcement of the closure of the MAVA at the end of 2022, the question became: “Is the process that was launched solid enough for this unique network to fly on its own?”

In this period of gentle supported transition, MAVA progressively handed over the reins of the network’s coordination to the partners themselves. This is how Together for the Med was born. In this context we wish to evaluate the joint conservation actions that this network has been implementing.



This report aims to highlight the results of our conservation actions, to show that together we have made great strides for marine conservation, sustainable small-scale fisheries, protection of Mediterranean ecosystems and brought on board local communities. We wish to evaluate the results that we managed to achieve together, and prove that in 5 years of collaborative work, we were able to make a difference for marine conservation.

Objectives of the report

The objectives of this report are to:

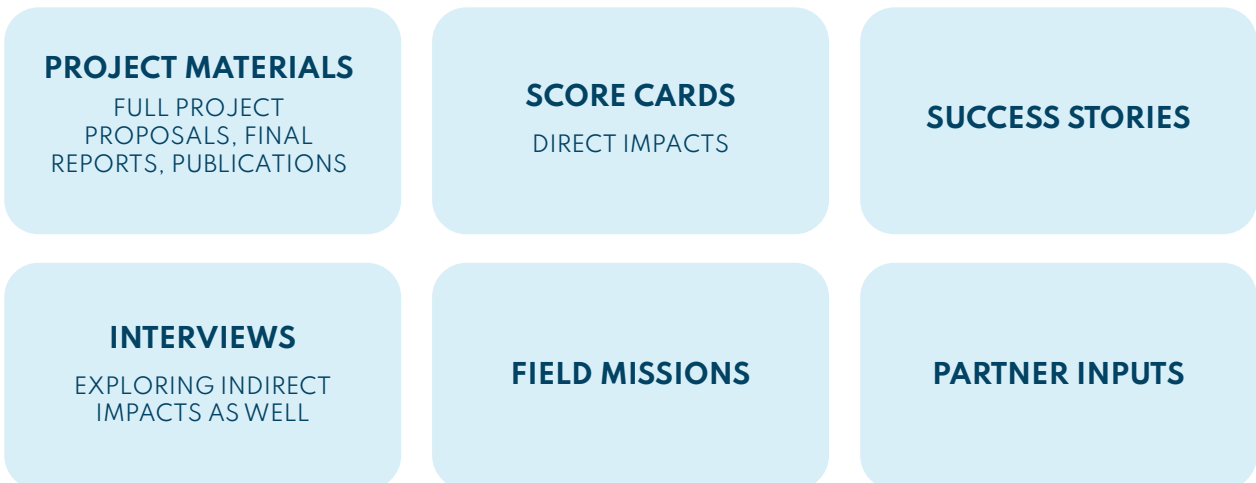
- Measure the cumulative impacts of projects at the partnership level,
- Evaluate success, capitalising on lessons learned for marine conservation,
- Publicise recommendations of partners to increase their project effectiveness and make their conservation activities sustainable.

Methodology

To carry out this impact assessment, we applied a step-by-step methodology, as detailed below:

- 1** Identification of the global expected outcomes: participatory approach to the global theory of change before projects begin
- 2** Definition of cross-cutting indicators at the partnership level
- 3** Data collection with several rounds of tailored questionnaires and individual interviews with project coordinators, investigation at key project meetings, meeting and interviewing of field actors and beneficiaries
- 4** Cross-analysis of data to measure cumulative impacts for marine biodiversity
- 5** Validation by all project coordinators of the network
- 6** Drafting and publication of the report, to be published in the beginning of 2023
- 7** Synthesis of main results in an infographic used for outreaching and awareness raising

The resources that were used to draft this report are:





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, a big thank you to all the members of the Together for the Med network for the rich interviews, the documentation on the projects and their fascinating explanations.

Secondly, a huge thank you to the MAVA Foundation, for their unconditional support during these 5 years, without which these results for marine conservation, sustainable fisheries and biodiversity would not have been possible. Thank you for the information shared, the fluidity of the dialogue and your unique feedback.

Finally, thank you to all those who contributed to the report in the BlueSeeds team, the IUCN Med and other reviewers.

Interviews

What is the originality of this particular partnership compared to other existing ones?

The genesis of the partnership makes it unique in many regards. Firstly, Together for the Med was built on an already well-developed base with all the momentum and weight of the past (partners already working together, operating methods set, *etc.*).

On the other hand, each partner entered with its own positions, strategies and ambitions. Still today, the multi-stakeholder nature of the partnership – in terms of sectors, geographies, themes and size of organisations – allows for a broad approach; together, the projects and partners are working complementarily towards many of the challenges faced by the Mediterranean Sea.

Other key aspects contributed to the success of the partnership, such as the neutrality of the secretariat, and significant funding supporting the partnership over a fairly long period of time, that gave the opportunity to do trial and error and to benefit from high-quality communication and capitalisation capacities for a nascent network.

What is your best memory of facilitating the partnership?

The first time the partners forgot to copy me on an important mail which was the proof that full buy-in and autonomy was on its way.

Paule Gros, MAVA Foundation, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Mediterranean Program



What is your best memory of facilitating the partnership?

Any face-to-face meetings make the notion of partnership really come into its own. Seeing people face-to-face and experiencing the dynamic of this partnership make us realise the diversity, engagement, and strength of Together for the Med. And this feeling does not only come out from the in-meetings moments, but all the memories around these too, as they are always full of exchanges, intense discussions... and laughs.

At MAVA, we often refer to the *MAVA community*, and these face-to-face steering committee meetings are what the *MAVA community* is all about.

Charlène Minster, MAVA Foundation, Manager, Mediterranean Programme and Impact & Sustainability Unit



What do you take home about leading a network of over fifty partners?

It was a rich and stimulating human adventure. We were lucky to have passionate, young, dynamic, competent and gender-equitable organisations and a good geographical representation of the Mediterranean. For me, this was an important factor in the overall dynamics and representativeness of the projects. I remember those rich informal moments on the fringes of intense work sessions, such as this improvised concert in Porto Cesareo, Italy, in 2019. These helped create bonds of trust between us that were conducive to the emergence of new ideas.



Now that you have left the MAVA Foundation and are working on other issues, how do you see Together for the Med?

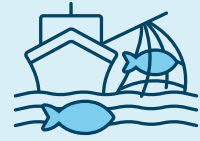
Today, after seven years, I can see that making this a flexible and collective work from the start has borne fruit. We progressively moved from satellite and fragmented projects to a grouping of partners around common results, organised under six very rich thematic projects. I am delighted that Together for the Med is still ongoing with its holistic approach to marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean.

Julien Semelin, Head of Environment Investments at Carlier Philanthropy, formerly Head of Learning and Evaluation and Manager at MAVA Foundation



© *Sentinels of the Mediterranean* documentary

1. Promote sustainable fishing



We are engaged to mitigate the impact of fisheries on biodiversity, protect key sensitive areas and promote sustainable fishing practices. We are united to collect data on bycatch and depredation and to facilitate ongoing engagement and collaboration with cooperative fishers. Our ultimate goal is to reduce fishing pressure on endangered species and habitats.

Achievements

10 TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS/MITIGATION MEASURES

SUCH AS FISHING GEAR MODIFICATIONS, OR ALTERNATIVE BAIT - TO REDUCE BYCATCH AND DEPREDAION WERE TRIALLED WITH POSITIVE RESULTS DEMONSTRATING THE POTENTIAL FOR ROLLOUT IN RELEVANT SMALL-SCALE AND LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES

2,500 FISHERS INVOLVED

ACROSS THE REGION TO REDUCE THEIR IMPACT

60+ TECHNICAL MEASURES, MANAGEMENT PLANS, AND ROADMAPS FOR IMPROVEMENT

WERE DEFINED

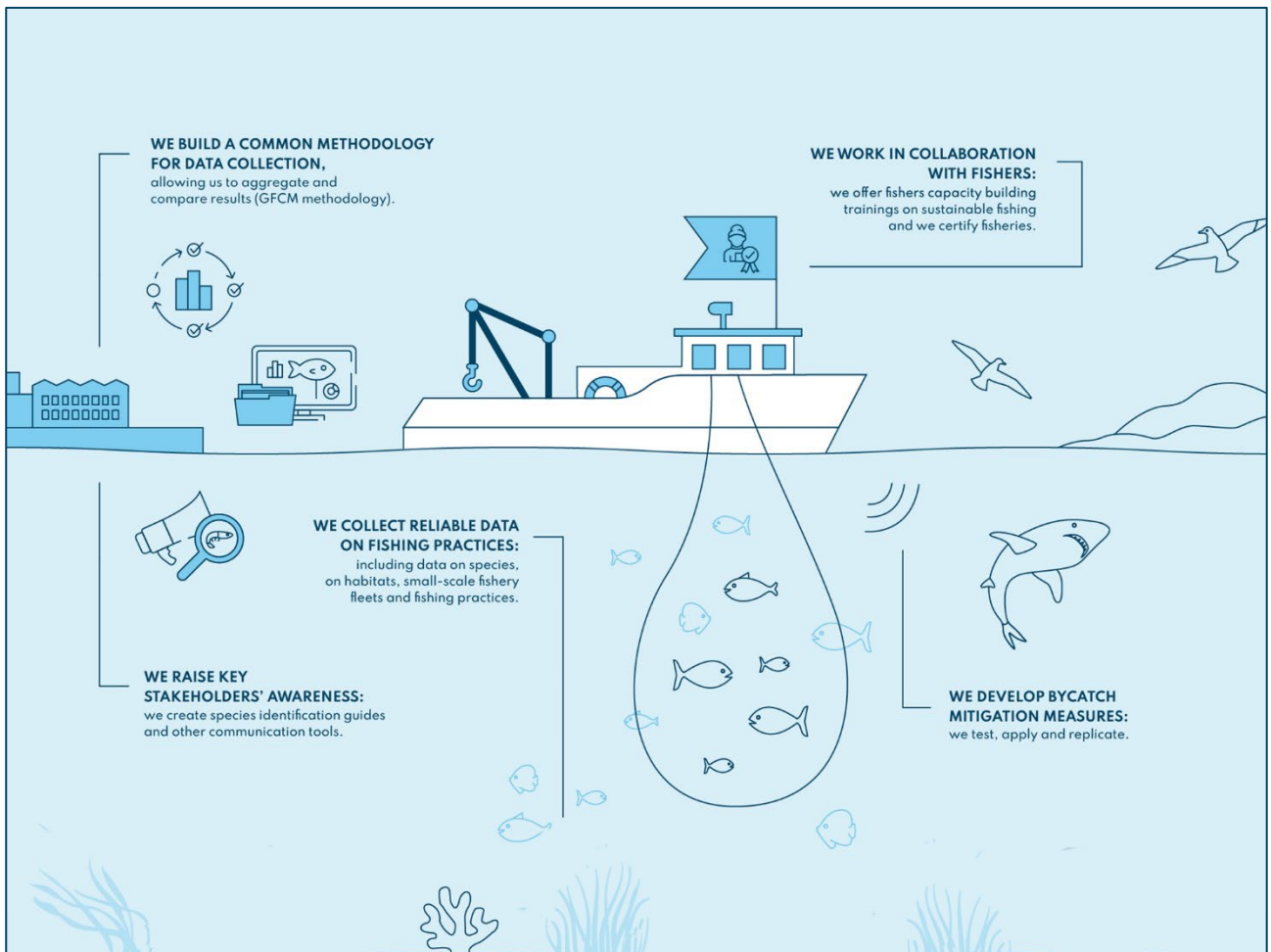
750+ FISHERIES MANAGEMENT LEGISLATIONS

FROM SEVERAL MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES WERE INCLUDED IN A COMPREHENSIVE WAY INTO A REGIONAL REPOSITORY ACCESSIBLE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

4,500 OBSERVATIONS ON BOARD FISHING VESSELS

AND MORE THAN 13,000 QUESTIONNAIRES WITH FISHERS FROM 7 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Key activities



Projects involved

MEDBYCATCH

CYPRUS BYCATCH

INCA GREECE

MITIGATING DOLPHIN DEPREDATION

SPECIES KNOWLEDGE

LIFE PLATFORM

MEDPATH

Challenges

The unregulated exploitation of fish stocks over the last few decades has resulted in a significant depletion of species and habitat destruction. According to the State of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries report published by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 2022, 75% of assessed fish stocks are fished outside sustainable limits. Of the most important threats, resulted from unregulated fishing and unselective fishing is bycatch and depredation, especially on the most vulnerable species.

