



Event Report

**EPPA Sub-Regional Workshop on the designation of Marine
Protected Areas**

20-21 April 2021

Live video conference



This Project is funded by the European Union

NIRAS **umweltbundesamt^U**

The project implemented by the Consortium of NIRAS (lead)
and Umweltbundesamt GmbH

1 The event

The EPPA Sub-Regional Workshop on the designation of Marine Protected Areas took place on April 20-21, 2021, via live video conference. The workshop was organized in cooperation with TAIEX, and under the EPPA project work programme, namely activity 5.1.2 “Assistance for the identification of marine protected areas and exchange of best practices to achieve and/or to maintain the good ecological status of marine waters and preserve biodiversity”. It targeted the following EPPA beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

The participants came from the relevant authorities of the EPPA beneficiaries involved in the implementation of the marine protected areas. They represented the Ministries with the environment portfolio, in addition to national environmental management and conservation agencies, water management bodies, and coastal zone management bodies. Details are available in the list of participants. Civil society was represented by NGOs from the beneficiaries, namely: Association of Young Ecologists of Niksic (Montenegro), Co-Plan (Albania), LIR Evolution (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The EU Delegations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey were also present.

The speakers represented EU Member States’ and European Commission experience. There were experts from the relevant national authorities of Romania and Slovenia; and from DG Environment (Marine Environment and Water Industry Unit), European Commission. Additionally, the workshop mobilized contributions from UNEP/MAP, EUSAIR, and managers of marine protected areas in Romania and Slovenia. Details are available in the agenda and the presentations can be downloaded in both the TAIEX website and in the EPPA project website.

The aim of the workshop was to present the scientific basis for evaluating potential areas for the establishment of new marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Adriatic Sea basin - two MPAs in Albania, one MPA in Bosnia and Herzegovina and two MPAs in Montenegro, and the detailed recommendations for their establishment and the required management requirements. These designations will contribute to fulfilling the engagements of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Montenegro to meet the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding the ecosystem approach and the Aichi targets, and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Protocol, as well as demonstrating their readiness to fully respect the environmental legislation and policies of the EU. In addition, the workshop presented and discussed tangible activities in order to ensure follow-up actions in the target countries and facilitate the exchange of best practices in order to achieve and/or to maintain the good ecological status of marine waters and preserve biodiversity.

2 Proceedings and conclusions

UNEP opened the workshop by providing an international contextualization of MPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean, in particular updates on the elaboration of the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for Marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean and the outcomes of the last assessment of the status of MPAs in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean is a global biodiversity hotspot. While it has only 0.3% of the world’s ocean volume it accounts for 4% to 18% of identified marine species globally. But it is also under pressure. It contains 33% of the global maritime traffic, it’s the world’s first touristic destination, there’s a growing interest in hydrocarbons in the sea, it is subject to land-based pollution and fishing over-exploitation. In this context, the existing 1137 MPAs, despite being mostly coastal or shallow waters, are essential for biodiversity preservation. The existing coverage is only 8.3%, below the Aichi target.

The Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MPAs and OECMs aims to build on the existing coverage in line with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the CBD, the Post-2020 SAPBIO, and other relevant global, regional and sub-regional processes and initiatives. The Regional Strategy is being elaborated in consultation with relevant global, regional and national organizations for timely submission to the 15th meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (23-25 June 2021). Its main strategic outcomes are: Governance for the establishment and management of MPAs and OECMs strengthened among Parties, MPA coverage increased through the expansion of soundly-designed, representative and well-connected



This Project is funded by the European Union

NIRAS

The project implemented by the Consortium of NIRAS (lead) and

umweltbundesamt[®]

Umweltbundesamt GmbH

networks of MPAs; OECMs that contribute towards achieving Post-2020 global protected area related targets for the Mediterranean region are recognized and reported; MPAs are managed effectively and threats to biodiversity are reduced; Action and support for MPAs, OECMs and biodiversity conservation is mobilized across governments, the private sector, stakeholders, youth and the general public.

In parallel, there are other regional processes concerning the post-2020 MPA agenda. The Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean is a joint initiative of SPA/RAC and MedPAN. This third edition is being co-organized jointly by SPA/RAC, MedPAN, WWF Mediterranean and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. A post-2020 MPA Roadmap is being developed as part of the MPA Forum collaborative process.

That was followed by knowledge sharing by managers of marine protected areas from Albania, Romania, Italy, and Slovenia, as well as technical sessions highlighting the links between MPAs and the MSFD Programmes of Measures, and the Biological Diversity Protocol (coastal blue corridors for biological diversity and sustainable fishery).