In many regions, **fishing remains at the heart of the Mediterranean culture and is closely linked to food security and economic growth.** Small-scale fisheries make up most of the sector – representing 83% of the region’s fishing vessels and 57% of the fisheries-based jobs.

Efforts toward rebuilding stocks are essential and require **effective management with fishers to ensure coastal communities' food security.**

Collective efforts and results

1 Collecting data

In order to **reduce fishing pressure** on threatened species and habitats, the first step is to **collect reliable data** on fishing.

Indeed, the Mediterranean, and particularly the southern coast, suffers from a lack of knowledge in this field. When data exist, it is often difficult to aggregate them at national level because collection methods are not standardised.



© Silvio Rasmigo

To overcome this difficulty, Together for the Med projects have been working on the application of **two common methodology**: one on **bycatch of vulnerable species** (Monitoring incidental catch of vulnerable species in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries: Methodology for data collection) by MedBycatch project and another one on **dolphin depredation** (Dolphin depredation in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries: Methodology for data collection) by the dolphin depredation project. This methodology provides a framework for standardized data collection on bycatch of

vulnerable species through onboard observations, on-site surveys and self-sampling that can be applied across the region to provide harmonised and comparable data and evidence for decision making.

Thus, for the first time, data have been collected with sufficient regional and temporal coverage to serve as a baseline. This helps improve fisheries management, reduce by-catch and increase post-release survival of vulnerable species.

Several Together for The Med projects have therefore worked on data collection and analysis:

Some have focused on **collecting data on habitat**:

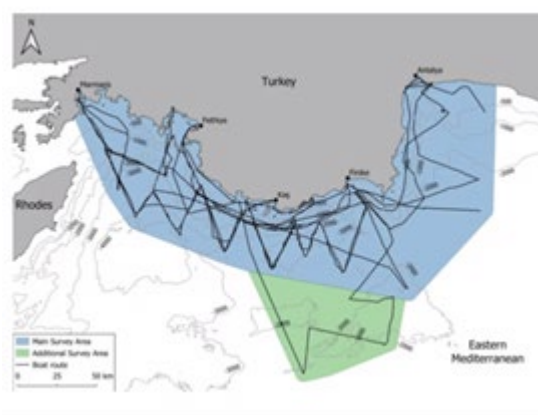
In southern Turkey, the Marine Mammal Research Association (DMAD) studied deep-diving species, from small cetaceans to large whales, using boat surveys and transects with acoustics.

After the campaign, they compiled the data to identify key areas with multi-taxa: KBAs, IMMAs, IBSAs, SPAMIs. These areas are hot spots for biodiversity and these maps are crucial for the work with fishers.

Also in Turkey, studies were conducted in the Foça Special Environmental Protection Area (SEPA). The MedBycatch project assisted in the data collection by regularly visiting ports, thus obtaining systematic and standardised data on the vulnerable species caught.

Moreover, the samples collected by the MPA/NTZ project, following 13 months of ichthyoplankton surveys, provided information on the presence of invasive species without genetic analysis. The study also showed that illegal fishing is one of the priority problems in the region.

The collection of habitat data showed that conventional fishing activities (SSF - coastal fishing) have more impact on stocks than on habitats. However, illegal fishing activities (trawling, dynamite fishing) have strong indirect impacts.

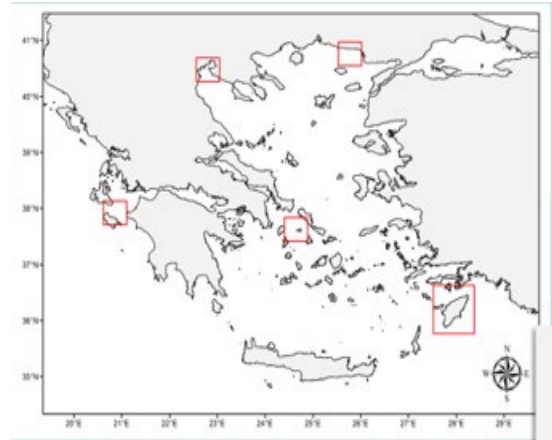


Other projects have included data collection on **fishing practices and fleet size**:

During the implementation of the INCA project in Greece, approximately 1,000 interviews were conducted, covering 73% of the ports of the Greek coastline, to collect data on the active SSF fleet and its distribution, fishing effort, and the gears predominantly interacting with marine megafauna.

In total, 524 docking sites were visited with the number of professional SSF vessels recorded being 5,152. The results of this survey indicate that the Common Fisheries Register (CFR) does not reflect the actual size of operational vessels in Greek waters. In the framework of the project, areas of high conflict (“hotspots of interaction”) between SSF and marine megafauna.

Furthermore, 604 on-board surveys on SSF vessels were carried out during one year, in order to record damages in gear and catch of SSF and incidental catches of vulnerable species.



5 hotspot study areas of interaction where on-board monitoring was implemented to estimate fishing gear & catch damage, and incidental catches

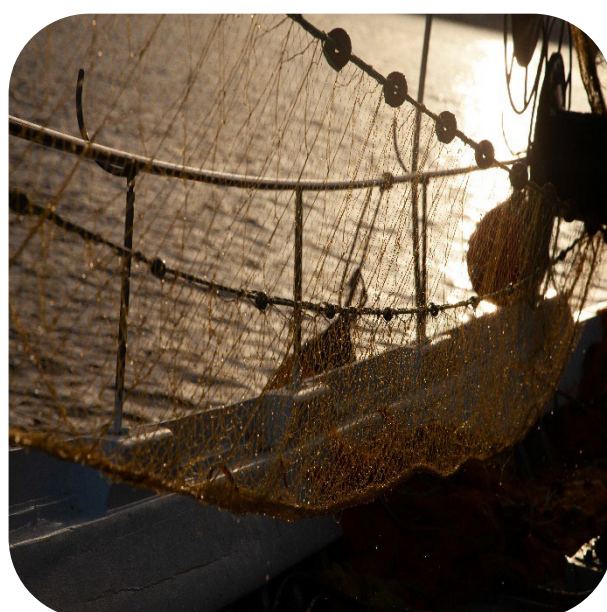
Project: INCA Greece

2 Reduce negative interactions between small-scale fisheries and marine megafauna

In addition to data collection, Together for the Med projects also worked on the **negative interactions** between fishers and marine species. These interactions resulted on the one hand in **incidental catches** of marine megafauna and on the other hand in **income losses for small-scale fishers** due to damage to fishing gear and catch caused by marine megafauna.

The extent of this damage has been documented in several projects:

According to the results of the INCA project the average frequency of damage to fishing gear caused by megafauna amounts to 73% of fishing attempts. The average annual cost of economic damage per fisher was estimated at ca. **€4.863**.



In Malta, 76% of fishers surveyed noted an increase in cetacean depredation and 33% of the fishing gear deployed during 2019 suffered damage. To address this problem, fishers agreed to modify their fishing techniques by changing their gear. Although the results of this experiment are still unclear, and despite the reluctance of some, most fishers are grateful that the problem is being addressed.

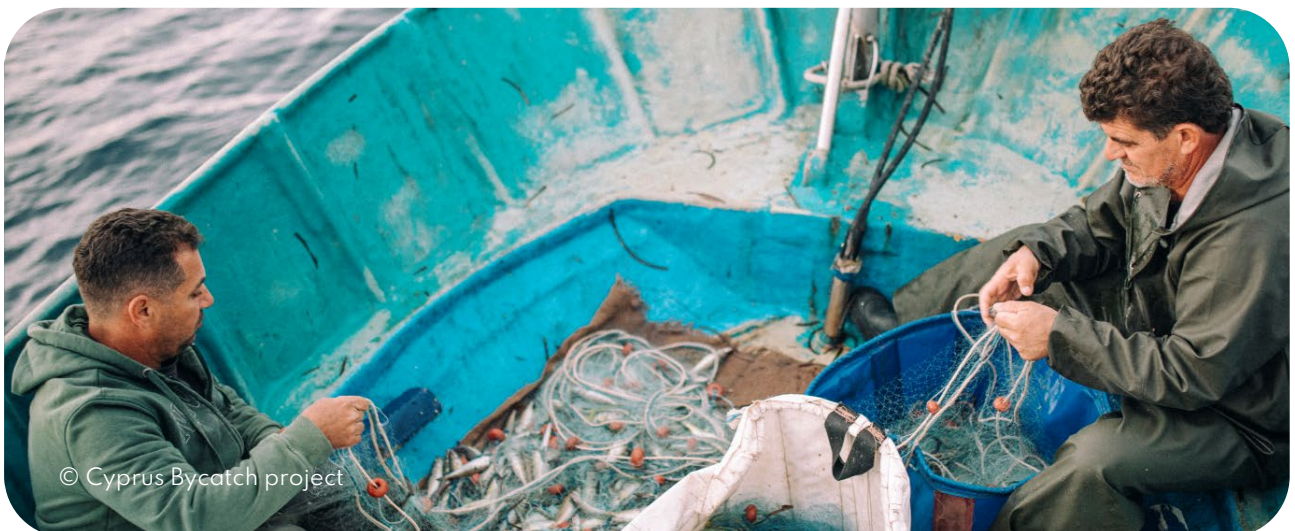
Similarly, in Catalonia, the Palamos trawler fleet has adopted technical modifications to fishing gear to reduce their impact on overfished stocks. These changes have resulted in a 25% increase in square mesh size which has led to a 60% reduction in juvenile mortality.

Finally, the LIFE and Depredation project have carried out **research on cetacean-fisheries interactions in the Mediterranean**. The aim is to better understand the impact of such interactions on small-scale fisheries and developing new potential mitigation measures.



The interaction between the SSF and vulnerable species is an issue that needs to be addressed on a regional scale in order to implement mitigation measures. To this end, a common methodology for the collection of by-catch data on vulnerable species was developed and adopted by the GFCM. This involved almost **4,500 observations on board fishing vessels and more than 13,000 questionnaires in ports with fishers from 7 different countries**. The results of the survey provided vital information to identify the periods, areas and fishing gears of greatest concern, in order to develop solutions to mitigate the impacts and considerably increase the knowledge of bycatch at the regional level.

To ensure the success of the measures put in place, it is essential that all key stakeholders collaborate – including government agencies, research institutions, fishers, local fisheries authorities and NGOs.

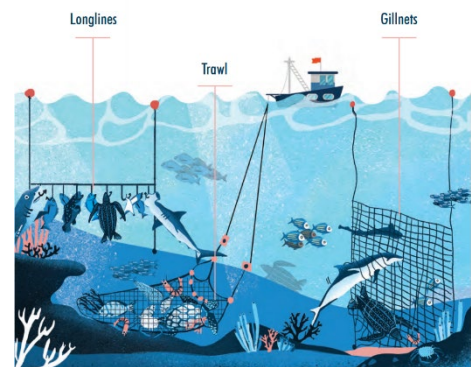
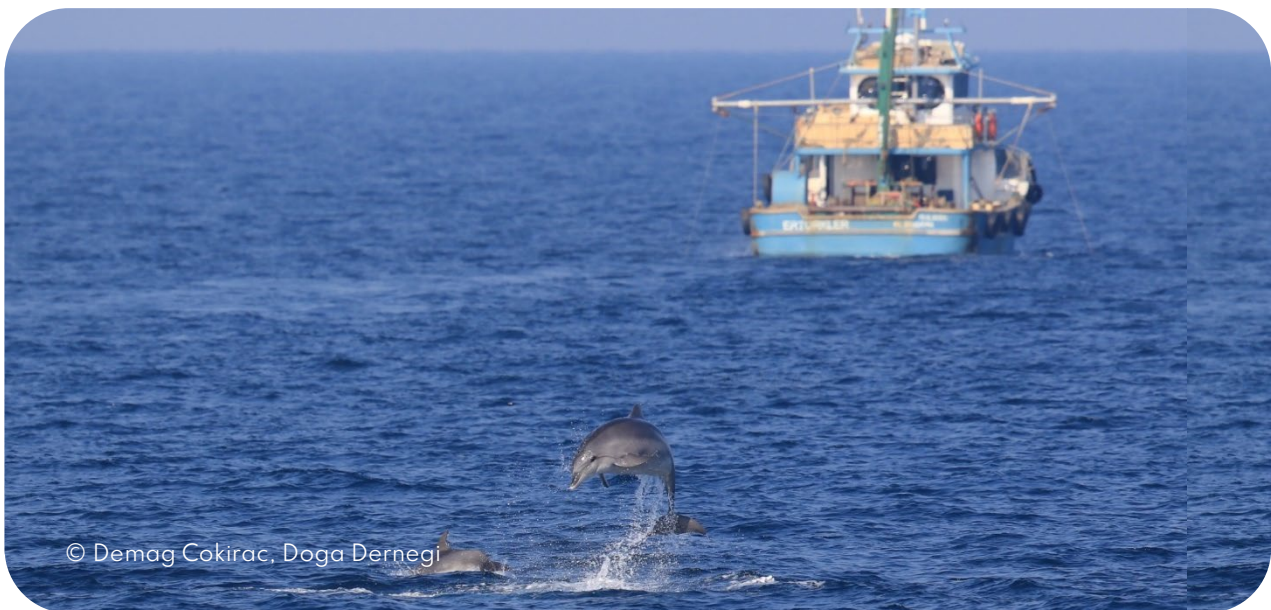


3 Raising awareness and building trust with fishers

A unique feature of our network is that we **work in collaboration with fishers**. From data collection to testing mitigation measures, the projects have all involved volunteer fishers.

For example, the trusting relationships created between fishers and observers have been fundamental to the success of the MedBycatch project, from knowledge sharing and data collection to the testing of potential measures to mitigate bycatch of vulnerable species. In total, more than 50 observers have surveyed over 42 ports in the Mediterranean and conducted over 3,600 on-board observations and over 12,100 questionnaires in port, demonstrating the incredible success of the observers in establishing good collaborations with fishing communities.

This relationship of trust was also seen in the Cyprus Bycatch project. In Northern Cyprus, fishers now share videos on social networks of themselves releasing target species and openly advocating to other fishers. In South Cyprus, the fisher's network has grown considerably, which is the result of ongoing collaboration with the fishing community.



By building strong relationships, the benefits and positive achievements go far beyond data collection:

- Establishment of an open dialogue for the exchange of knowledge and opinions
- Change in fishermen's behaviour
- Active participation of fishers in data collection
- Increase in the number of fishers willing to participate and provide sensitive data (e.g. fishing areas)
- Voluntary increase in fishers' involvement
- Building constructive dialogues and knowledge exchange
- Fishermen sharing videos of themselves implementing best practice



Many **high-quality documents and guides have been produced** through the different projects such as documentaries ([Protecting What's Precious](#) featuring one of the MedBycatch observers), videos, awareness campaigns and even a TV news report on CNN. In Cyprus, a short story named the “Blue conference” was written and disseminated for children to raise the issue of bycatch in the Mediterranean Sea. The book was a great success as more and more are asking for a copy.



Previously, there was a fisher who refused to discuss about sea turtles, today instead he calls me when he accidentally catches one.

Tunisian observer

Recommendations

In order to maintain the positive momentum generated under Together For the Med, the partners are now committing to a new project on interactions with the following objectives:



Promote collaboration between fishers, scientists, competent national authorities, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders (e.g. private sector, consumers) to create a long-term drive for sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean.



Improve the characterisation of interactions between fisheries and vulnerable species, by continuing monitoring through observer programmes (e.g. on board, upon landing) and other tools (e.g. self-sampling, questionnaires) established in accordance with the GFCM standard methodology and explore alternative approaches to data collection that ensure the long-term sustainability of the monitoring effort.



Promote transfer of knowledge within and between countries, including feeding the GFCM bycatch database with data and information collected by observer monitoring, with relevant data from stranding monitoring programmes, to support the formulation of scientific advice.



Reduce interactions between fisheries and vulnerable species by implementing mitigation measures that have already proven effective and by conducting trials to test the effectiveness and viability of new alternative technical solutions and mitigation measures.



Increase awareness of the interactions between fishing activities and vulnerable species, continuing the successful communication approach of the MedBycatch project.



Develop relationships with fishers to increase their commitment to bycatch reduction, including participation in testing mitigation measures, safe handling and release techniques.



Engage at national, regional and European levels to influence policy developments related to bycatch of vulnerable species; strengthen and increase the coherence of frameworks; develop or update national action plans for vulnerable species and integrate proven mitigation solutions into legislation, including supporting the adoption of proposals for measures to address bycatch in the context of binding GFCM decisions and other relevant frameworks such as the EU, ACCOBAMS and the Barcelona Convention.



Until today, we thought that the sea was an unlimited resource, with an infinite capacity for regeneration. The reality is the complete opposite: we, fishers, have an obligation to work on fishing sustainably.

Isaac Moya, small-scale fisher
from l'Estartit, Catalonia, Spain

Stories – Examples

Small scale fishers and marine wildlife:
a unique relationship

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

Sharing knowledge for
artisanal fishing sector transition

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

Resilience in time of Covid-19: Addressing
the interaction between small-scale
fisheries and marine megafauna in Greece
despite of the COVID situation

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

Amal: Hope for
Mediterranean Fisheries

[WATCH ON YOUTUBE >](#)

2. Engage Mediterranean community



We foster Marine Protected Area (MPA) creation and their effective management. We promote a co-management approach at the regional level through communication, experience sharing, networking and capacity building by and for coastal communities.

Achievements

23
NEW NO-TAKE ZONES
(NTZs)

3 MPAs WITH
PIONEERED AND
PROMOTED/SUPPORTED
CO-MANAGEMENT
MODELS

AL HOCEIMA (MOROCCO),
KURIAT (TUNISIA) AND
GYAROS (GREECE)

5 MPAs WITH
FORMALLY
ESTABLISHED CO-
MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEES

4 MPAs ARE
IMPLEMENTING
MANAGEMENT PLANS

350+ KEY
STAKEHOLDERS WERE
TRAINED

900+ LOCAL
ACTORS WERE
ENGAGED WITH

505 SQUARE KILOMETERS INCREASE IN NTZ AREAS

OF WHICH ABOUT 390 SQUARE KILOMETRES HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED

Key activities

WE MAP VULNERABLE HABITATS TO DESIGN MPAS,
to diagnose biodiversity pressures, to identify threats on specific species (e.g. turtles). Mapping has played a great role in mediation and concertation between stakeholders.

WE WORK TO ENSURE SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF CONSERVATION INITIATIVES,
with public authorities, locals, fishers, tourists and many other stakeholders. We improve the visibility of conservation activities and we measure their socio-economic impact.

THANKS TO CITIZEN SCIENCE, WE CARRY OUT RESEARCH LEADING TO STRONG KNOWLEDGE BASES FOR RESTAURATION,
allowing the establishment and enforcement of no-take zones, and the restauration of ecosystems (e.g. Posidonia oceanica meadows) or the population of specific species (e.g. sharks).

WE CREATE TOOLS FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS MANAGERS
for monitoring and mooring management.

WE SHARE GOOD PRACTICES AND EXCHANGE KNOWLEDGE,
between fishers from different countries or between MPA managers from all over the Med and through scientific collaborations.

WE COMMUNICATE AND SPREAD KNOWLEDGE ON THE MED'S STATE OF HEALTH
through trainings, documentaries, success stories and co-management with fishers.

Projects involved

CO-MANAGED
MPA / NTZ

MEDKEYHABITAT

THE KURIAT
PROJECT

CONSERVATION OF
MARINE TURTLES IN
THE MED

BALEARICS

MEDSEAGRASS

SAFESHARKS

TOGETHER FOR
THE MED

Challenges

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) provide considerable **benefits to human populations** through a variety of cascade effects. Amongst there, MPAs can ensure a durable and dependable catch for fisheries, playing a crucial role in subsistence or market economies.

To ensure the future of the region and its communities, the creation of a **regional network of effective MPAs is essential**. International negotiations for post-2020 (post-Aichi) global marine coverage by MPAs in the Mediterranean region were concluded in 2022 at the Kunming-Montréal summit, with an agreed target of 30% coverage by 2030. **Only 8.3% of the Mediterranean Sea is currently protected and a mere 0.04% is strictly protected.**

The continued expansion of MPAs is crucial, but without adequate investment in human and financial capacity, we will not be able to achieve our environmental conservation goals.



© Sentinels of the Mediterranean documentary

Collective efforts and results

The final objective is to create and expand effective and sustainable MPAs and NTZs.

1

Strengthen our knowledge to encourage the creation of protected areas

Maps are one of the main tools to help create MPAs and NTZs. The knowledge acquired through mapping is indeed essential and can be mobilised at several levels:

First of all, mapping can help **create MPAs and NTZs and improve their management**. Indeed, knowledge acquired through mapping on the pressures and vulnerabilities of an area help convince and advocate for the creation of an MPA. Several examples illustrate this:

- In Morocco and Montenegro, the mapping carried out in the respective areas of Jbel Moussa and Ratac provided the impetus for the creation of MPAs.
- In Cyprus, increased knowledge of the impact of trawling in Chrysohou Bay is helping scientists advocate for the creation of an NTZ.
- In Tunisia, habitat mapping is used to update management plans.
- In Turkey, habitat mapping is used as a basis for drafting a new management plan for Foça SEPA.



© Sentinels of the Mediterranean documentary



Anchoring impact study in Catalonia, Spain
© BlueSeeds



Anchoring impact study in Catalonia, Spain
© BlueSeeds

In addition to assisting in the creation and management of MPAs or NTZs, mapping data is also useful for **assessing the effectiveness** of these areas once the protection rules have been defined (by comparing the ecological status of the MPA with that of a neighbouring unprotected area). For example, in the Balearic Islands and in Blanes (Spain), scientific work was carried out in the field for 8 months to assess the pressure of anchoring on *Posidonia oceanica* meadows.

Finally, mapping is a key step for many **restoration or conservation projects**. For example, the mapping of *Posidonia* in the MedSeaGrass project in Sardinia enabled the development of **innovative actions** for the restoration of *Posidonia*: planting of natural cuttings and the implementation of a digital mooring management system to avoid anchoring on *Posidonia* (BlueMooring).

In summary, a map is a crucial tool for mediation, interpreting results, conducting negotiations and identifying solutions. However, while mapping is an essential tool,

it is not sufficient to communicate the benefits of MPAs to wider external audiences or to take immediate action on emerging threats faced by MPAs, including mass tourism, climate change and invasive species.

For this reason, Together for the Med projects have also worked on knowledge sharing, communication and awareness raising.

2 Encourage knowledge sharing, communication and awareness raising

Awareness sharing

Awareness-raising is at the heart of our work area because it allows us to involve local stakeholders and, more generally, the general public in the subject of MPAs. Awareness-raising activities are therefore closely linked to the success of the general conservation project, because without the support of local stakeholders, nothing is possible. It is bearing this in mind that many awareness-raising activities were implemented within the framework of Together For the Med:

In Turkey, photographs and videos of fishers were collected and used to communicate on the actions of the pilot sites. In Kaş-Kekova, a photographic exhibition on the "Treasures of the Mediterranean" was even organised during the visit of the Blue Panda, WWF's ambassador boat in Turkey.

For five months, the Blue Panda sailed around the Mediterranean to raise awareness about the importance of protecting marine biodiversity, through press trips, public events, workshops and engagement with fishers. This event resulted in over 250 press articles.