Albania presented its developments regarding the “Karaburun-Sazan” Marine National Park. It was designated in 28.04.2010, covering 15 % of Albanian Coastline (surface 12,428.82 ha). The area is subject to a SPAMI Twinning Programme SPA/RAC and NAPA with the aim to achieve the objectives of the Barcelona Convention and its protocols concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in The Mediterranean as well as Aichi target. The park has 3 zones: a central area devoted to scientific research and monitoring, an effective management and recreation zone devoted to water leisure, and a sustainable development zone allowing more invasive activities like boating, mooring, swimming, etc. The three main conservation targets are: a. *Posidonia oceanica*, b. *Lithophylum byssoides*, c. *Cystoseira amentacea*. The species are monitored and regularly assessed, together with water quality. The main future challenges are management effectiveness, management of small scale fisheries, ensuring sustainable financing of the MPA, implementation of new laws for protected areas, visitor control in coastal areas, regulation of tourism and marine spatial planning of Vlora Bay.

Romania also shared its experience with the designation and management a marine protected area in Vama Veche. The management plan was approved in 2016, seeking to harmonize interaction between humans and nature by protecting diversity of habitats and seascape, promoting the traditional use of marine waters by encouraging the traditional practices, activities and culture of local population. At the same time, leisure and tourist activities are accessible to public. The Operational plan is centred on 5 themes: biodiversity, tourism, local community and economy, education and public outreach and management actions. The work included identifying habitats and species to be targeted by conservation.

In order to warn on the delimitation of the protected area, NIMRD installed in the perimeter of the MPA nine warning buoys. They are 1 meter high and 60 cm in diameter and carried information plates with easily visible information from boats passing through the area. Each of the nine buoys was ballasted using a galvanized bent chain, with ballasts of approximately 275 kg each (railway sleepers). They were positioned collinearly at 6-6.5 m, at 200 m between them. During summer, the Mobile Monitoring Point of the MPA was moved to the area, represented by the caravan equipped by the NIMRD "Grigore Antipa" located either on the beach in Vama Veche, or in 2 Mai. Researchers and technicians of NIMRD have ensured permanence during the peak period of the summer season, carrying out research and monitoring of the state of the marine protected area, as well as education and public awareness activities, by distributing to tourists brochures, leaflets and flyers related to the MPA and marine environment in general.

Romania also presented the impact of the MSFD Programme of Measures on marine waters (Black Sea). It includes 36 existing measures (Water Framework Directive, Nitrates Directive, Wastewater Treatment Directive, Bathing Water Directive, International Agreements) and 29 new measures. They were established according to the 11 Descriptors on the basis of which the ecological state of the marine environment is characterized. They include: measures for the protection of cetaceans, fish fauna, to prevent pollution from ships, to reduce underwater noise, to identify areas for the accumulation of plastic waste in the marine environment and elaboration of an action plan for their depollution. The PoM is monitored yearly via water quality, conservation status.



This Project is funded by the European Union

NIRAS

umweltbundesamt[®]

The project implemented by the Consortium of NIRAS (lead) and Umweltbundesamt GmbH

Italy presented its experience with Torre Guaceto MPA, with 12 292 km² of protected area in the Adriatic. The MPA is divided into several zones: integral reserve (research activities), general reserve (research activities, tours and bathing), partial reserve (in addition to the previous activities, it also allows for artisanal fishing). The MPA is also involved in conservation projects, such as the MYSEA project aimed at strengthening the Sea Turtle Recovery Center Network in the Puglia Region (Torre Guaceto, Manfredonia, Barletta, Raucio e Calimera); a Study on interactions between coastal dolphins and fisheries in and around the SAC of Torre Guaceto; geomorphological and sedimentological surveys to define the use of the touristic beaches, restoration of fragmented or degraded ecosystems. Ecosystem parameters are monitored using a new system of automated sensors. One of the buoys is equipped with a system of multiparametric sensors made with low-cost prototype sensors of the competence of the CMCC, to allow the acquisition of continuous data of the parameters of temperature, conductivity, fluorescence of chlorophyll a, fluorescence CDOM, turbidity, dissolved oxygen. The measured parameters are sent to the platform which, thanks to the forecast models, will provide, in relation to the definition of the recognized vulnerable areas with respect to the model distribution of pollutants on the geomorphological characteristics.

In the first five years of management (2000-2005) fishing was prohibited to allow the regeneration of fish stocks. Experimental fishing began in 2005, with the drafting of a shared fisheries agreement between researchers, fishermen and management. The agreement allows the modification of fisheries management based on the results of monitoring activities on fish stocks. The authorized fishing net is the tramaglio (trammel) (max 1200 mt with meshes over 10 (3 cm) and 11 (2.6 cm).