In Tunisia, to promote Kuriat MPA to the general public and stakeholders, the local NGO Notre Grand Bleu produced a series of documentary videos that address a range of issues including ghost fishing. These videos have been widely distributed to the general public at cultural events.

In Tunisia and in the Maghreb, we notice the emergence of the community TunSea on Facebook. This group raises awareness on marine conservation in Tunisia and now also in neighbouring countries, with over 11,000 followers.

Together for the Med has also produced a documentary, titled *The Sentinels of the Mediterranean*, which offers a new perspective on marine conservation, combining the expertise of field scientists with the experience of fishers who are mobilising to protect the Mediterranean. The documentary has been widely publicised on the internet and shown at festivals.



[WATCH IT ON OUR WEBSITE >](#)

Exchange of best practices and training

Exchange visits between fishers from different fishing areas and countries were organised in order to experiment with new approaches, like using acoustic devices to mitigate depredation of fishing nets by dolphins. Tunisian fishers went to Morocco to experiment with the reinforced seine. Similarly, in Tunisia, fishers from Tabarka and Haouria went to Ghannouch to explain the NTZ concept and its benefits for fishers and the community. Finally, in Morocco, exchanges were organised between managers and fishers of the Al-Hoceima and Gökova MPAs.

Within the framework of the co-managed MPA/NTZ project, **training courses** were organised in three Mediterranean sub-regions (Maghreb, Adriatic, and Eastern Mediterranean) to train MPA stakeholders in **MPA effectiveness**. " *The question of the target group for the trainings was a central issue, as it determined the effectiveness of the training provided. We decided that each week-long training would be delivered to participants from countries in the same sub-region, in order to increase connectivity between people facing similar problems. We also considered that MPA managers should not be the only target group, as they are not the only decision-makers in the field of marine conservation, although they often receive attention in capacity building programmes. In the end, the trainings targeted MPA members, NGOs, academics, public institutions (ministries, coastguards) and international institutions,*" explains Timothée Cook, training officer.

Workshops were also organised to **promote women entrepreneurship**, by encouraging women to start their own businesses, and helping them to achieve

financial independence. In Morocco, for example, workshops organised by the NGO AGIR in the Al Hoceima National Park involved 50 fisherwomen. They learned how to build sustainable fishing gear and participate in the preservation of their environment.

The NGO Notre Grand Bleu organised a workshop in Tunisia entitled "*La semaine du grand bleu*". This week-long workshop brought together 44 national and Mediterranean participants on the theme of knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and replication and duplication of projects. Mouloud Benadbi, an Algerian marine biologist who participated in the training, went on to train people in Algeria as a turtle specialist.

Events

One of the most notable events to which the Together for the Med network participated was the **2020 Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Forum** held in Monaco. This [Forum event](#) brought together nearly 700 participants from 36 countries. At the end of the discussions, several recommendations were issued, which can be summarised as follows:

- The **network of stakeholders** (MPA managers, local authorities, jurists, artisanal fishers, NGOs and scientists) is a key ingredient for the implementation of the roadmap. This network allows us to join forces and speak with one voice to address current common challenges and identify actions for change.
- The **integration of other area-based conservation measures** (ABCMs) into the Roadmap is essential for achieving the 30×30 target.
- **Achieving the ambitious targets for MPA protection** requires the commitment of all: governments, MPA stakeholders, regional organisations, NGOs, civil society, scientists and donors.
- **Effective management of MPAs** is an overall objective of the roadmap. Accurate assessment of management effectiveness will be supported by the development of tools, while taking into account, amongst other things, the EU and MedFund initiatives on this topic.



The 2020 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, Monaco

3 Actively participate in improving the effectiveness of protected areas

Social acceptability and co-management

The establishment of MPAs must be the result of viable **compromises** between stakeholders. An MPA is therefore the result of lengthy discussions between local stakeholders, in order to reach a consensus to best satisfy everyone's interests.

Among the main stakeholders to be included in the discussions, **fishers** are key because they know very well local issues at stake and because they can be a blocking factor if they see the MPA's interests as contrary to their own. It is therefore essential to **consult** them:

In Italy, for example, the LIFE small-scale fishers's network consulted fishers, local MPA managers, regional fisheries department managers, coastguards and research bodies to gather information on the functioning of different types of protected areas and on necessary authorizations. A list of potential scenarios and processes to follow was then developed.

In Tunisia, consultation meetings with 95 fishers and representatives of government authorities were held to facilitate communication.

Beyond consultation, Together for the Med encourages **co-management** of MPAs with fishers, which involves exchanging of ideas, promoting and enhancing sustainable practices as alternative sources of income, and promoting fish products with low commercial value.

The Balearic Islands are an example of co-management: the islands of Ibiza and Formentera have a fisheries management plan with an objective of co-management and low impact fishing. Green boxes will be installed and rules on the use of nets have been defined (24-hour limit in Ibiza and 48 hours in Formentera). These are smart devices that send information on the whereabouts of the boat and thus provide for the accumulation of data, such as the viability of fishing grounds and the movements of the fishermen.



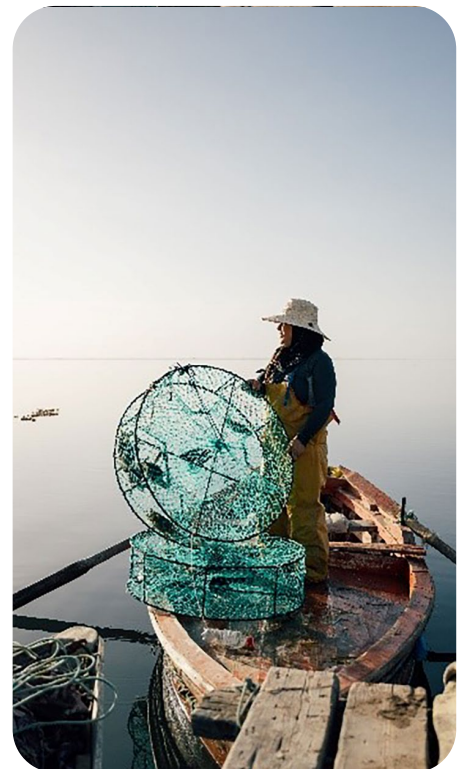
Creation of new MPAs and expansion of existing MPAs

One of the key objectives of Together For the Med is to participate in the **creation of new MPAs or NTZs**:

One of the most successful examples is Ghannouch in Tunisia, where an NTZ was established under the comanaged MPA/NTZ project. This NTZ is the result of a request made by local fishers and supported by WWF to address the pressures they were facing in their activity. A study was therefore carried out to assess the state of biodiversity in the area, and a questionnaire was conducted among fishers to determine the feasibility of the NTZ and its location. This led to the signing of an agreement for the establishment of an NTZ including the main

stakeholders. Once established, fishers were able to build artificial reefs to restore the habitat, using local materials. As a result, a few months later, cuttlefish, one of the target species, began to reproduce on the reefs. The cuttlefish stock was replenished within 6 months. This successful technique was then replicated in other locations along the Tunisian coast. To reinforce this work, a co-management committee was also created. In addition, the women of Ghannouch underwent a series of entrepreneurial development trainings and are now able to build nets to transform the invasive blue crab into profitable products on the market. These actions contribute to the resilience of fish populations in Ghannouch, and include the involvement of the whole local community.

In Algeria, the process of developing the management plan for the future Rachgoun MPA began in July 2021. Local workshops and technical field consultations were organised to enable the consultancy firm to submit in December 2021 the first deliverable of the first phase, the relevance study for the classification of the future Rachgoun Island MPA. The MPA is now on track for official declaration.



The **expansion of existing MPAs** is also one of the key objectives of Together for the Med, and particularly of the co-managed MPA/NTZ project:

In Turkey, a new NTZ was established in the Foça SEPA.

Similarly in Italy, local stakeholders requested an extension of the MPA and NTZ of Torre Guaceto (Italy).

In Croatia, a new NTZ is being established on the island of Molat (Croatia), and several other project sites are working on the creation of new NTZs.

In the Balearic Islands, the development and expansion of the MPAs of Calvia, Tagomago, Baix Fondo and Palma are also noteworthy.

Socio-economic assessment and valuations

Before creating an MPA, it is advisable to carry out a **socio-economic study** to understand uses, but also to convince the authorities to protect the area with figures and a **monetary valuation**. Indicators should be defined beforehand, for example on divers' expenditure (e.g. how much money do they spend, how many dives do they do?) or on tourism (e.g. how many tourists visit the MPA, how much of tourism expenditure can be attributed to the expansion of the MPA?).

As an example, the Balearic Islands collected **socio-economic data** in the 3 main ports of the Pitiusas (Ibiza, Sant Antoni and Formentera) with the aim of expanding the existing NTZ. The methodology of the natural capital accounting study in the Mallorca MPA revealed, among other things, that investment in MPAs is profitable.

This methodology is now available and the figures have been reported in the international media.

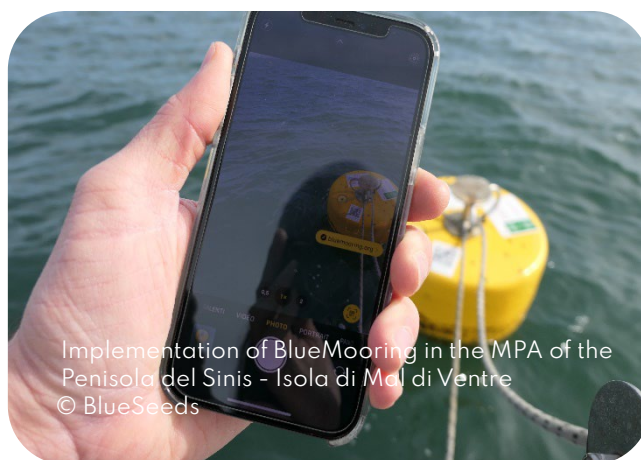
Support for MPA management

Finally, in addition to the creation of MPAs and NTZs and their expansion, Together For the Med has an increased interest in the management efficiency of these areas. We therefore worked on the development of different **management tools**, amongst which:

A **monitoring strategy**: For an MPA to be effective, it is essential that there is on-site monitoring to ensure compliance with conservation rules. For example, in the Kuriat Islands, SPA/RAC helped design a monitoring strategy for Tunisia to stop illegal fishing activities on sensitive marine habitats. This strategy was approved by local authorities.

A mooring management strategy and tool:

Many MPAs are facing a high influx of tourists, which undermines the health of their habitats and the effectiveness of their conservation actions. To help managers control these flows, the Blue Incubator project set up a mooring management tool called BlueMooring. Created as a web application, BlueMooring offers managers the possibility of easily accessing the attendance and mooring data in their MPAs and, if they wish, of collecting entry fees.



For example, in Sinis, Sardinia, nearly €10.000 was raised in two months through the collection of mooring fees. This sum will be directly reinvested in maintenance and will cover the management costs of the buoys.

Recommendations

Here are some recommendations for the implementation of future projects on marine protected areas:



To work around MPAs, and not only inside their geographical boundaries



To support permanent connections between networks of MPA managers and other networks of stakeholders (scientists, public administrations, NGOs, fishers, tourism sector, jurists, municipalities)



Replication is the inclusion of multiple samples of habitat types in MPAs and networks. Replication of protected resistant and resilient marine habitats at multiple sites increases the probability that some will survive and will support the recovery of affected areas. Replicate MPAs enable the dispersal of marine species between areas. Replicate MPAs can be designed to accommodate dispersal patterns of species and facilitate connectivity between sites.

Ebrucan Kalecik, WWF, MPAs and Fisheries Officer

Stories – Examples

MedSeaGrass - Restoring Posidonia:
encouraging results despite a difficult path

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

Capacity building: the main tool for
enhancing the effectiveness of
marine conservation

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

Fish make a comeback in
the MPA of Gyros MPA

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

How to best manage moorings?
Feedback from the field

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

3. Improve legal and policy framework



We mobilize and advocate to scaling up successful local solutions, accelerate the implementation of current legislation, influence European and Mediterranean policies, and develop a stronger biodiversity framework for the Mediterranean.