The experience of Torre Guaceto MPA proves the ecological and economic value of the environmental heritage of the MPA: for every euro invested in conservation, 11-12 euros of benefits are generated.

Slovenia presented its experiences in developing MPA planning. The process started with an inventory of the coastal area, which included scientific research and stakeholder consultations. That resulted in the definition of limits, zoning, conservation objectives & measures. The main objective is to ensure conservation status and awareness raising. The main lessons taken from The Slovene experience is that MPA and marine conservation require long-term planning and measures, strong communication with stakeholders, management effectiveness, and intra-national and international cooperation. Slovenia also shared how it is integrating blue corridors into its maritime spatial planning.

The main objective of the event was, however, to present and discuss the EPPA study on the designation of new MPAs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. The participants were informed about the process of developing the study, and its structure, which includes information about marine protected areas in the Mediterranean, in particular in regard to EU initiatives and legal framework, the assessment criteria used in the study to identify potential sites, and the concrete proposals for the three countries.

The EPPA study recommends two MPAs in Albania, namely the areas of Porto Palermo and Rodoni-Lalzi because they have a representative range of key habitats and species at appropriate levels; and both fulfil the criteria of adequacy and networking, also for the South Adriatic Sea. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, the study proposed one MPA: The Neum - Klek Bay and Mali Ston Bay due to its naturalness and the presence of critical areas for various life stages. Finally, for Montenegro, the study proposes two MPAs: Platamuni due to its high and valuable biodiversity features also protected by the inaccessibility of the coast line. The second area is Katic and Ratic because of its large *posidonia oceanica* meadows and other key habitats. The MPA will provide a suitable habitat for a high number of marine organisms as well as protected and endangered species.

Moreover, the EPPA study also suggests the creation of a regional marine conservation area in open seas covering the southern Adriatic basin and the northern Ionian Sea. The area lays partially within the jurisdictions of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, and Italy. It would require a transboundary agreement and coordination to be implemented. The EPPA decided to propose this transboundary MPA because of its holistic vision of marine protection and conservation, following the ecosystem-based approach towards networks of MPAs.



This Project is funded by the European Union

NIRAS

The project implemented by the Consortium of NIRAS (lead) and

umweltbundesamt[®]

Umweltbundesamt GmbH

The proposed areas are generally fairly large providing the necessary space to contribute to the conservation of species and habitats, for which they have been identified. Their designation by the national authorities as MPA's will significantly contribute to the completion of an effective network of protected areas in the Mediterranean. It is important to consider that these designations will only be effective if they are followed up by putting in place an effective management regime.

The study also recommends that:

- The governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro are invited to accept the proposals of the country reports and declare their intention to designate the proposed areas in their territories as Marine Protected Areas
- The governments of these countries are recommended to establish committees to develop the proposed designations from formal decisions into a national decision. It is suggested that these committees should include representatives from different government agencies, responsible for aspects of marine management as well as the local authorities whose areas are involved. The Committees should give interested stakeholder interests the opportunity to be consulted on the proposals being prepared concerning the territory to be covered and management regimes to be established
- The governments are encouraged to ensure that designated areas have appropriate legal status under their national legislation
- In establishing management regimes, the governments are encouraged to ensure mechanisms for regular scientific monitoring and review, as well as educational and communication activities in support of the conservation objectives
- The establishment decisions should include provisions for the creation of the necessary governance structure and the funding required for its operation
- The governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Italy are invited to agree on the designation of the proposed area in the Adriatic Basin as an MPA and designate the respective parts of this area under their individual territories accordingly. They are also recommended to identify it as a Special Protection Area of Mediterranean Interest SPAMI and to establish a joint management structure to coordinate protection activities for the whole zone

The workshop participants agreed to the relevance of the study proposals and its recommendations.

Workshop outputs

The workshop's main outputs were:

- Strengthened capacity to address the implementation challenges of the marine protected areas
- Exchanged experiences in the implementation of the marine protected areas between EU Member States and the EPPA beneficiaries
- Increased regional dialogue on the implementation of a cross-border, regional marine conservation area in open seas covering the southern Adriatic basin and the northern Ionian Sea
- Identified national obstacles towards the implementation of marine protected areas
- Presented and supported EPPA study on the designation of marine protected areas in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro

3 Evaluation

The participants were asked to evaluate the workshop by TAIEX using an online survey after the event. The evaluation results are presented below in a summary table.



			No. Responses	Expert Score	Yes / Excellent	No / Good	Satisfactory	
80693	Workshop - participant - A. Questions	1	Was the workshop carried out according to the agenda?	11	-	11 (100%)	-	-
		2	Was the programme well structured?	11	-	11 (100%)	-	-
		3	Were the key issues related to the topics addressed?	11	-	11 (100%)	-	-
		4	Did the workshop enable you to improve your knowledge?	11	-	10 (91%)	-	1 (9%)
		5	Was enough time allowed for questions and discussions?	11	-	11 (100%)	-	-
		7	Do you expect any follow-up based on the results of the workshop (new legislation, new administrative approach, etc.)?	11	-	8 (73%)	3 (27%)	-
		8	Do you think that further TAIEX - %pr_c_abbreviation% assistance is needed (workshop, expert mission, study visit, assessment mission) on the topic of this workshop?	11	-	9 (82%)	2 (18%)	-
		Workshop - participant - B. Expert ratings	-	Mr. Constantin, Gheorghe - Speaker MS	11	86.36%	5 (45%)	6 (55%)
	-		Mr. Dimovski, Mihail - Other speakers	11	90.9%	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	-
	-		Ms. Popovici, Mihaela - Other speakers	11	88.63%	7 (64%)	3 (27%)	1 (9%)
	-		Mr. Santi, Saso - Speaker MS	11	86.36%	5 (45%)	6 (55%)	-
	-		Ms. Mance, Marijana - Speaker EU	11	90.9%	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	-
	-		Mr. Papanthassiou, Vangelis - Speaker MS	11	93.18%	8 (73%)	3 (27%)	-
	80693	Workshop - participant - B. Expert ratings	-	Mr. Turk, Robert - Speaker PP	11	90.9%	7 (64%)	4 (36%)
-			Ms. Abaza, Valeria - Speaker MS	11	84.09%	4 (36%)	7 (64%)	-
-			Ms. El Asmi, Souha - Other speakers	11	90.9%	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	-
-			Ms. Lazaj, Lorela - Speaker CC	11	88.63%	6 (55%)	5 (45%)	-
Workshop - participant - C. Logistic Ratings		1	Conference venue	2	-	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-
		2	Interpretation	2	-	2 (100%)	-	-
		3	Hotel	1	-	-	1 (100%)	-
		4	Flight	1	-	-	1 (100%)	-
		5	Catering	1	-	1 (100%)	-	-
		6	Was the communication leading up to the event satisfactory?	7	-	7 (100%)	-	-
		7	Was the pre-event test useful?	4	-	4 (100%)	-	-
		8	Did you find the virtual event platform easily accessible?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-
		9	Was the platform user-friendly?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-
		10	Did the host provide adequate instructions during the event, on the use of the platform and in problem solving?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-
Workshop - speaker - A. Questions	11	Was the IT support provided adequate?	9	-	9 (100%)	-	-	
	1	Did you receive all the information necessary for the preparation of your contribution?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-	
	2	Has the overall aim of the workshop been achieved?	10	-	9 (90%)	-	1 (10%)	
	3	Was the agenda well structured?	10	-	9 (90%)	-	1 (10%)	
80693	Workshop - speaker - A. Questions	4	Were the participants present throughout the scheduled workshop?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-
		5	Was the beneficiary represented by the appropriate participants?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-
		6	Did the participants actively take part in the discussions?	10	-	7 (70%)	-	3 (30%)
		7	Do you expect that the beneficiary will undertake follow-up based on the results of the workshop (new legislation, new administrative approach etc.)?	10	-	8 (80%)	-	-
		8	Do you think that the beneficiary needs further TAIEX - %pr_c_abbreviation% assistance (workshop, expert mission, study visit, assessment mission) on the topic of this workshop?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-
	Workshop - speaker - C. Logistic Ratings	9	Would you be ready to participate in future TAIEX - %pr_c_abbreviation% workshops?	10	-	10 (100%)	-	-
		1	Conference venue	5	-	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	-
		2	Interpretation	5	-	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	-
		3	Hotel	3	-	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	-
		4	Flight	2	-	-	2 (100%)	-
		5	Catering	1	-	-	1 (100%)	-
	6	Was the communication leading up to the event satisfactory?	7	-	7 (100%)	-	-	
	7	Was the pre-event test useful?	8	-	8 (100%)	-	-	
	8	Did you find the virtual event platform easily accessible?	8	-	8 (100%)	-	-	
	9	Was the platform user-friendly?	8	-	7 (88%)	-	1 (13%)	
	10	Did the host provide adequate instructions during the event, on the use of the platform and in problem solving?	8	-	8 (100%)	-	-	
	11	Was the IT support provided adequate?	7	-	7 (100%)	-	-	

Endnotes

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda (provided as a separate document)

Annex 2: List of Participants (provided as a separate document)

Annex 3: Presentations (provided as a separate document)



This Project is funded by the European Union



The project implemented by the Consortium of NIRAS (lead) and Umweltbundesamt GmbH



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the Niras IC Sp. z o.o. and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.