Achievements

The partnership has been instrumental in **integrating key fisheries and biodiversity issues into national, regional and international strategies**. Some examples of notable results are:

A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (GFCM)

HAS BEEN APPROVED BY GOVERNMENTS AND IMPLEMENTED WITH THE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION OF OUR PARTNERSHIP

2 GOVERNMENTS, MALTA AND TUNISIA, ARE USING OUR CO-MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

AS A BASIS FOR THEIR ENTIRE MPA SYSTEM

A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR VULNERABLE SPECIES

IS BEING DEVELOPED AT THE GFCM LEVEL

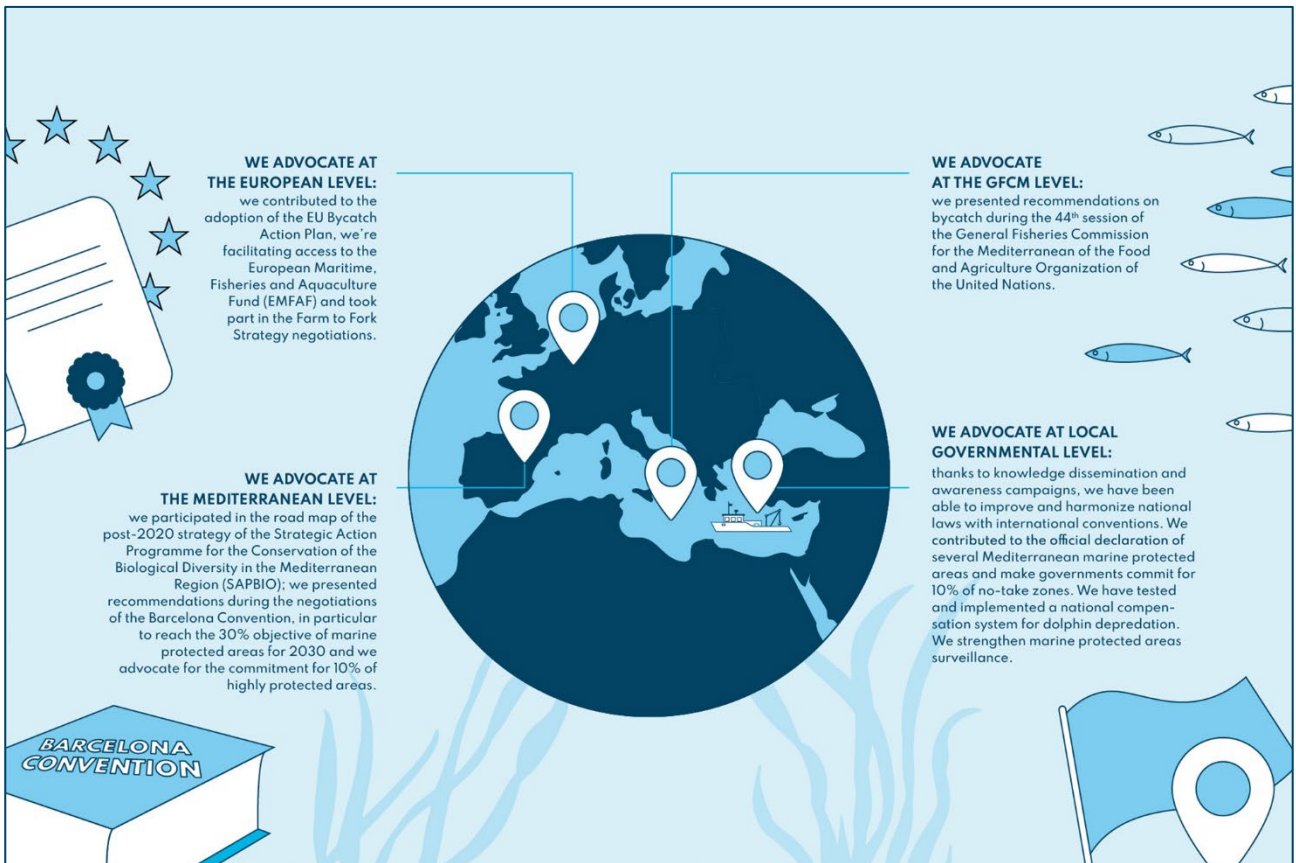
THE NEW EUROPEAN MARITIME, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE FUND FACILITATES ACCESS TO FINANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

THROUGH A 100% PUBLIC AID RATE, THUS ENCOURAGING THE TRANSITION OF SMALL-SCALE COASTAL FISHERIES TOWARDS GREATER SUSTAINABILITY

5 COUNTRIES IN WHICH NATIONAL LEGISLATION ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL MEASURES HAVE BEEN AMENDED AND HARMONISED

WITH THE REGIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK (ALBANIA, EGYPT, LEBANON AND TUNISIA)

Key activities



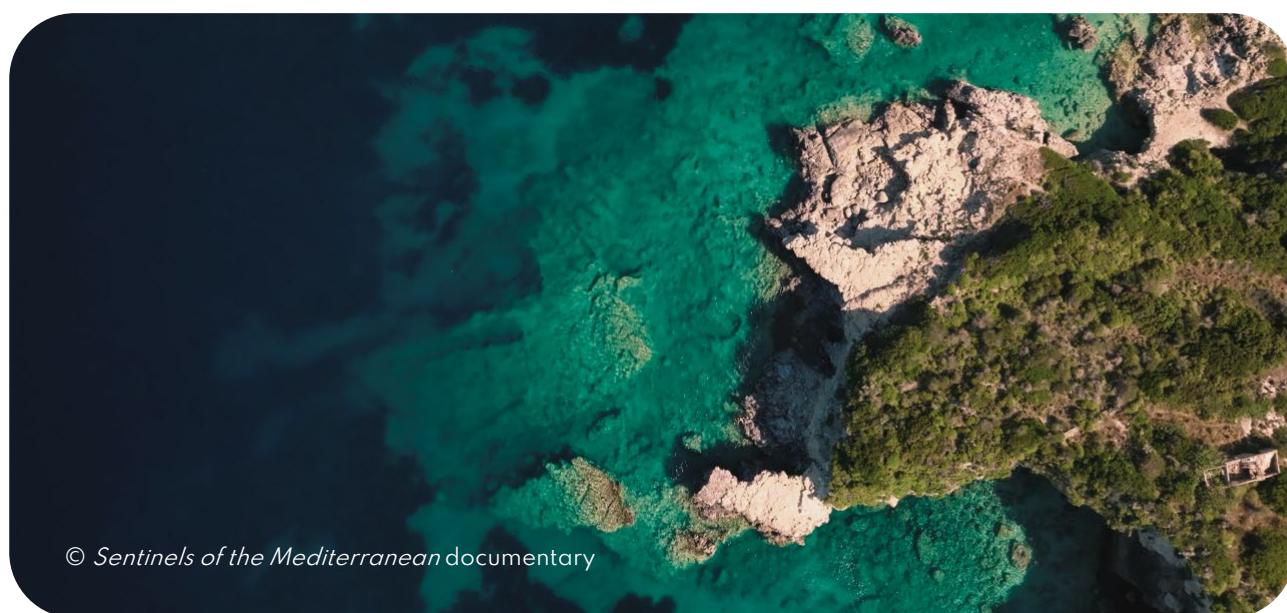
Projects involved



Challenges

International regulations on fisheries and biodiversity are marked by a severe **lack of knowledge** and **understanding** at national level. This translates at the local level into **poor enforcement** of these rules and **ineffective conservation measures**.

It is therefore crucial to **facilitate the implementation** of these regulations by creating a **harmonised framework of legislation** at the regional level and **by supporting governments and stakeholders to transpose and implement** these standards on the ground.



Collective efforts and results

1 Making recommendations to international and regional organisations

Among our main achievements, Together for the Med has participated in the elaboration of recommendations to regional and international bodies. For example:

Together for the Med helped to collect data from MPA managers. During the **MPA Forum** held in Monaco in December 2021, these data were used to estimate the real state of progress of international commitments and to develop recommendations (2020 roadmap) that respond to needs and issues raised directly in the field, by managers themselves.

As part of the **Low Impact Fisher's Forum** organised by **LIFE**, we published, in collaboration with *Our Fish*, a report on the implementation of Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) entitled "*How the EU can Transition to Low Environmental Impact, Low Carbon, Socially Just Fishing*". This report calls for a transition to low environmental impact, low carbon, socially just fishing. It is now being used by the European Parliament in its own report on the implementation of the CFP.

In 2021, WWF published a report titled "*30 by 30: scenarios to recover biodiversity and rebuild fish stocks in the Mediterranean*" and released a video to prove the benefit of MPAs for the fisheries sector. WWF used these deliverables to make recommendations to countries.

More specifically, Together for the Med has contributed to the definition of the action plans of **the EU, the Barcelona Convention and the GFCM/FAO**:

Together for the Med projects have been very active in contributing to **EU action plans**:

MEdPAN contributed to the Union for the Mediterranean's GreenerMed 2030 Agenda, as well as to the EU consultations related to the MSFD, the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the Interreg-Med and ENI-Med consultation for the future of these programmes.

The LIFE platform also contributed significantly to the definition of the European action plans:

It worked with the European Parliament Fisheries Committee and the European Commission - DG Mare on MPA policies - on co-management and on the implementation of the multi-annual plan for fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Western Mediterranean.

LIFE participated in a panel discussion on "The sustainable seafood sector and the EU Green Deal" at the European Maritime Day.

LIFE followed the European Parliament's INI report on the farm to fork strategy which resulted in the adoption of a resolution "on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system".

Finally, LIFE participated in several consultations on "blue food" and small-scale fisheries in preparation for the "UN Food Systems Summit".

Together for the Med projects and partners participated in the elaboration of the Post-2020 "Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean (Post-2020 SAPBIO) of the Barcelona Convention", at COP 22 in Antalya in December 2021.



GFCM/FAO: One of the main outcomes of Together for the Med's projects on fisheries and biodiversity is the recommendations for by-catch reduction for the harmonisation of fisheries legislation at the 44th Commission of the GFCM. These recommendations encourage, amongst other things, the development of training for national and regional authorities on by-catch, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and social welfare support.

2

Facilitate the implementation of the international and regional legal framework at national level

Improve and harmonise laws (e.g. with fisheries)

In order to meet international standards on fisheries, it is essential to 1- diagnose the state of the legislative framework on fisheries in each country, 2- compare the legislative frameworks of each country and 3- harmonise these legislative frameworks at the regional level to facilitate their understanding and application.

To this end, the Mediterranean Legislation project created the **GFCM-Lex**, an online platform providing **transparent and easy access** to information on a **country's fisheries and aquaculture legislation** for fishers, stakeholders and the general public. The project aims to raise awareness of existing legislation in the region to encourage sustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices, in line with the recommendations adopted by the GFCM. As a result of this process, more than 100 legal documents from various countries were analysed, in order to be revised.

Notably, considerable progress was recognised in three target countries (Albania, Tunisia and Turkey). In Albania, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development expressed satisfaction with the results of the project, particularly with regard to identifying gaps in national legislation.

The country took immediate action by incorporating the missing GFCM decisions into national legislation. The government was also able to incorporate the GFCM provisions not yet reflected in Albanian legislation into the National Plan for European Integration 2021-2023. By amending its national legal framework, Albania had the opportunity to address issues such as by-catch and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and to better take into account small-scale and recreational fishing.

Thanks to the **collaborative** nature of GFCM-Lex, anyone can update information on their country's fisheries and aquaculture legislation. This collective practice will not only **ensure the continued development of country profiles in GFCM-Lex**, but also **increase awareness** and **engagement** of stakeholders in the process of ensuring their country's compliance with regional and international measures.

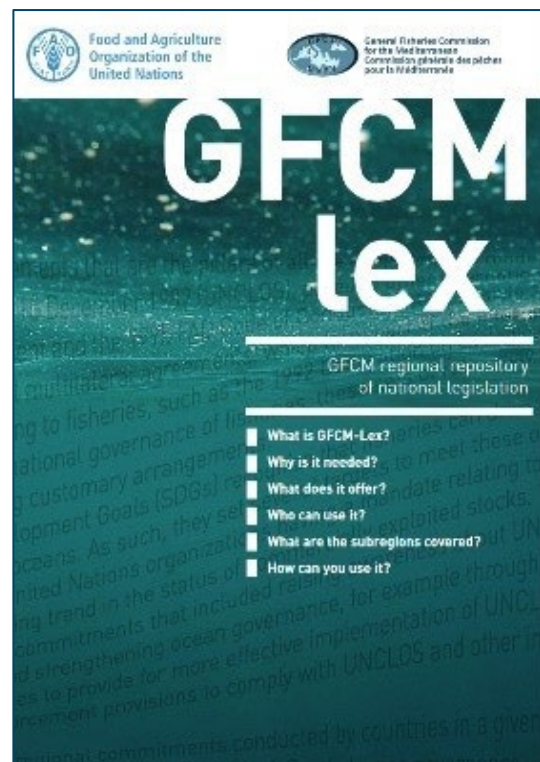
Promote the development of national action plans on priority biodiversity issues

As coastal areas are under the jurisdiction of States, it is they who officially declare MPAs. This official declaration is crucial as it then allows the allocation of funds and human resources for management. In this context, Together For the Med projects have **advocated** with governments to encourage the official declaration of MPAs and NTZs:

The Balearic Islands project produced a report on the benefits and impacts of MPAs to convince the government to allocate more funds to MPAs. This report was positively received by the government.

In Turkey, thanks to SPA/RAC, national action plans for the conservation of marine vegetation and coralligenous habitats were approved by the Ministry.

In Italy, WWF supported the Ministry of Ecological Transition and advocated for the 30x30 target. This target was included in the Italian biodiversity strategy.



Promote the implementation of national action plans on priority fisheries issues

Finally, Together for the Med participated in the **adoption of action plans on priority fisheries issues**.

For example, in Greece, based on the INCA project results a detailed proposal was developed for a national compensation scheme for small scale fishers to address **depredation problems**. The proposed mechanism includes the following conditions: (i) it should target only small-scale professional fishers and not all registered coastal professional fishers. (ii) The mechanism should be at least partially financed by available EU funds, but it should also be financed by national resources. (iii) The mechanism should be simplified in its operation for the authorities that will manage it and for fishers, with easy access for both. (iv) The determination of the level of financial support should take into account the most recent and valid data from the annual assessment of damage caused by marine megafauna on both catches and fishing gear resulted by the INCA project (v) Financial support should be granted on an annual basis per fishing vessel and the amount should be the same for the whole country.

This project therefore illustrates the **need for advocacy work** based on scientific data to promote the adoption and implementation of specific mitigation measures to reduce interaction with marine megafauna.

Stories – Examples

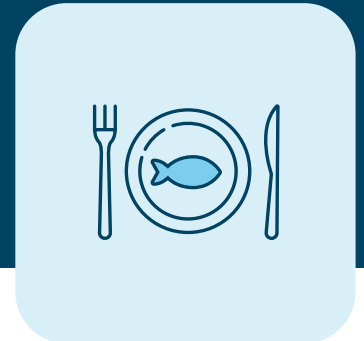
Identifying legal gaps to accelerate fishing sector transition

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

Let's raise the voice of women in Fisheries in Europe

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

4. Valorise sustainable seafood



We foster a shift towards sustainable practices for Mediterranean fisheries via the implementation of certification and labelling processes and the promotion of sustainable seafood alternatives for consumers.

Achievements

6 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE WERE ESTABLISHED

INVOLVING KEY ACTORS IN THE FOOD VALUE CHAIN WHO ARE NOW INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARTICIPATORY CERTIFICATION SCHEME

4 COUNTRIES WITH ACTIONS PLANS IMPLEMENTED

TO ADDRESS THE MANAGEMENT GAPS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS IDENTIFIED IN FISHERIES

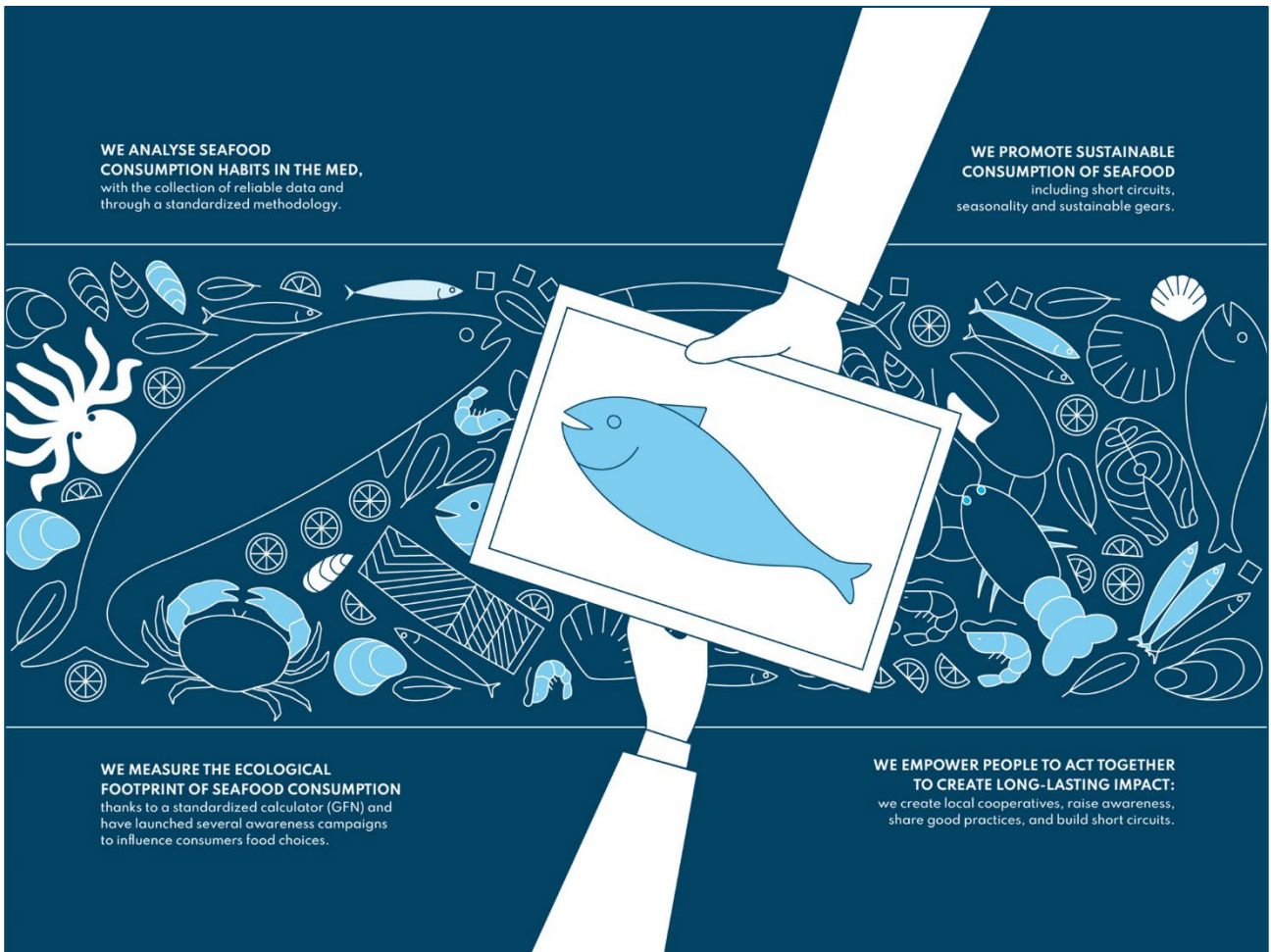
4 SPANISH FISHERIES' SUPPLY CHAINS WERE CHARACTERISED

(BLUE AND RED SHRIMP, STRIPED SOLDIER SHRIMP, EUROPEAN ANCHOVY AND EUROPEAN SARDINE)

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT ANALYSES OF THE FISHERIES, AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK VALUE CHAINS WERE CARRIED OUT

WITH THE AIM OF DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Key activities



Projects involved

SEAGOOD
ECOLOGICAL
FOOTPRINT

FOODNECTED

MEDPATH

Challenges

The **current food system** is not sustainable and has significant impact on the environment: it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, overexploitation of natural resources, degradation of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity, both terrestrial and marine.

As far as seafood is concerned, in the Mediterranean, eating habits often rely on species whose populations are **in decline**. By **diversifying our food preferences**, it is possible to reduce the pressure on marine ecosystems while supporting local fishing economies.



Collective efforts and results

1 Supporting SSF to promote sustainable seafood consumption

In order to promote a shift towards sustainable practices for Mediterranean fisheries, the first step is to understand **seafood consumption habits**: what is the state of knowledge of consumers regarding seafood? Once this detailed understanding is acquired, different tools and commercial incentives can be developed to support more sustainable fishing and consumption.

Within the framework of Together for the Med, two projects have been working particularly on the **promotion of sustainable marine food**:

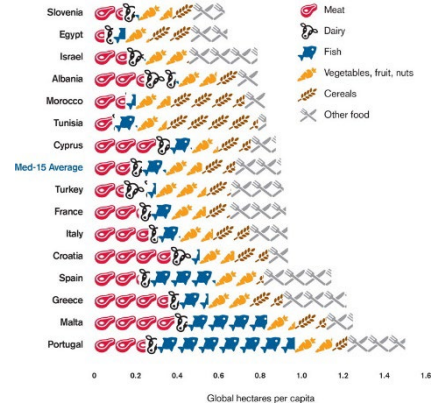
The Seafood ecological footprint project conducted a three-country study to understand food habits and preferences, with the ultimate aim of encouraging the general public to change their food preferences towards lesser-known species that are not in decline. At the end of the project, it was found that food consumption is one of the main drivers of the ecological footprint of the three countries studied (Croatia, Italy and Turkey). As for seafood, its consumption contributes to 6% of the total food footprint in Turkey and 11% in Italy (these ecological footprint measures were calculated using the Global Footprint Network calculator). The study further concludes that **the main barriers to buying non-standard seafood are price, flavours and unknown cooking methods**.

The Foodneted project initially aimed to create a **Mediterranean Community of Practice** (CoP) involving a range of stakeholders in short value chains. The final objective of the project was to facilitate the sharing of good practices, seek solutions and build synergies that facilitate the transition towards fair and sustainable food systems with a low ecological footprint.

Our work on food systems leads us to conclude that it is essential to invest time and energy in building **strong relationships** of trust, mainly through meetings, field visits and exchanges. However, with the Covid pandemic, it became more difficult to organise meetings. Efforts were therefore redirected to the local level.

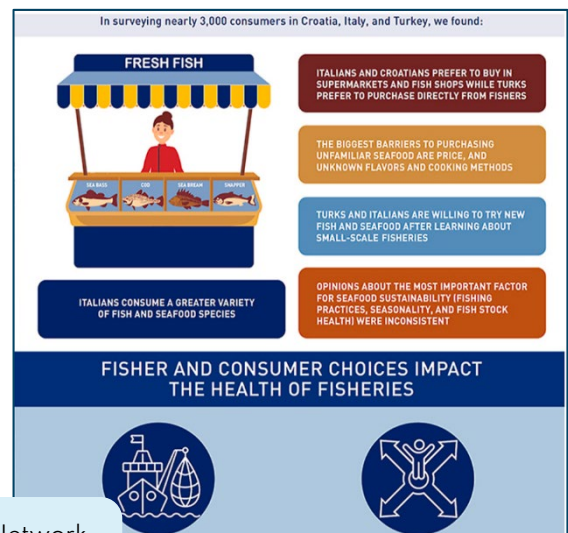
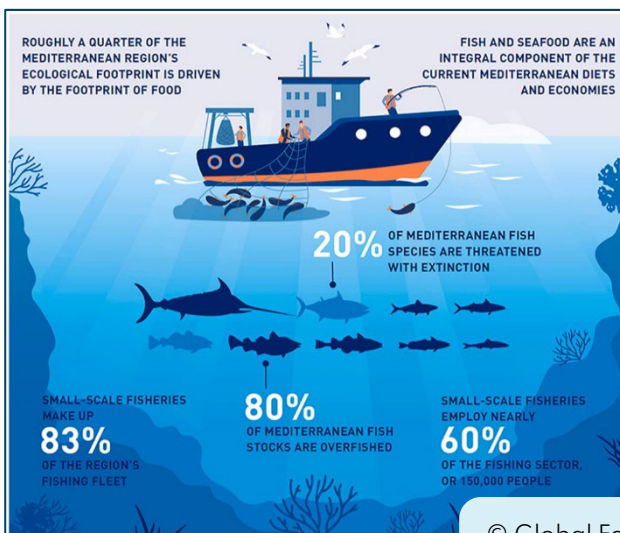


Ecological Footprint of Food Consumption (2010)



After years of stressing the importance of education and raising consumer awareness of the value of their food and their connection to the people who produce it, we are excited to be working with sustainable fishing and farming organisations. Our goal now is to move with them towards a world where all stakeholders can come together through common initiatives to improve the lives of everyone, with an essential aspect of what it means to be human: the food we choose to eat, to not only nourish our bodies, but also our minds and communities.

Paula Barbeito, Slow Food, Foodnected Project Coordinator



© Global Footprint Network

2 Empowering individuals to act together to create a long-lasting impact

Through its various projects, Together for the Med has worked to create **cooperatives and communities of practice (CoP)** to encourage people to act together towards a more sustainable food system:

A CoP is an **organised group of small-scale producers** and other key actors in the food system who share values and a common approach to sustainability. They work together to transform the current food system into a more equitable and sustainable system for a healthy planet and resilient communities.

A **producer organisation (PO)** is an officially recognised body that has been formed by, and is controlled by, producers in a specific sector (agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture), and that was founded as an initiative of the producers themselves, to pursue their specific objectives.



POs are established in accordance with a number of provisions of EU legislation and are approved by the competent national authorities. They can operate at national, regional and global level as POs, associations of POs and inter-branch organisations.

For example: The SlowFood project and LIFE platform have supported the creation of the brand "Empesca't". "Empesca't" is a **quality brand for our products, regulated, managed and certified by our association** *Arts Menors Costa Brava*. We made this brand to give a name to what we do every day with our way of fishing, using different passive gears seasonally, respecting closures, minimum sizes or effort limits, and promoting good fishing practices and project involvement. The fundamental axis is quality and sustainability, we know the state of the sea and we wanted to bring this added value to the hands of the consumer who appreciates it. On the other hand, we serve fish without intermediaries, directly at a fair price for us and with greater transparency for consumers.



Gaining fair access to resources and markets is a fundamental struggle for small-scale low-impact fishers who make up the majority of the European fleet. We believe that working together with others is essential to achieving a positive and meaningful change in our food systems. To be viable, fishers must be rewarded for the value they add through their good practices. On the other hand, consumers need to be able to easily identify sustainable, healthy and fair products, and to know their story, so they can value and select them.

Brian O’Riordan, LIFE Platform, Executive Secretary

Stories – Examples

Sharing knowledge for artisanal fishing sector transition

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

Fishers and scientist working together for sea urchin stock preservation

[READ ON OUR BLOG >](#)

5. Foster financial transition



We ensure long-term financial sustainability, essential for effective MPA management. We foster the replication of local mechanisms to diversify MPA budgets. We develop innovative funds to guarantee the financial sustainability of fishers that shift to sustainable fisheries practices and to foster local entrepreneurship.

Achievements

2 SUPPORT PROGRAMMES TO IMPLEMENT LOCAL FINANCING MECHANISMS WERE DEVELOPED

VISITOR FEES AND CONCESSIONS IN MPAs

1 LOCAL FINANCING MECHANISM (VISITOR FEES) WAS TESTED IN 4 COUNTRIES

ALBANIA, CROATIA, MONTENEGRO AND TURKEY

1 LOCAL REVOLVING FUND WAS SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED IN MOROCCO

IN AL HOCEIMA

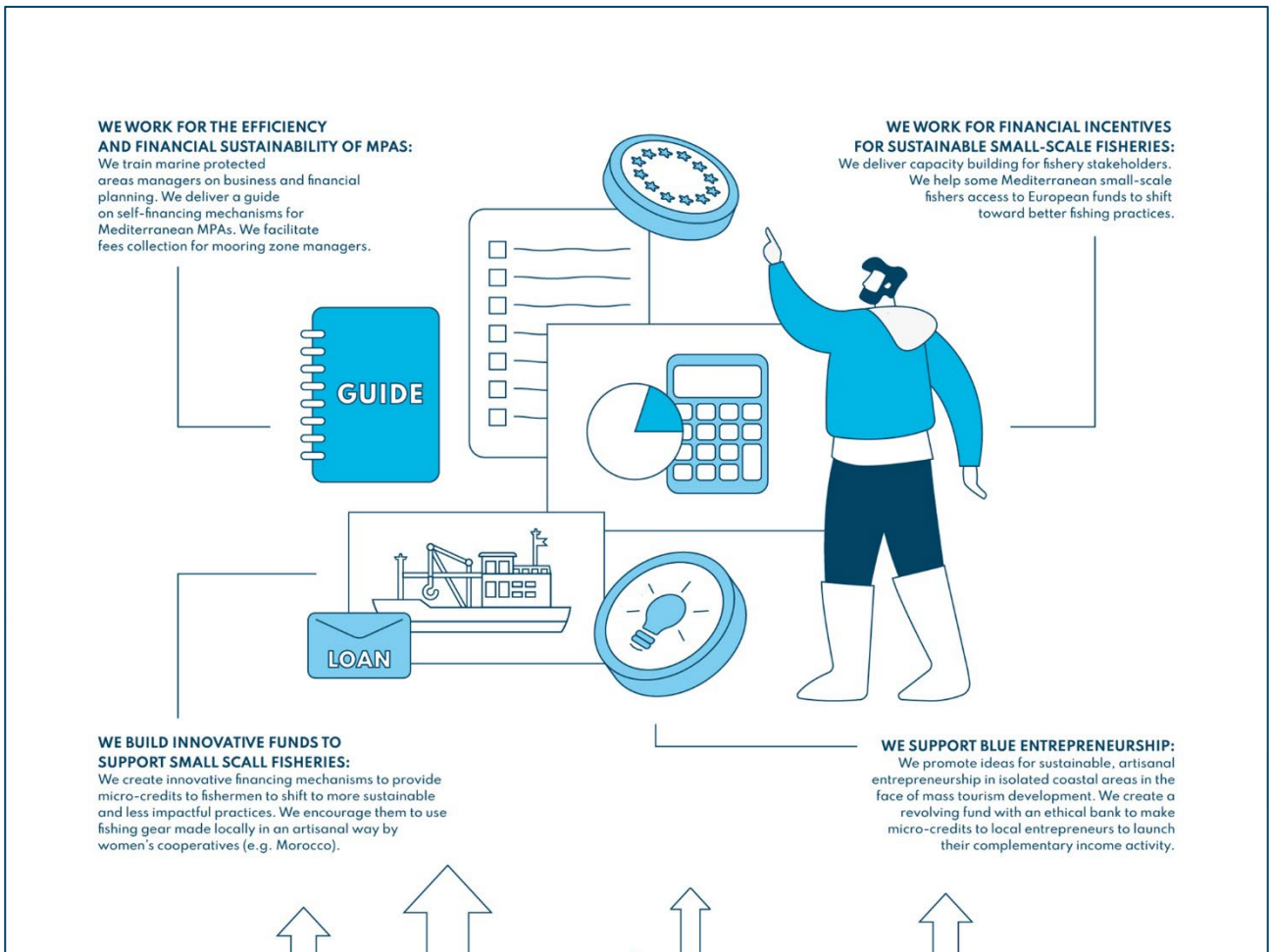
1 INNOVATIVE REVOLVING FUND WAS DEVELOPED IN LASTOVO ISLAND MPA (CROATIA)

TO GENERATE BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY AND ENTREPRENEURS VIA THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BUSINESSES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY (E.G. PESCA-TOURISM, WASTE MANAGEMENT)

37 FISHERS WERE SUPPORTED TECHNICALLY AND FINANCIALLY

TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE FISHING PRACTICES THROUGH ACCESS TO EU FUNDING

Key activities



Projects involved

CO-MANAGED
MPA/NTZ

MEDPATH

SUSTAINABLE
SMALL-SCALE
FISHERIES

BLUE INCUBATOR

Challenges

Sources of funding for biodiversity conservation are weakening, while increasing environmental pressures are exacerbating the problem of underfunded MPAs. Indeed, many MPAs in the Mediterranean continue to face a recurring lack of financial resources to operate effectively. In such a context, MPAs need to rationalize their costs and diversify their revenues without losing sight of their conservation objectives.

Furthermore, in the fisheries sector, decades of overfishing and mismanagement have seriously degraded marine resources of the Mediterranean Sea. This situation not only threatens marine biodiversity, but also the survival of small-scale fishers whose livelihoods and incomes are highly dependent on the state of fish stocks.

In this context, it is urgent to support MPAs and SSFs towards achieving financial sustainability, in order to ensure the sustainability of marine conservation projects.



Collective efforts and results

1 Increasing financial efficiency and sustainability for MPAs and SSFs

Capacity building for over 49 MPAs on topics related to management effectiveness and sustainable finance, Marine Stewardship Council training of 21 stakeholders.

Nearly 600 users of the guide on sustainable financing mechanisms for Mediterranean MPAs.

Guide and support programs for development of local financing mechanisms

The **Guide on Sustainable Financing for MPA managers**

was published in February 2021. A new chapter related to fundraising was added in October 2022, completed by a database listing more than 70 donors, and new chapters will be added periodically as the work on MPA financing continues. The guide is completed by support programs for the step-by-step implementation of financing mechanisms.



Under the Comanaged MPA/NTZ project, 4 sites were supported for the implementation of local financing mechanisms through the support programs. More than 10 practical tools were developed as part of the support programs, tailor-made for MPA managers' needs. As part of the toolbox developed for the implementation of visitor-based fees in MPAs, a digital fee collection (BlueMooring) tool was also developed (Incubator project). The “support program approach” will be replicated for other financing solutions, such as:

- The implementation of blue carbon funding,
- The implementation of ecomoorings as part of *Posidonia oceanica* conservation strategy.

Both those approaches are interlinked, as a methodology on blue carbon for *Posidonia* to pay for the implementation of eco-moorings (ongoing), updating a methodology from 2015, was developed. An initial draft of this independent methodology with third party validation was written. In-situ proof-testing of the methodology has started in Spain thanks to a partnership with an academic partner in Spain (Blanes Center for Advanced Studies), and additional potential pilot sites were identified to continue the tests in 2023.

2 Developing innovative funds and financial mechanisms

Innovative funds for fishers

Al Hoceima revolving fund: The association AGIR, in Al Hoceima, Morocco, developed a revolving fund to support the manufacture of sustainable fishing gear by a cooperative of fisherwomen called Mednasse, leading to:

- Financial empowerment of 50 women,
- Training of 300 fishers from 5 different sites,
- Innovative financial mechanism (reimbursement by automatic deduction from auction sales).

The successful implementation of this innovative fund was made possible by consultations and participatory planning meetings with 200 fishers belonging to 3 cooperatives operating in the Al Hoceima MPA, to reduce threats and damage caused by human activities.

EMFAF Pre-Financing Fund proof-of-concept: The “Mediterranean sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) pre-financing facility in EU and non-EU countries” project

was a proof-of-concept project to assess the feasibility of a pre-financing revolving fund to facilitate the access of SSF to the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). So far, 37 fishers in 2 countries were supported, technically and financially, to adopt sustainable fishing practices through access to EU funding. The granting mechanism was successful, as measured by the increase in the number of applications to the EMFAF. In Sardinia (Italy) for example, the first contribution (€63.287 in grants and €12.600 in technical assistance) to fishers supported by this project was followed by a 100% increase in the number of submitted applications. In Croatia, some of the fishers who received grants and technical assistance, prepared two or more applications each for EMFAF. Overall, an investment in technical assistance of €42,630 has allowed a total submission of a request of 2.397 M€ to EMFAF authorities for fishers. The technical assistance investment is representing only 0,19% of the total requested funds.

The success of this proof-of-concept led to the development of a **Pre-Financing revolving Facility** that **will start loaning money to SSF in 2023**. This PFF, run by a French association (BlueMove) has already signed a partnership with one ethical bank and has a capital of over 1M€ to start supporting fishers.

Sustainable entrepreneurship to foster marine conservation

Through the Comanaged MPA/NTZ project, Tunisian fishers explored with WWF North Africa two models of sustainable development:

- Sustainable management and support for artisanal fishing,
- Promotion of artisanal fishing products.

To assess the relevance and the feasibility of such developments, a study on Elasmobranch fishing, including the evaluation of the economic value of elasmobranchs and the analysis of the ecosystem impact of elasmobranch fishing in the Gulf of Gabes was conducted.



Following a similar approach, BlueSeeds launched the **Blue Business Incubator (BBI)** in Lastovo, Croatia, to foster the development of **small impact businesses** on the island. The aim of this incubator is to reduce the negative impacts of the various sectors (fishing, agriculture, transport) on the marine environment and to enable local

inhabitants to be the main actors in the preservation of their island. In total, 8 entrepreneurs were supported. The incubator offered the entrepreneurs help in **building their business plan and business model** and professional support to help them **access public funds** (European funds in particular). In addition, the BBI led to a partnership with an **ethical bank** for the creation of a **revolving fund** that aims to provide loans to entrepreneurs in financial need at minimum rates. Currently, €14.000 are available in the fund, which can be used for future entrepreneurs once the first loans paid out are refunded. In addition to its economic and financial impact, the incubator has also benefited the entrepreneurs socially, by **promoting dialogue and cooperation** between the island's stakeholders and **strengthening synergies** between different areas of activity. For example, one of the most notable results of the incubator is the creation of **a local cooperative** bringing together fishers and farmers in order to add value to their products and find common outlets inside a short circuit. The replication of the BBI is now being explored in other parts of the Mediterranean.

Capacity building and management effectiveness

MedPan established a **working group on sustainable financing** and contributed to the MedFund new initiative on highly protected MPAs, as part of the post-MAVA strategy. MedPAN also developed an **online training module** on business planning (designed and delivered by BlueSeeds), that was delivered to 9 MPAs in January 2021. Other MPAs, in addition to those 9 trained, worked on their business plan using the **Medplan tool**, with the support of BlueSeeds. More than **20 business plans** were developed during the last 2,5 years in the Med, facilitating the implementation of financing strategy by MPA stakeholders.

BlueSeeds developed a **5-day training program** (Turkey, Tunisia and Croatia) called "Efficiency and sustainability of marine conservation projects" with +10 different topics, gathering conservation experts from 7 countries. More than 40 people were trained during 3 workshops, allowing for the development of a network of practitioners able to replicate sustainable funding precepts in their countries. In addition to those efficiency workshop, a tool (**BlueDiagnosis**), aiming at assisting the decision-makers in steering the MPA towards being more sustainable, was developed. It was tested on 25 MPAs in 9 Mediterranean countries between September 2021 and November 2022.

3 MedPATH supports 2 fisheries for greater sustainability

Nine French fisheries entered Marine Stewardship Council pre-assessment. These pre-assessments enabled fisheries to identify challenges to achieve **greater sustainability**.



2,760 SPANISH AND 1,400 FRENCH FISHING BOATS OPERATE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA



MORE THAN 8,300 FISHERMEN IN SPAIN AND 2,300 IN FRANCE ARE WORKING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



THE MEDITERRANEAN IS HOME TO 4%-18% OF ALL KNOWN MARINE SPECIES

For example, for **sea urchin**, significant **gaps in biological data** were identified. Some stock assessments are underway, but in different and specific areas, and are never aggregated, which maintains **this lack of knowledge** about the stock and its evolution.

To overcome this lack, a **participatory workshop** was organised to **co-construct an action plan** for the sea urchin fishery, in collaboration with all stakeholders, including a dozen professional fishers. During this workshop, all the scientific structures that were carrying out biological assessments of the stock for several years, in different marine protected areas or coastal zones of the Gulf of Lion, decided to **pool their protocols and results**, in order to provide a trend in the evolution of the stock at the scale of the French coastline, but also to develop tools and a method for carrying out a relevant assessment in future years.

Stories – Examples

The guide
on financing MPAs

[VISIT BLUESEEDS.ORG](https://www.blueseeds.org) >

How to best manage moorings?

[READ ON OUR BLOG](#) >

EU 'sustainable' fisheries Fund
reintroduces harmful subsidies
and ignores biodiversity crisis

[VISIT WWF.EU](https://www.wwf.eu) >

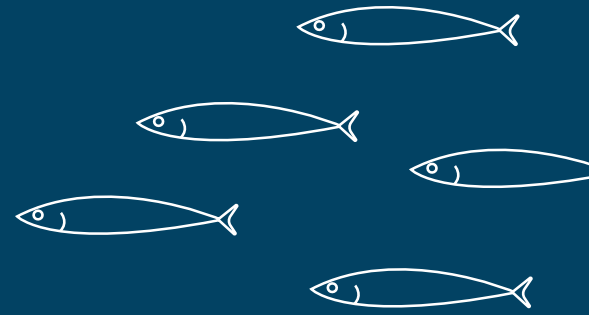
Business plan training

[WATCH ON YOUTUBE](#) >

MedPATH: Medfish- Improving
Sustainability in the Mediterranean

[WATCH ON YOUTUBE](#) >

Conclusion and legacy



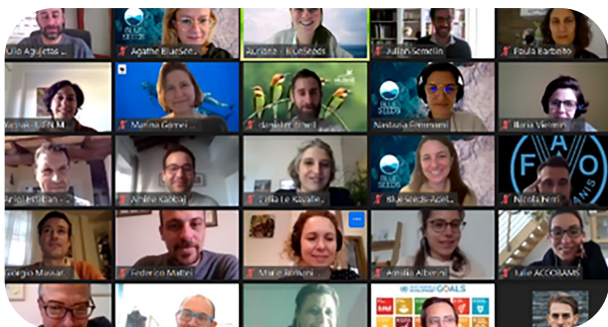
With all these common results, we are keen to continue working together. Strengthen and further develop this network to maintain global coherence, communicating with other networks of similar size and above all encouraging the sharing of expertise.

Because in view of the complexity of the subject and the scale of the issues at stake, we need to support and coordinate ourselves and, above all, to promote initiatives with positive results, in order to inspire, motivate and replicate them elsewhere. Together we are stronger than alone.

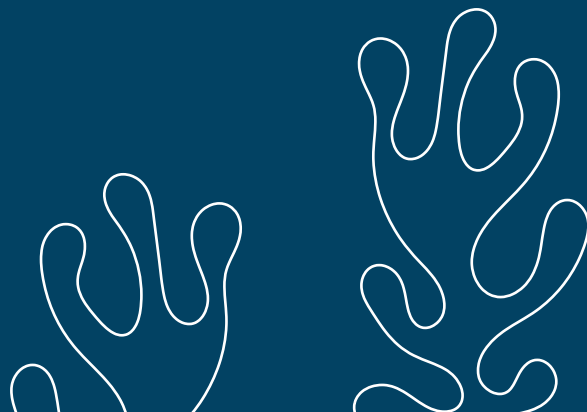
For the partnership to sustain long-term conservation impact, additional funding support and stronger synergies are necessities. To secure these, the partnership will foster collaboration with regional initiatives, such as the MedSea Alliance, the Friends of the SSF, and the Union for the Mediterranean.

To learn more about Together for the Med and the projects,

[VISIT TOGETHERFORTHMED.ORG](https://www.togetherforthemed.org) >



Bibliography



Project monitoring info

ScoreCards MAVA: Monitoring project: [OAP M4M5 phase 2 - Google Sheets](#)

Steering Committees project updates

Full Project Proposals

Project websites and project deliverables

Interviewees for impact measurement

Project coordinators

Daniel Mitchell, Birdlife Europe – MedBycatch and Cyprus Bycatch

Julie Belmont, ACCOBAMS – Mitigating Dolphin Depredation

Celia LeRavallec, ACCOBAMS – Mitigating Dolphin Depredation

Francesca Frau, MedSea Foundation – MedSea Grass

Amalia Alberini, WWF Greece – INCA Greece

Lobna Ben Nakhla, SPA/RAC – Turtles

Ibrahim Ben Amer, SPA/RAC – Species Knowledge

Paula Barbeito, SlowFood – Foodnected

Nicola Ferri, GFCM-FAO – Med Legislation

Ahmed Siliman, GFCM-FAO – Med Legislation

Aniol Esteban, Marilles – Balearics

Adèle de Toma & Marie-Aude Sevin, BlueSeeds – Blue Incubator

Marco Costantini, WWF MMI – Sustainable Fishing prefacility fund

Julio Agujetas, MSC – MedPATH

Anna Barbanti – WWF Med – Co-Managed MPA/NTZ

Yassine Ramzi Sghaier, SPA/RAC – MedKey Habitats

Giulia Prato, WWF Italy – SafeSharks

Manel Ben Ismail, NGB – Kuriat

Field stakeholders

Ebrucan Kalecik - WWF

Gökhan Kaboğlu: Researcher/Lecturer (Dokuz Eylül University-Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology)

Mouloud Benabdi: Abyss Consulting Alger

Anis Zarrouk: SPA/RAC project manager and national focal point MedBycatch

Hamadi Mejri: Ministry of Agriculture Tunisia, GFCM national focal point

Houssine Nibani, AGIR Morocco

MAVA coordinators

Paule Gros, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Mediterranean Program

Charlène Minster, Manager, Mediterranean Programme and Impact & Sustainability Unit

Julien Sémelin, former Marine Program manager and Head of learning and evaluation

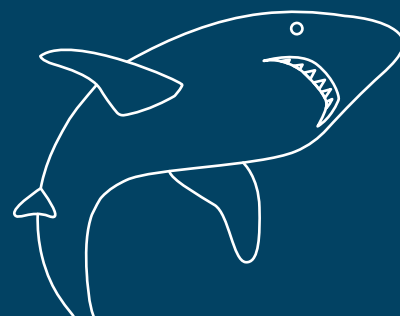
Field missions

Tunis, Tunisia – Bycatch & Species knowledge general meetings - November 2021

Malaga, Spain – Midterm evaluation – February 2022

Sardinia, Italy – Final Evaluation meeting – October 2022

Appendix



INCA – 10.2021

Preliminary questions

Impact measurement

To collect data for the impact report in the framework of Together for the Med. We rely on project leaders to provide us with information and key results to be valued. In this report, the aim is to demonstrate the cumulative impact of the project, i.e. to highlight the synergies, replications, and amplification of the results on the common themes. We are aware that this report comes early regarding the development of the project, so we invite you to focus on phase 1 and to enrich it with phase 2.

Questions:

1. What are the results that emerged from the **data analysis** on the impact of fishing activities on marine megafauna in Greece? Expected/Unexpected?
2. What are the results regarding the **advocacy work** to mitigate marine megafauna and SSF conflicts in Greece? You also propose feasible and scientifically robust alternatives to the national authorities, have you been able to pass new regulations that change practices? What changes have you seen? Expected/Unexpected?
3. You collaborate with fishermen, what have been the **social outcomes of this collaboration**? What has this project achieved in human terms?
4. You work on the development of a **national compensatory system** to fishers. What are the results of this development?
5. About replication? How the work on the 5-case studies can be **disseminated**? How do you see the **replication** of the activities you have launched? What are the criteria for a successful replication?
6. You are working on **conflict reduction** for several years all over Greece. In a very general way, how do you see the evolution of these interactions in the Mediterranean Sea?